



**MAGHULL
TOWN
COUNCIL**

**SURVEY ON RESIDENTS VIEWS OF OPTION 2 OF
THE LOCAL PLAN FOR SEFTON**

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Part 1: Background and methodology

Background: Sefton Council conducted a consultation on the proposals contained in the Local Plan July- September 2103. The Maghull Town Council Survey was conducted to provide added value to Sefton's Consultation.

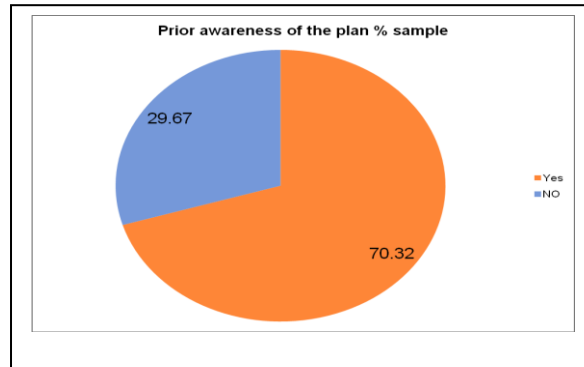
Methodology

- Information given was unbiased, apolitical and factual.
- Target distribution of households – 10% of households all wards in Maghull Town Council.
- Selection of households was random the selection being based upon houses available on the day.
- The survey was delivered by hand and only given to households prepared to reply.
- Randomised times of surveying were used included weekdays, weekends and evenings to try to ensure that a wide variety of households gave their opinion.
- An addressed envelope was provided to ensure confidentiality.
- A signature, a number and a post code was expected in the reply. This was to ensure that geographical distribution was town wide, and that replies were from individuals not from group interests or pressure groups.
- Replies were opened by MTC officers and were not collated by names of residents/households.
- Survey numbers were limited by a short time available and numbers of councillors available to deliver the survey.
- The survey design and questions were consulted on and amendments made in the light of consultation.
- 556 households completed the survey.
- The data, findings, conclusions and recommendations in this report are not based on conjecture or the personal opinions of any one individual or group, but are based on an objective analysis of the views of the Maghull households who took part in this survey.
- The Survey and its evidence base is statistically significant and large enough to extrapolate from the sample to the population in general; in other words we can conclude that the opinions shared in this survey broadly represent the opinions and views of the whole of the Maghull population.

Part 2: Aggregate responses to survey questions

Question 1

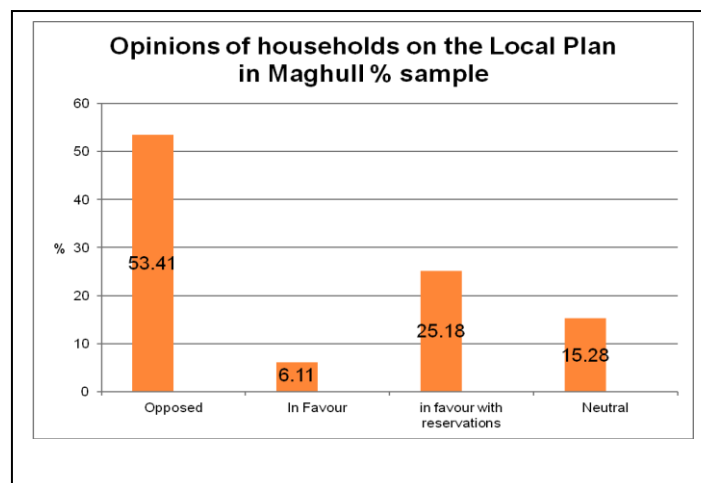
Prior awareness of The Local Plan



Analysis

The MTC survey has surveyed approximately an additional 165 households whose views wouldn't have been included in Sefton's consultation because they had no knowledge of it.

Question 2: Opinion on proposed plan in Maghull.



