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Planning Development

Kirklees Local Plan EIP Hearing Statement

Matter 30 – Huddersfield Sub-Area (rejected) housing allocations Site ref: H510 – land north of Fenay Lane, Almondbury

The full details of our client's case for arguing the Local Plan is unsound in respect of being unjustified in its strategy of allocating other areas of Green Belt land ahead of H510, are contained in our submission to the Council at the Publication Draft Stage which comprised a representation pro-forma submitted through the Council's consultation portal, together with our earlier representation to the previous version of the Draft Local Plan published in November 2015. This dealt with more site specific issues and compared H510 and H1679 in terms of their relative planning merits.

As the Inspector will already have a copy of these documents, I do not intend to fully recite these submission at the hearings. At the time of writing, the MIQ's for rejected housing sites have not been published and therefore, guided by the Inspector, I would like if possible to discuss this case on the basis of the following headings:

- In my opinion, the awkward, stepped and weak Green Belt boundary that will result of the proposed allocation of H1679.
- If the release of H1679 is accepted to form an appropriate strategy in terms of Green Belt release, I argue that this cannot occur without consideration of the remaining land left in the Green Belt north of Fenay lane, simply because the new Green Belt boundary would not be in accordance with NPPF paragraph 85.
- Issues surrounding the availability and delivery of all land north of Fenay Lane, should the whole of Fenay Lane form the new Green Belt boundary – i.e. why the prospect of isolated pockets of land not put forward for allocation should not outweigh the need to ensure a strong and defensible new Green Belt boundary in accordance with NPPF paragraph 85.
- I argue that the most appropriate strategy would be to utilise the clear and permanent boundaries of Fenay Lane and Penistone Road, as they provide an easily recognisable and defensible squaring-off of the south-eastern side of the Almondbury settlement area. The Council acknowledge these features would provide "strong defensible features beyond the current green belt boundary which would serve to prevent sprawl" in connection with the decision to allocate H1679 (ref: Council's 'Accepted Site Options Technical Appraisals' document - page 72).

- I am of the view that through my submissions to the Council, all sites (including the Council's land – H1679) have equal merit for development allocation in relation to relevant planning matters.

Proposed modifications:

- 1) Remove all remaining land north of Fenay Lane from the Green Belt.
- 2) Allocate rejected site H510 for housing development, (and possibly H1681 & H2596 – although we are not appointed to represent those landowners) and safeguard (or mark with no notation) other land north of Fenay Lane not put forward for allocation at the present time.

Nicholas Willock MRTPI MRICS

3rd February 2018