
Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	3 rd July 2015
Subject:	Sefton Local Plan: Submission Draft	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Report of:	Director of Built Environment		
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	Yes
Exempt/Confidential	No		

Purpose/Summary

To present to Members an update of key issues arising from the publication of the Local Plan and changes which have taken place since then, prior to the Plan being submitted for examination.

Recommendation(s)

That **Cabinet** note the key issues arising from the publication of the Draft Plan and change to circumstances since then and recommend the Council authorise the draft Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

That **Council** note the key issues arising from the publication of the Draft Plan and change to circumstances since then and authorise the draft Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

How does the decision contribute to the Council’s Corporate Objectives?

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
3	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
4	Health and Well-Being		✓	
5	Children and Young People		✓	
6	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	✓		

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To brief Members on the issues arising from the publication of the draft Local Plan and the change of circumstances since the Plan was published.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Not to brief Members, and to submit Plan direct to Secretary of State. However, it is considered important to alert Members to the change of circumstances as set out in section 6 of this report.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

None arising from this report.

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial
Legal
Human Resources
Equality
1. No Equality Implication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains <input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

None

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

Publication of the draft Local Plan: 30 January – 27 March 2015

The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT has been consulted and notes the progress report indicating comments from interested parties. At this stage of progressing the Local Plan the report does not indicate any direct financial implications for the Council. (FD 3622/15)

Head of Corporate Legal Services have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report. (LD 2914/15)

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Council meeting.

Contact Officer:

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Background Papers:

None.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Draft Sefton Local Plan was published for an eight week period between 30th January and 27th March 2015. In response to this stage of the Plan, we received almost 1,300 'representations' (the name to given to comments either objecting to the Plan or in support), and three petitions containing approximately 7,900 signatures.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to identify key issues arising during the publication period and any relevant changes to circumstances since the Plan was published.
- 1.3 The next stage is to submit the Local Plan for examination by an independent Inspector.

2. Key points raised in representations

- 2.1 This section provides a brief overview of some key representations received. It is not meant to be comprehensive. A copy of all representations will be available on the Sefton web-site in early July and these will be forwarded to the Inspector when the Plan is submitted at the end of July.

2.2 Overview of representations from public bodies and other key agencies.

The Local Enterprise Partnership and Natural England broadly supported the Plan with minor qualifications.

Of those consultees who submitted representations objecting to the Plan, the following is a summary of the most significant issues raised:

- Environment Agency: expressed concern that flood risk assessments had not been undertaken for a few sites. These assessments are currently being carried out.
- Sport England: objected to former school sites being identified for development as Sefton's playing pitch study has not been completed and so it is not possible to know that such sites are surplus. This study is well underway and its conclusions will be taken into account as the Plan goes to examination
- English Heritage (now Historic England): recommended changes to a number of policy areas to ensure that the historic value of the Borough is given greater emphasis.
- United Utilities: noted the need for more detailed information on some of the larger sites identified for development before they can fully comment on the impact on their infrastructure, but stressed the need for development to reduce surface water run-off to reduce the risk of flooding.

2.3 Adjoining local authorities:

- Liverpool Council – expressed broad support for the Plan's housing requirement and employment land figures
- Knowsley Council – supported the strategy of the site and the approach to selecting the sites. Knowsley were part of a joint study with Sefton to selecting sites in the Green Belt. They noted that the Inspector at the recent examination

into their Local Plan supported this approach to selecting sites in the Green Belt.

- Wirral Council – supported Sefton Council’s intention to provide for their own identified local needs for housing and employment within their Borough boundary, and requested clarification on detailed points in a number of policies
- West Lancashire Council - expressed concern about the impact the sites proposed for development north of Maghull would have on the strategic Green Belt gap between Maghull & Aughton.

