

LOCAL PLAN: MAGHULL TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE TO ADDITIONAL SITES AND GENERAL CONCERNS REGARDING RISKS TO MAGHULL

1 BACKGROUND

Maghull Town Council is aware of the sites suggested within Sefton's Local Plan (Preferred Option) which already places 25% of the housing need within Sefton within the Town Council's borders. If the Local Plan is adopted without change to the Preferred Option this will disproportionately increase the size of Maghull by approximately one third. Maghull is already one of the largest owner occupier towns in England and MTC is one of the largest Town Councils in England.

In July 2013 Maghull Town Council conducted the largest survey of households ever undertaken regarding residents' views on the proposed Local Plan. Over 75% of residents expressed serious concerns over how inadequate infrastructure could negatively affect the quality/sense of place across the town, particular concerns were expressed over the drainage system (which is already failing), increased congestion across the internal arterial roads which were never built to deal with current levels of traffic, health services provision etc.

The survey was large enough to extrapolate results from the sample to the whole population so we can say with confidence that these percentages will reflect the feelings of the Maghull residents. Further concerns were expressed about the loss of valuable agricultural land and Green Belt/space and the disproportionate effect the proposals will have on Maghull. Concern was also expressed regarding whether the Council's Brown Field first approach was being rigorously applied (**Strategic Policy SS1; 1**).

To date Maghull Town Council have not received a response giving a satisfactory assurance that these concerns will be addressed as part of the Local Plan process. The proposed sites within the Preferred Option are already causing concern to the Town Council relating to infrastructure and mitigation of the proposed housing and business increases as well as length of time that residents may be forced to suffer large scale building disruption.

Maghull Town Council requests that Sefton Council provide a detailed response on how Maghull residents' concerns including how concrete assurances will be given that the necessary infrastructure will be provided (in keeping with **Objective 9 of Sefton's Local Plan**) at the right time and in the right place.

2 RESPONSE

The Town Council opposes the inclusion of the Additional Sites surrounding the borders of Maghull which include the Ashworth Hospital East Site, the land to the west of the Roundmeade Estate, the site at Aughton Chase and the site on Sefton Lane and any other sites that may have an adverse /negative impact on the issues of concern expressed by Maghull residents. The only exception would be where the inclusion of an alternative site would reduce the disproportionate effect of development on Maghull or alleviate potential issues related to 'infrastructure risk'

3 RATIONALE

1. The amount of housing already proposed for the area is disproportionate to the current size of Maghull. Any further suggestion of more housing would lead to the town increasing in size at an unsustainable level. Additional sites would contradict **objective 3** of the Local Plan as they would not protect and enhance the quality of place. **Strategic policy SS1: Spatial Strategy for Sefton 8.14** key principles state '*New development should be broadly in proportion to the size of the community to which it relates*'. This key principle has not been adhered to in the case of Maghull, any further development would worsen this failure. The disproportionate allocation for Maghull also indicates that **objective 4 of Strategic Policy SR1; Sustainable Growth and Regeneration** '*Local housing needs will be met, as far as possible, in the local area which they arise*' is likewise brought into question.

2. The infrastructure is already struggling to manage at its current level. The proposed housing levels within the Preferred Option are giving residents and the Town Council considerable concern as to how that increase may be managed given the current problems with flooding, hydrologic failure within the drainage system etc. Additional housing will push the infrastructure to breaking point. At the moment we have no concrete assurances/guarantee of how Sefton will meet **objective 9 of the LP** '*To make sure that new developments include the essential infrastructure, services and facilities that they require*'. There are concerns related to risks associated with infrastructure providers and whether they will be able to deliver the necessary infrastructure in a timely manner at the right place. This fact brings into question whether **Strategic Policy SR7 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions** is adequate enough to provide the assurances and guarantees that would alleviate the concerns of residents as expressed in the MTC Survey.

The provision of an infrastructure delivery plan is welcome, however, without having access to such a plan makes it impossible a priori to judge whether this plan would address the concerns of residents. Appropriate policies may exist, but without the ability to provide assurances/guarantees that these things will be addressed residents will still be concerned.

Para 8.6 states '*Good infrastructure planning is a critical aspect of development. Working with partners including both public and private sector infrastructure providers, local people and developers is critical in ensuring that the right infrastructure is provided in the right location at the right time*'. It would facilitate this process if Maghull Town Council could have a copy of Sefton's analysis of the Town Council survey and what and how the Local Plan will respond to residents' concerns.

3. The roads are sufficiently congested as the moment. A lot more traffic may bring the town to a standstill. Although Maghull Town Council haven't had access to the latest analysis of traffic flows, research from the Ashworth development indicates that the number of additional journeys will be in the region of 500 per day if we apply this to the larger site and the business park it will increase exponentially (1,000s of additional journeys per day). The assumption that an additional spur on the M58 will reduce congestion is only partially true, this will do nothing to reduce the increased traffic flows into Maghull and parents undertaking the school run. Schools are already heavily congested, and pressure points such as the Hall Lane Bridge with parents en route to St George's (the only Catholic Primary School in Maghull) will inevitably lead to increased congestion as cars vie with each other to cross a single lane wooden canal bridge.

These issues question the achievement of the **Key factors** which support the recommendation for the adoption of option 2 '*it will identify the most sustainable green belt developments having regard to local constraints such as highway capacity, flood risk and ecological designations*'

The large site is on a flood plain that in the past wouldn't have been developed, how concrete are the guarantees over the effectiveness of SUDs and if Sefton Council adopt the management of SUDS what guarantees will the residents have that they will be maintained?

There are also emerging concerns regarding the length of time the currently proposed sites would take to complete, an estimate for the Ashworth Site is 10 years and the larger site up to 18 years. Unless cast iron guarantees can be provided by infrastructure providers and careful master planning of the site to manage the potential noise, traffic flows visual and aesthetic issues, the result will be to subject residents to unacceptable disruption over a 20 year period.

The highways in Maghull are not suitable for a large increase in traffic, one of the roads alongside the proposed development is accessed by a small railway bridge, this is unsuitable for heavy traffic, there are existing problems with farm vehicles being unable to cross, it becomes a single track roadway for wide vehicles.

4. Investment is needed within the town centre to revitalise a needed shopping centre not more houses.

5. No guarantee can be given by United Utilities that they will be able to improve the sewerage and drainage system in time for the development currently proposed. Any additional housing will merely exacerbate the problem.

6. The Green Belt is already been eroded considerably by the proposed sites within the Preferred Option. Any more development is not needed in this area and will blur the boundaries between distinct settlements even more. The average loss of Green Belt is in the region of 3.5%, Sudell Ward will lose over 90% of its Green Belt and any further loss in the immediate area would not be in keeping with the objectives in the Local Plan.

7. The environmental impact will be considerable and will change the feel and impact of the Town for future generations.

The Town Council urges Sefton to exclude the additional sites from their deliberations regarding the Preferred Option for the reasons given above.