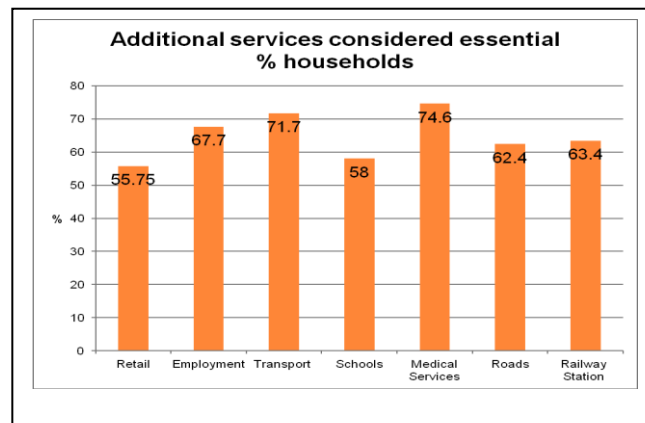
Analysis

53.41% were totally opposed

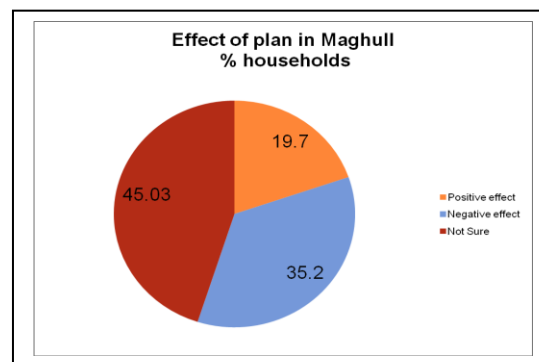
6.11 % were totally in favour

25.18% were in favour with reservations

15.28% were neutral

Question 4: Additional Services needed.**Analysis**

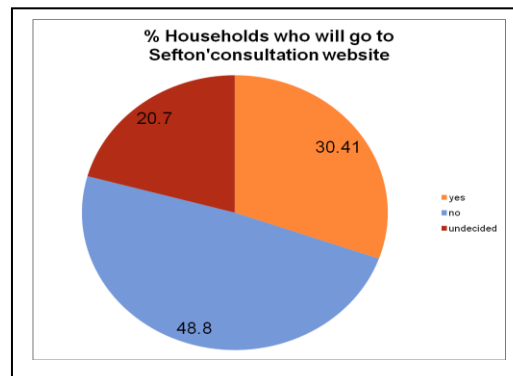
Residents would like to see these additional services guaranteed before any building takes place. They fear the funding won't be forthcoming to meet the demands. Residents report that services in Maghull are already at breaking point.

Question 5: Effect on household?**Analysis**

45.03% (251 households) were not sure if the proposals would have a positive or negative effect on their household

19.7% (110 households) thought that the proposals would have a positive effect on their household

35.2% (193 households) thought that the proposals would have a negative effect on their household

Question 6: Go on Sefton's survey?**Analysis**

48.8% (approximately 272 households) of respondents reported that they will not go to Sefton's website to complete the consultation

30.4% (approximately 170 households) said that they will complete the consultation

20.7% (approximately 114 households) were undecided

This is potentially a worrying statistic as over 69% of the households surveyed may not take part in Sefton's consultation. We didn't have time to analyse the reasons why this was the case, but a key determining factor may be lack of access to ICT equipment and not understanding how to navigate to the website or request a hard copy of the consultation documents.

Part 3: Summary of residents views by broad category

Of those who were totally opposed and made further comment on their concerns

61.7% cited infrastructure issues as a main concern

31.3% cited Greenbelt issues as a main concern

07.0% cited other issues

Of those who were in favour but had reservations and made further comment

60.7% cited infrastructure issues as a main cause of concern

12.7% cited affordability issues as a main cause for concern

12.7% cited Greenbelt issues as a main cause for concern

13.7% cited other reasons as a main cause for concern

Of those who were in favour and made further comment

28.57% cited jobs and affordability as determining factors

71.42% cited positive infrastructure and service improvements as determining factors

Part 4: Synopsis/Analysis of resident's views (based on responses Q3 & Q4 of survey)

a) Views of those who were completely in favour (6% of total sample)

Employment /Regeneration

Residents expressed the view that the Local Plan will lead to increased employment opportunities.

Housing

Residents expressed the view that the Local Plan will lead to increase opportunities for first time buyers to enter the housing market and that new build homes will improve the area.

