

PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT OPTION REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION JULY 2107

We object to the proposal in the preferred option that up to 500 dwellings could be provided within the Green Belt in Lymm as part of the Council's preferred option for the following reasons:-

As national planning guidance explains the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. The Green Belt was first established on adoption of the Borough's Unitary Development Plan in 2006 and was intended to be preserved for the Plan period and beyond. To propose significant changes to the boundary some 11 years after the Green Belt was defined seems to be clearly contrary to the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS5 of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy. While, the NPPF does allow for Green Belt boundaries to be altered in exceptional circumstances, the extensive alterations in the Council's preferred option appear to be of a scale far greater than envisaged in the guidance.

The consultation document does not set out to define where and when the 500 dwellings would be provided. This makes it very difficult to comment on how such development would affect the character and appearance of the village and its rural setting. Nor is there any detailed explanation of how the required additional education and primary care facilities would be provided. While the possible future preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan would provide a means of assessing and allocating housing sites, the acceptability of development in principle within the Green Belt would already have been established by that stage.

This is of concern given the large number of call for sites within the village which emphasises the strong demand for sites from developers. National Green Belt policy stresses that the most important feature of Green Belts is their openness and residential development on any of the sites would significantly reduce openness.

We are particularly concerned about the site to the west of Highfield Road and south of Massey Brook Lane (site reference R18/036). The houses on Highfield Road provide a clear and defensible boundary on the western edge of the village. To allow development on the site would undoubtedly result in pressure for further development in the area and a very significant reduction in openness. Furthermore, access to the site could only be provided from Massey Brook Lane given the presence of existing development. The junction of that road with Booth's Hill Road is substandard due to the alignment of the two roads. Any significant increase in traffic using the junction would have a significant adverse effect on highway safety. Furthermore, it would be difficult to improve the junction because of the roads' alignments and the location of the nearby canal bridge. Finally, Hardy Road and Highfield Road are quiet residential streets with a high incidence of on street parking. They are already used as a 'rat run' by drivers travelling between Cherry Lane and Booth's Hill Road. Development to the west of Highfield Road would exacerbate the situation to the detriment of highway safety and the safety of pupils attending Cherry Tree Primary School.