2.4 Parish Councils:

- Formby Parish: objected to loss of Green Belt, the two proposed business parks, excessive development, impact on infrastructure e.g. health facilities, schools & drainage
- Hightown Parish : concerned about proposed development at Elmcroft Lane and also at Sandy Lane
- Ince Blundell Parish: concerned at the potential loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, considered the housing requirement to be excessive, objected to loss of former school sites (Professional Development Centre & Holy Trinity, both in Formby), and concerned over the proposed gypsy and traveller transit site next within Ince Blundell parish
- Lydiate Parish: objected to loss of high quality agricultural land and excessive development in its area
- Maghull Town Council: expressed concerns about the impact of the proposals on infrastructure (in particular concerns over impact on roads, schools and health facilities), loss of Green Belt and affordability.
- Melling Parish: objected to the two sites proposed in Melling village, preferring the safeguarded site at Ashworth Hospital; too much housing proposed, loss of best and most versatile land, impact on local infrastructure including drainage, roads, health services & schools
- Thornton Parish: concerned about risk of flooding on some sites, and specifically to proposed development on sites at Southport Rd, Thornton

2.5 Landowners and developers:

The following is a summary of some of the key issues identified by landowners and developers:-

- housing requirement should be updated to take account of the most recent household projections
- need for greater ‘buffer’ in its housing requirement as Sefton has consistently developed fewer houses than its target figure
- employment land requirement should be more flexible
- general support for sites from those who own or wish to develop them
- comments stating that some sites are not suitable or may not be able to developed to the capacity stated in the Plan - this approach has often been used to promote different sites and say they are preferable to those currently identified
- risks of certain sites not being able to be developed, and therefore need to consider further sites, specifically those promoted by the landowner/ developer making the representation
- lack of safeguarded land being provided in order to justify the release of further land in the Green Belt – more land needs to be provided for more homes

- flexibility to allow safeguarded land to be available earlier if allocated sites not able to be developed within the anticipated timescale
- some safeguarded land should be part of the main housing supply.

3. Views from individuals and local communities:

3.1 General comments

The main focus of comments from individuals related to the amount and location of development proposed by the Local Plan, specifically for residential development. General comments about the level of development proposed, and the amount of land identified for development within the Green Belt, included:

- refusal to accept housing numbers
- there should be a 'brownfield first' policy
- there is no shortage of housing; many houses vacant & for sale - why build more?
- a view that the statistics used to justify the Plan are flawed.

3.2 Overall comments on sites proposed for development included objections to the loss of Green Belt land, loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, disruption to residents during building work, loss of view, impact on quality of life, loss of recreation space, impact on house price, not suitable location for affordable homes, strain put on local services such as schools, GPs, public transport, unequal distribution of sites across Sefton, homes not needed at the scale proposed and the preference to use brownfield sites over greenfield.

3.3 There were a small number of supporting representations including those who would wish to see more homes, including affordable homes, employment areas and investment in local facilities and infrastructure. There was also support from those promoting sites and general support for brownfield sites (e.g. the former Philips Factory site, Churchtown; 'Prison site', Maghull).

3.4 The section below picks out some of the key specific comments on a number of the housing and employment allocations. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, either in terms of the comments or the sites. It is intended to provide a broad overview of the most common issues raised during the consultation, primarily by residents.

Site specific comments

3.5 All these sites relate to sites identified for housing unless otherwise stated. The 'MN2' reference for each site refers to Policy MN2 in the draft Plan.

