

Council Statement on Local Plan – 20 February 2019

In putting together the Local Plan the Council has followed the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirements, which set out the expectations for how the Plan should be developed. The NPPF indicates a clear preference for the Plan to cover a 15 year period. In developing the Plan regular advice has also been taken from the Planning Inspectorate to best ensure consistency with the NPPF requirements and to develop a balanced and deliverable Plan.

The Local Plan process highlighted that the settlements of Clay Cross, Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh are the most sustainable locations for new development. Consequently, consideration was given to sites beyond the existing built up areas in Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh in order to identify potential housing sites that could be delivered in the Plan period. This meant consideration had to be given to the Green Belt Boundaries and an independent review of the Green Belt was undertaken to inform this process.

The Examination process provides independent scrutiny of the Local Plan and enables the Inspector to take views on the proposals and identify potential changes. Therefore such scrutiny will lead to modifications to what has been proposed. This is not unusual and is part of the established process.

In this case the Inspector has taken the view that development of one site on the edge of Dronfield and one on the edge of Eckington would have a harmful impact on the Green Belt. She has also suggested that a site on the edge of Dronfield should be reduced in size. These matters have been explained in the Inspector's letter dated 18th February 2019.

Given the impact of the removal of these sites it is not possible to identify sufficient housing sites over the Plan's 15 year period. However, the Inspector indicates a way to accommodate this impact would be to identify sites over a 10 year period, with a commitment to an early review of the Plan to meet longer term needs.

Subject to the clarification from the Inspector the Council will make the amendments to the Plan and identify up to 10 years of housing land rather than 15 years. This will reduce the amount of Green Belt sites allocated in this Local Plan, but it will require a further review in due course.

Councillor Michael Gordon
Planning Portfolio Holder, North East Derbyshire District Council