



Hearing Statement on behalf of Wain Homes (North West) Ltd (ID: UPSVLP 2471)

In relation to: Matter 2 – The Duty to Co-operate

Warrington Local Plan Examination

Emery Planning project number: 19-202

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Date : 22 July 2022
Author : Wiktoria Sypnicka/John
Coxon

Approved by : Stephen Harris

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1. Introduction

1.1 Emery Planning is instructed by Wain Homes (North West) Ltd (hereafter referred to as “Wain Homes”) to submit a written response to the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions in relation to Matter 2 – The Duty to Co-operate of the Warrington Local Plan Examination. Wain Homes has an interest in the following omission sites:

- Land at Lumber Lane, Burtonwood; and,
- Land at Runcorn Road, Moore - part of the former draft allocation: Warrington South West urban extension.

1.2 This hearing statement should be read in conjunction with our detailed representations to the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft of the Warrington Local Plan, and our other Hearing Statements submitted to this examination.

2. Wain Homes response to the Inspector’s questions

Question 12 - Are there cross boundary issues that arise from strategic allocations or planning permissions in neighbouring authorities and if so, how have these been dealt with through co-operation?

Question 13b - Taking each of the following in turn, what cross boundary issues are there and how have they been addressed through co-operation?

b) Transport infrastructure and mitigation

2.1 The Council has failed its duty to co-operate due to a lack of meaningful discussions with St Helens Council in relation to the (now removed) allocation at Burtonwood.

2.2 The signed Statement of Common Ground dated April 2022 (SP10) states at paragraphs 4.42 to 4.43:

“Bold Forest Garden Suburb (St Helens)

The emerging St Helens Local Plan proposes to remove approximately 140 hectares of land at Bold from the Green Belt, to enable it to form a future new Garden Suburb, with capacity for approximately 3,000 new dwellings

(proposed site allocation 4HA in the emerging St Helens Borough Local Plan). Whilst this area is within the Borough of St Helens, it is (at its nearest point about 1 kilometre from the border with Warrington).

WBC is particularly concerned about the potential impact on residents in Burtonwood, and as such, has now removed the Burtonwood residential allocation from its Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (2021). It is expected that the development of the site would be informed by a master plan exercise. This would consider (amongst other matters) any effects of the development on transport infrastructure in Warrington (including junction 8 of the M62), in liaison with National Highways."

2.3 The same is stated in the Statement of Common Ground between the Council and National Highways (SP11, paragraphs 4.8.1 to 4.8.2).

2.4 As detailed in Section 3 of our Regulation 19 Representations, dated November 2021, the evidence base does not contain any justification for the removal of the allocation and the concerns stated above. Indeed, the SoCG states that the development of the site would be informed by a master plan exercise, including an assessment of any effects of the development on transport infrastructure in Warrington. This suggests that no assessment of the impacts has been carried out at this stage and the allocation has been removed based on unjustified assumptions.

2.5 The Council has highlighted that a cross-boundary issue exists on the basis of the impacts of the Bold Forest Garden Suburb on Burtonwood, however has failed to comply with the duty to co-operate for the following reasons:

1. The Council has failed to work with St Helens Council to assess the issue and the extent of potential impacts on Burtonwood, which has now affected the proposed supply of housing. As mentioned above, the SoCG between the Councils states that a master planning exercise, which would consider the highway impacts in Warrington among other matter, is yet to be carried out.

2. The approach is not consistent with the evidence presented to the St Helens Local Plan Examination. Warrington Council did not submit a hearing statement in relation to the Bold allocation (Matter 4, Session 4) and does not appear to have raised any issues elsewhere. In fact, the SoCG submitted during the St Helens Local Plan Examination does not refer to any potential impacts on residents of Burtonwood at paragraph 4.30. The Council did not contest the Bold Forest Garden Suburb and the St Helens Local Plan up to 2037 has now been adopted.

3. Should the Council have been concerned about the potential impacts, this should have been raised early in the preparation of the St Helens Local Plan. The SoCGs in both examinations simply state that the parties will work together to consider any cross boundary requirements or issues, however there is no evidence available of this work taking place. The Council has therefore not co-operated to deal with the cross-boundary issues and has failed its duty to co-operate.

- 2.6 On the basis of the above, there are potential cross boundary issues which have been highlighted by the Council that arise from a strategic allocation in a neighbouring authority, St Helens Council. Co-operation does not appear to have been in place, with the exception of agreeing Statements of Common Ground. These appear inconsistent in that Warrington Council now suggests the Bold Forest Garden Suburb is likely to have an impact on the Burtonwood residents and has removed the residential allocations as a result.
- 2.7 No evidence has been produced to clarify the work undertaken by both authorities to resolve these cross-boundary issues or to identify mitigation measures which could reinstate the allocation at Burtonwood. If the issue is considered to be so significant that it may prevent development at Burtonwood, then the Council should have been more proactive in securing mitigation measures and co-operating with St Helens Council to reduce the potential impacts. The Council failed to raise these concerns at the early stages of the Bold allocation and throughout its own plan preparation, therefore has failed to comply with the duty.