Better services

Residents expressed the view that the Local Plan will lead to an improvement in public services, transport and improved leisure facilities.

b) Views of those who were completely opposed (53% of total sample) and those who were in favour with reservations (25% of total sample)

Infrastructure

General observations on infrastructure comments

Residents were concerned that the scale of the development and its position would make effective mitigation extremely difficult because of the cost and the arterial road infrastructure, making the plan unsound and unsustainable.

Of those who made comments, concerns about inadequate infrastructure were the main issue for both categories, e.g. those who were totally opposed and those who were in favour with reservations (60.7% of sample).

Roads

If over 2,000 new homes are built on this site it will result in approximately an additional 4,000 cars spilling onto existing roads which are already very busy. Majority of arterial roads in this area are essentially country lanes. These roads cannot be widened and main thoroughfares such as Deyes Lane are already near capacity, residents have to park their cars on grass verges, already ruining the aesthetics of the area. The area is used as a rat run for large lorries going to and from the M58, this will worsen if the development goes ahead as planned. The junction of Poverty Lane and Foxhouse Lane is already a potential accident spot with 6 lanes of traffic intersecting at a junction with poor lateral visibility. Mitigating these problems will be nearly impossible without whole scale redesign of the internal/arterial road network in the immediate area. The roads are essentially narrow two way winding country lanes with poor forward visibility, with particularly bad visibility between Poverty Lane and Hall Lane. Although the area will be a 20mph zone this will not be adequately policed and the potential for accidents will inevitably increase, this may be particularly true around Maricourt School which is very busy with pupils darting across the road as they go into and leave the school premises. Pressure will inevitably increase on this road due to increased traffic flow toward Hall Lane. Another serious concern with this stretch of road relates to parents taking their Children to St Georges Primary School (the only Catholic Primary in the area), which is only accessible via a single lane canal bridge which is already a pressure point with four lanes of traffic converging at the bridge, currently resulting in traffic backing up down Hall Lane toward Northway and backing up along Hall Lane toward Station Road. The increase in traffic will exponentially increase this problem at the Hall Lane bridge.

There are already serious issues with congestion around St Georges School (Dennett Close) a large increase in traffic due to the 'school run', which is inevitable, will potentially result in gridlock around Hall Lane, Old Hall Road and Dennett Close, and residents who live on the estate opposite the school who already struggle to get out of the estate at busy time will find it even more difficult.

The Methodology for selecting green belt sites cites that Traffic and Access are assessed as being Green for the S129 and that the development of this site can provide significant infrastructure and accessibility improvements, including the provision of Maghull North station and the southbound

spurs onto the M58 motorway. Whilst the latter two points may be credible, the survey results question the robustness and rigour of the consequences study in relation to the wider impact on the arterial road infrastructure of 'Greater Maghull'.

The survey results indicate that the residents believe the proposals fail the methodology for building on the Green Belt because of the following taken from the methodology 'The road network is at or near capacity in a number of areas which could preclude or limit the amount of development either singly or cumulatively, because mitigation is not possible'.

Schools

Inadequate research and evidence of planning to deal with a large increase in school numbers. The Local Plan does mention the potential expansion of Summerhill Primary School, however there doesn't appear to be any fact based research on the numbers and scale of any increase in demand for school places at primary and secondary and there is little concrete evidence of robust planning to adequately deal with the inevitable increase in demand for school places.

At the moment it is estimated that a large percentage of school places in Maghull are taken by pupils from outside the area. If the current plan goes ahead the likelihood is that these children will be crowded out, if this happens it will mean that fewer children will be travelling to school by public transport and many more will be dropped off by car as part of the school run, exacerbating the very serious congestion that happens at the moment. The roads to majority of schools are almost gridlocked now, the situation will inevitably worsen and there is no clear evidence in the plan how this serious issue will be dealt with.

Medical services

Inadequate detail on how the medical needs of the increased population will be met. The existing medical services are stretched, it is difficult to get a doctor's appointment and the current dental provision will be woefully inadequate if the plan goes ahead as currently proposed.

Railway Bridges

The new estate is bordered by what are essentially two country lanes and the only way in to what the survey refers to as 'Greater Maghull' is via two small railway bridges. These bridges are narrow and were never build to deal with the current levels of traffic, an increase in traffic on the scale predicted will exacerbate the problem many fold, at busy times potentially leading to traffic backing up down the length of Poverty Lane over the railway bridge to the intersection with Foxhouse Lane and potentially beyond the cross roads into Eastway. Again it is difficult to see how these problems can be mitigated. Building an additional entrance to the M58 will not do anything to alleviate the traffic going into 'Greater Maghull'.