MN2.2 Bankfield Lane, Churchtown

- Impact on local wildlife, sewers can't cope, high flood risk and poor drainage, impact of traffic on Churchtown, damage caused by vibrations (traffic and piling)

MN2.4 Land South of Moss Lane, Churchtown

- Impact on ecology, flood risk, poor site access (Moss Lane is not wide enough), poor ground conditions, local traffic network unable to cope, poor access to local services, impact on Southport Old Links Golf Course, loss of gap to neighbouring settlements, impact on Meols Conservation Area, damage caused by vibrations (traffic and piling)

MN2.7 Lynton Road, Birkdale

- Poor access and danger on local roads due to more traffic, impact on local wildlife, new development unlikely to be in keeping with existing homes, localised flooding problems, poor location directly adjacent to rail line

MN2.8 Former Ainsdale High School

- Preference for the site to be used for a community wildlife garden, traffic and access problems and impact on level crossing, loss of playing fields, need to retain school for possible future re-use

MN2.11 Land South of Moor Lane, Ainsdale

- Traffic issues (particularly the junction with Liverpool Road), impact of nature (e.g. loss of ponds on site), new development would 'jump' a good Green Belt boundary and cause urban sprawl

MN2.12 Land North of Brackenway, Formby

- Flood risk, impact on local nature, loss of viable equestrian business, traffic problems ('rat running') and poor access, proximity to airfield

MN2.16 Land at Liverpool Road, Formby

- Flooding issues, concern that flood risk maps were changed, impact on junction with Bypass, importance of this site to the setting of Formby

MN2.19 Land at Andrews Close, Formby

- Impact traffic would have at railway crossing, poor access to site, flood risk and poor drainage

MN2.48 and MN2.49 Land East of Formby (Employment Sites)

- Some support for new football facilities south of Altcar Lane
- Flood risks on site, impact on nature, threat of retailers on sites to Formby centre, danger of having access direct onto Bypass, sites not accessible to Formby residents who would have to cross busy road

MN2.20 and MN2.21 Hightown Sites

- Elmcroft Lane is not suitable for increased traffic, potential loss of wooded area, no school in Hightown, scale of development would alter the nature of the village, drainage problem, impact on nature

MN2.23-26 Thornton Sites

- Would negate any benefits the new road will bring, impact on wildlife, flood issues, impact on Crematorium

MN2.27 Turnbridge Road, Maghull

- Access to Turnbridge Road is restricted, roads over canal not suitable for more traffic, impact on listed buildings nearby, continued loss of Lydiate's character, flooding problems (the canal has burst its banks in the past)

MN2.28 and MN8.1 Land North of Kenyons Lane/ Lamshear Lane, Lydiate

- Impact on local heritage and Lydiate village, loss of jobs at the dairy, loss of gap with villages in West Lancashire

MN2.29 and 2.46 Land to the East of Maghull (includes Employment Site)

- Scale of development too large, disproportionate; site can only be accessed by narrow country lanes, not a suitable location for a business park, site contains a brook which sometimes floods, concern that policy does not require affordable homes on this site

MN2.30 and 2.31 Melling Sites

- History of sewerage capacity in this area, additional traffic in the village would be unsafe, village hasn't the facilities to cope, impact on village heritage/character

3.6 Site proposed by Peel Holdings, east of Switch Island

Whilst the draft Local Plan did not identify the site proposed by Peel Holdings to the east of Switch Island for a port-related business park, many residents expressed their concern about the impact the potential development of this site would have. The primary concerns included the loss of agricultural land, closing the gaps between Aintree, Melling, Maghull and Kirkby, the impact on the existing settlements of the increase in traffic, impact on the landscape and the risk from flooding.

