



Sefton Local Plan Examination December 2015

Mactaggart & Mickel Homes Ltd (ref : 637)

PMM – Policy MN1

ADDENDUM WRITTEN STATEMENT

MACTAGGART & MICKEL

Matter 3 – HOUSING NEED & PROVISION

MAJOR MODIFICATION : POLICY MN1

Sefton Council issued the wording for PMM 103 on the 4th December 2015 with regard to matter of an early review of the Local Plan.

This was worded as follows;

“Add a new part 5 to the policy to set out the circumstances that will require an immediate review of the Sefton Local Plan:

5. Sefton will work jointly with the other Liverpool City Region local planning authorities, including West Lancashire Borough Council, and the Liverpool City Region LEP to establish, objectively, the level of long term growth appropriate in Sefton through the joint commissioning of a further housing and employment assessments. In the event that further housing or employment provision is needed in Sefton, an immediate review or partial review of the Sefton Local Plan will be brought forward to address these matters.”

This major modification was commented on in the written statement by Mactaggart & Mickel, lodged on the agreed deadline of 18th December 2015.

It has become evident that on or around this deadline date Sefton Council issued further modifications to Policy MN1. These modifications related to the Council’s commitment to an early review of the Sefton Local Plan.

Mactaggart & Mickel wish to comment on this further modification, at the ‘Mopping Up’ session of the Local Plan Examination to be held on Friday 15th January.

As there was no opportunity to comment on the Council’s further modification, we thought it may be helpful to provide the Inspector with a short written statement, to highlight the points we wish to raise on this important matter.

The latest Major Modification (Chapter 5) concerning Policy MN1 and a commitment to an early review of the Sefton Local Plan resulted in an amended version of MN1 para 5, to reads as follows (further amendment shown bold);

“5. Sefton will work jointly with the other Liverpool City Region local planning authorities, including West Lancashire Borough Council, and the Liverpool City Region LEP to establish, objectively, the level of long term growth appropriate in Sefton through the joint commissioning of a further housing and employment assessments. In the event that further housing or employment provision is needed in Sefton, an immediate review or partial review of the Sefton Local Plan will be brought forward to address these matters.

The review will commence within 6 months of the adoption of the Sefton Local Plan and the completion of proposed Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA), whichever is later, and will be completed within 3 years from the date of the Local Plan adoption.”

Mactaggart & Mickel have a number of observations on this ‘Major Modification’. This breaks down into three component parts. The first and third relate to timescales and second concerns the SHELMA.

In terms of the timescales, Mactaggart & Mickel welcome the commitment to review the Local Plan within six months of the adoption of the Plan. We consider this to be an appropriate timescale to reflect the commitment given to the Examination for an “immediate review.” The third part of the modification indicates that the review should be completed within three years from the date of adoption of the Sefton Local Plan. The purpose of the review is to ensure that Sefton’s Local Plan can meet its OAN in the plan period. Policy MN8 (as modified) prevents planning permission for development of safeguarded land to be brought forward until after the review of the Local Plan is completed. If the review is not completed until 3 years after adoption, then this would leave limited time to ensure delivery of housing within the plan period.

To ensure the Local Plan is robust and realistic Mactaggart & Mickel submit that this timescale should be more ambitious, and should be brought down to ‘two years’. This latter timescale would accord with Sefton Council’s own desire to address urgently the Plan’s deficiency in meeting the OAN housing requirement.

Mactaggart & Mickel oppose the second part of a commitment to an early review being made wholly contingent on the completion of the SHELMA. This adds in an additional level of conditionality to the immediate review required, and is contrary to the basis upon which it was agreed the Examination could proceed. Further, the calculation of the current OAN is based on the current SHELMA and it is this OAN that the Plan fails to meet. A future review of the SHELMA will be undertaken as part of the joint Authority Sub Regional Review and will influence the calculation of the OAN at that time. It is not appropriate for the Council to seek to make the review of this Local Plan (which they accept is needed) contingent on a process separate from, and subsequent to, this Local Plan.

The Council fully recognise that they cannot meet their OAN .. The basis on which it was agreed that the Examination should proceed was recorded in the pre-Examination minute note of 24th September 2015;

“7. When submitting the SLP for examination, the Council indicated that an early review is likely to be necessary.

8. The Council asks that the plan be adopted in its current form, with the commitment to an early review.

10. If the Inspector finds that the housing delivery does not meet the substantially increased ‘OAN’ based on the 2012 household projections, the fact that the increase in housing need arose very late in plan preparation, coupled with the commitment to an early review, would be sufficient for the SLP not to be found unsound.

12. The Inspector stated that, having carefully considered the case made by the Council for an early review and in the absence of any overriding objection, the examination will proceed on the above basis.”

On this basis Mactaggart & Mickel consider that the immediate review required, which is not in dispute, should not be made contingent on any further process, such as the conclusion of a review of the SHELMA.

The production and ultimate timescale for the completion of the SHELMA is not within Sefton Council’s sole control. Mactaggart & Mickel are of the view that this could be delayed for reasons outwith Sefton Council’s remit. If that were to happen it would in turn prevent the early and immediate review of the Sefton Local Plan.

The Council have committed to an “immediate review” of the Local Plan (see amended paragraph 4.42 of the draft Local Plan). It was on the basis of this commitment that Mactaggart & Mickel, in common with the other parties to the Examination, agreed that the draft Plan should be allowed to proceed. The Council’s most recent modification to Policy MN1 undermines this commitment, by seeking to make the necessary review contingent on matters outside the immediate development plan process and, equally, outside the Council’s control.

It is Mactaggart & Mickel’s position that for the Inspector to have sufficient confidence that the review will be undertaken, so as to allow the Plan to proceed, reference to the SHELMA in Policy MN1 should be removed.

Therefore, Mactaggart & Mickel would request that this major modification is either further modified by Sefton Council or that the Inspector recommends the following wording, with regard to an immediate review of the Sefton Local Plan;

“An immediate review of the level of housing provision within the Sefton Local Plan will commence within 6 months of the adoption of the Sefton Local Plan to fully meet its OAN and will be completed within 2 years from the date of the Local Plan adoption.”

In the alternative, and as a further course of action available to the Inspector as an ‘interim measure’ to ensure the land supply is both robust and provides sufficient, flexibility during in the period when the Plan review is being undertaken, would be to allocate the safeguarded sites for residential development. Essentially enabling these sites to be brought forward for immediate development.

The Mactaggart & Mickel landholding at Lambshear Lane, Lydiate (Policy MN8.1) is a deliverable site that can assist in providing flexibility for the housing land supply going forward over the plan period.