Retail

Whereas it was recognised that the current shopping centre is not adequate and in need of modernisation, if the proposals go ahead as planned it will dramatically increase traffic flows between Deyes Lane and Central Square, causing an increase in traffic congestion, including an

increase in pollution levels through standing traffic. The parking in Central Square and its environs would also be inadequate putting additional strain on the surrounding roads such as the Leighton and Towers Avenue area, where recent changes in the car parking regime resulted in large scale disruption for local residents.

Flooding and drains

Residents commented that the S129 site floods and the methodology for building on Green belt (paragraph 5.10) cites that many of the sites will also need additional survey work and assessments (e.g. site specific flood risk assessments and ecological assessments) before any planning application is submitted to develop the site, residents are concerned that it will be a foregone conclusion if the site is given the green light for development.

Large areas of this site are in Flood Zones 2 and 3 or at risk of other types of flooding. The drains in Maghull are in a poor state of repair and United Utilities admit that there is a major problem with Hydraulic failure in Maghull, causing backups which result in raw sewage leaking out of the drains. If an additional 2,000 homes are somehow connected to the existing system there is a real danger that this unacceptable situation will get much worse. Although Sefton has a flood defence plan it seems to have no power over United Utilities whose lack of remedial action could create very serious problems in the event of any future flood where various water courses may coalesce which may then have an impact on any flood defence or control mechanisms installed on S129, which Sefton Council may ultimately be held legally responsible for.

Greenbelt

Out of 32% of those who were totally opposed to the plan cited loss of Green belt as the key issue, approximately 10% of those in favour with reservations cited loss of Green belt as a key concern.

Within the Methodology for selecting green belt sites there appears to be quite serious inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the application of the methodology. For example S125 has been ruled out because of the high cost of infrastructure (glass houses on site) when there is a large area of derelict glasshouses on S129. The analysis goes on to claim that the owners (smallholdings) have no intention of selling the land for development, this is not true, as several of the landowners when surveyed clearly were very keen to sell their land for development. S111 appears to have been ruled out because of poor access over the Leeds/Liverpool canal, *'Traffic and Access - Amber Access across Leeds Liverpool Canal is constrained. It is not possible to develop S110, S111 and S112 without overloading highway network'* this is clearly not the case, as there is a large road bridge connecting this area to the Central Square, further the survey results suggest that overloading of the road network would be far worse if S129 is developed. On the face of it these issues question the robustness and accuracy of the consequences study.

The survey results seem to suggest a belief that S129 has been chosen because it is one of the most profitable sites in Sefton for mixed use, generating enough funding to underwrite some mitigation, however, the residents seem to feel that there may be viable alternatives to S129, that are developable, and will have a lesser impact on the town, albeit that alternatives may take a little more imagination and be less attractive to developers and landowners.

The survey poses questions such as why was this (S129) site ruled in when Paragraph 112 of the Framework states where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality. On the face of it there is poorer quality scrub land locally available, such as the site behind Oriel Drive in Aintree which could be developed and would spread the burden of development more equitably. Other less damaging sites such as this scrub land by the ASDA Supermarket could be made accessible. This site is also on Floodplain 1 whereas S129 is on floodplain 2 and 3.

PROPORTIONALITY and POPULATION CHANGES

The plan proposes that Maghull contribute over twice the amount of its own housing need to the local plan this fact indicates that the proposals for S129 fail 4.6 of 'The updated Housing Requirement Study' which suggests that the future housing requirement should be split on a proportionate basis.

The survey indicates that residents believe that alternatives do exist and these should be explored. Proportionality was cited as an important aspect of Sefton's Local Plan, in this respect the Plan fails in one of its own key objectives.

Residents believe that any reduction in population estimates should result in sites on the scale of S129 being taken out of the Plan.

