

LEE ROWLEY MP: BRIEFING NOTE FOR ECKINGTON RESIDENTS ON THE CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

Background

A consultation is currently being undertaken on the draft North East Derbyshire local plan – the document which will determine where how our area will develop, and where houses will be built, in the coming years. This is an important consultation where we can make the case that the remaining proposed greenbelt sites aren't needed and shouldn't be built on.

All residents can get involved in the consultation if they wish. The consultation is a technical one (on some proposed modifications to the draft document) and arguments need to be made based on established planning rules and principles. If you are responding, we recommend that you use specific arguments to maximise the impact of your response and to increase the chance of success.

This note outlines some of the points you might like to make if you decide to respond to the consultation. You can use some or all of these points.

The arguments we recommend you make are broken down into two – where we think you should disagree with some of the proposals under consultation (see box 1) and then some wider observations you should make about the proposals (see box 2).

(1) Proposals that we recommend you agree with

- **That you agree that housebuilding at Eckington South, Eckington (EC1) should be removed from the next version of the Local Plan:** in 2019, the Inspector proposed that the 400 houses originally due to be built on a site in Eckington South should be removed from the next version of the plan. Residents should agree with her 2019 proposal so that, when the final version is published, those 400 houses are no longer contained within it

(2) Important points we think you should also make to the Inspector

- **That you remain unconvinced that the “exceptional circumstances” test has been made to remove any land in North East Derbyshire from the greenbelt at all:** under national rules, greenbelt sites can only be released for housebuilding if “exceptional circumstances” have been proven in an area. We don't think this is the case in North East Derbyshire and we recommend you highlight that no exceptional circumstances exist. As a result, the Inspector should continue with her plans to remove the Eckington South site and should also remove the remaining four greenbelt sites in Killamarsh and Dronfield which remain in the current draft.

(2) Important points we think you should also make to the Inspector (continued)

- **That the most recently published housing numbers for North East Derbyshire demonstrate there is no longer a shortfall of houses within the plan:** all local plans must have a target for housebuilding and North East Derbyshire's was proposed a number of years ago, by a previous Council leadership, for 6,600 homes by 2034. Based on the amount of housebuilding that has already happened, has been approved or is planned, we do not think there is a material gap between the target and what will actually be built. As a result, the Inspector should remove the greenbelt sites she was already planning to remove (Eckington) and should go further and remove the remainder that remain the plan at Killamarsh and Dronfield, too.
- **That the Inspector's justification for the removal of sites elsewhere in the District (such as sites in Coal Aston and Eckington) really could be applied to the remaining greenbelt sites:** that we would ask the Inspector to apply her own logic, as outlined in correspondence dated 18/02/2019, to remove the remaining greenbelt sites.
- **That coronavirus is likely to change the economic calculus of the coming years and may reduce demand:** that given the current uncertain economic times, there is likely to be incrementally less demand in North East Derbyshire to 2034 and therefore not as many houses will be needed.
- **That you agree that the spatial strategy should be changed to no longer require over 50% of houses be placed in level 1 settlements:** the Inspector was right to say that the requirement to build the majority of the District's housing in Killamarsh, Eckington, Dronfield and Clay Cross was not justified by the evidence.

Need more help or information?

Please just get in touch with Lee on lee.rowley.mp@parliament.uk or 439222 and he will be happy to talk through this in more detail if needed.