Environment

The criteria for allowing development indicates that sites where 'The land comprising the habitat or feeding areas of 'protected species should be avoided'. The site is used frequently used by pink footed geese as and other protected species. The residents believe that much more research needs to be conducted here before S129 is included as a development site, the fear is that we will lose a valuable habitat and that criteria 5.10 e.g., that Many of the sites will also need additional survey work and assessments (e.g. site specific flood risk assessments and ecological assessments) before any planning application is submitted to develop the site will not be rigorously applied. Residents believe that such additional survey work should be conducted and reported on in detail before this site is even considered.

Loss of Sense of Place

Residents feel that they will lose their sense of place if a development on this scale goes ahead, Some commented that they feel as if they are being unfairly treated when smaller communities seem to enjoy protection against huge developments such as this e.g. taking a huge tract of land that will massively increase the size of the town in terms of land mass and population size.

Sefton's Plan includes a comment about protecting the sense of place, in this respect the Plan has failed another of its aspirations through these proposals.

Brownfield first

Residents commented that the brownfield first policy should be rigorously applied to protect the Green Belt. This policy should now be applied to recent changes in planning law where industrial and commercial land can now be used for housing. This change in planning law means that there is now a potential for 'windfall' sites on commercial and industrial land to be factored into the Local Plan, alleviating the pressure on Green Belt for house building.

The survey indicates that the need for industrial and commercial land may be currently overstated as there is plenty of industrial and commercial land available at the moment and estimates suggest that between 20% and 30% of land currently used for retail will become available as consumer habits change, footfall declines and use of the internet increases.

Affordable Homes

Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of guarantee related to affordable homes, fears that developers will claim that they cannot afford to provide them as they have underwritten the costs of infrastructure (which will be inadequate anyway), such as roads, the new station and the motorway entrance. There has already been one such case in the Parkbourne area where no affordable homes were provided because the developer reported that they couldn't afford it.

Transport, including railway

The survey reported the transport links in the east of Maghull are poor and any improvement would be welcome, but most seemed to indicate that it should not be at the cost of such a huge development.

Meeting Sefton's Housing needs

Concerns were expressed that the current Local Plan could be dysfunctional because of a 'crowding out' effect created by non Sefton residents taking preference over current residents. There is a body of evidence to back up this concern as there is already a significant demand for housing in Maghull from outside of the area. If over 2,000 new homes are built in Maghull a proportion of these will go to people outside of Sefton, eg if the income figure is in the region of 20% then 400 homes will be lost to Sefton residents, we will have given up valuable grade 1 and 2 agricultural land and Sefton's housing needs remain unmet and we have contributed to other areas needs by building on green belt. It was felt that far more research is needed to quantify the scale of the crowding out effect.

Part 5: Summary Conclusions

- **A majority of those surveyed were opposed to the plan in Maghull (53%).**
- **6% were unreservedly in favour of the plan.**
- **15% were neutral but still identified key requirements expected.**
- **Those who were in favour with reservations (25 %), had a variety of essential requirements for success of the project.**
- **These included limiting the build to existing green space sites such as the hospital and prison area.**
- **Building on green belt (the majority of the land in Maghull), was unacceptable.**
- **The plan is grossly disproportionate and too big for Maghull. It will affect its sense of place.**
- **There are serious issues with drainage, flooding and sewage removal, an issue that is already a serious problem.**
- **Amenities and infrastructure, such as schools, medical facilities, road access, transport (bus services and train access) must be expanded prior to development.**
- **Some expressed a need for affordable housing and social housing being included.**
- **Green spaces must be provided in the proposed building area.**
- **Further stretching of police resources.**
- **Increased suburban sprawl.**
- **Sufficient empty homes in Maghull at present.**
- **Houses in Maghull may not go to Sefton residents and therefore may not fulfil the needs of local people.**
- **Small bridges will cause traffic problems.**

Overall Conclusion of the Survey

- **In the light of the evidence shown in this representative survey, the Local Plan as proposed for Maghull, is considered by the majority of Maghull residents to be inappropriate without considerable amendment.**

Draft Recommendations

- **Based on the evidence from the survey, Maghull Town Council's recommendation is that Sefton MBC Planning Officers reconsider the plan for Maghull to address the concerns of our Residents.**
 - **We recognise that Sefton MBC must have a local plan. The Survey has indicated that residents believe the plan for Maghull is too big and disproportionate. However, we would welcome the opportunity to work with Sefton MBC to address this, and other concerns of Residents.**
-