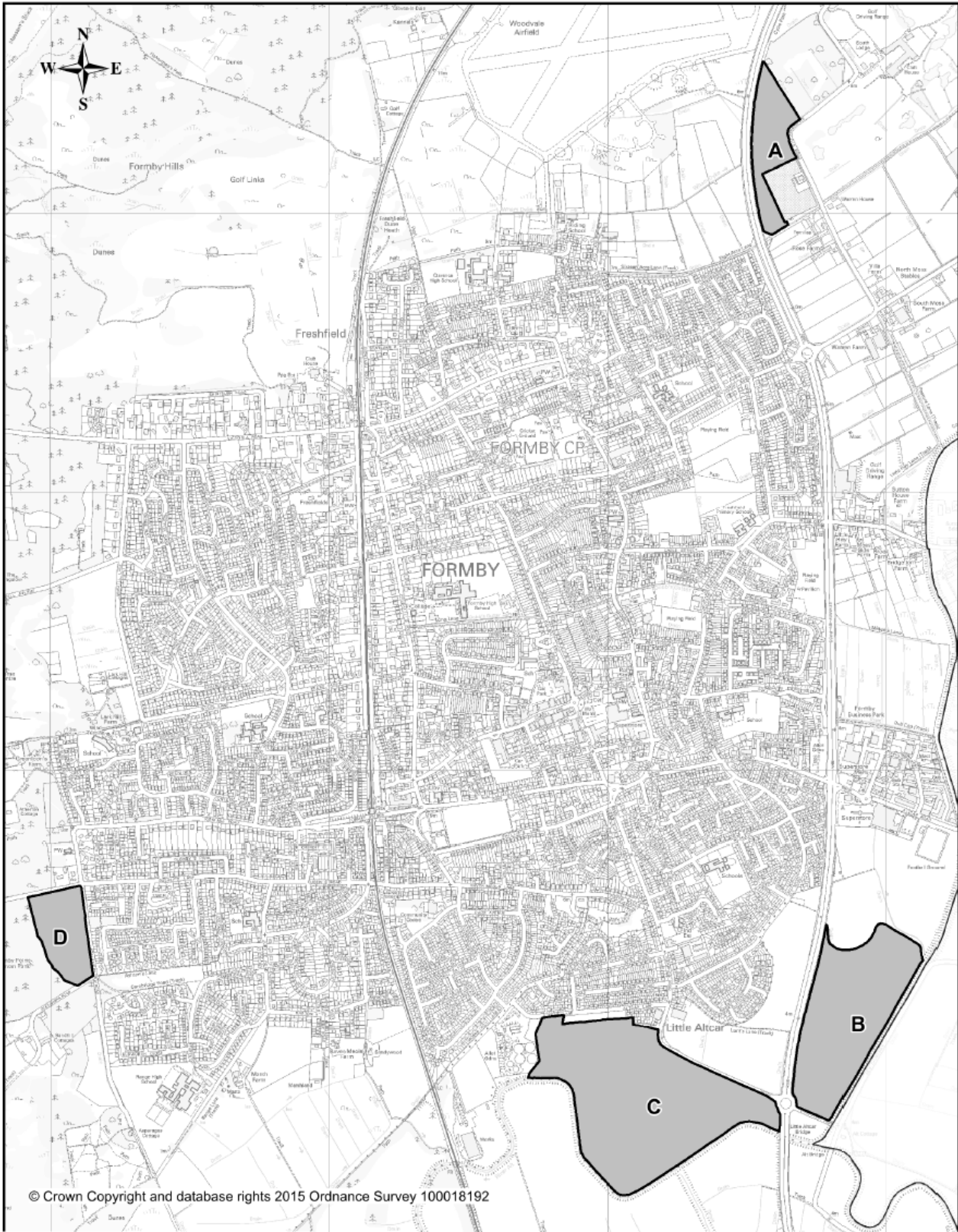
Many residents also wrote to express their support that the Council did not include this site in the Local Plan.

3.7 Sites proposed which are not included in the draft Plan

This is a list of alternative/new sites proposed by landowners/developers, together with the size of the site in hectares (ha). These are shown on plans of Formby and Sefton East Parishes (also including a site in Thornton) on the following two pages. All these sites are promoted for homes except sites B and L which are promoted for employment use.

- A. Land at Southport Old Road, north east of Formby* [5.73ha]
- B. Land east of Formby Bypass [south of MN2.49]* [17.80ha]
- C. Land south of Liverpool Road, Formby* [30.49ha]
- D. Land at Shorrocks Hill, Formby* [5.43ha]
- E. Land north of Kenyons Lane, east of Northway, Lydiate [36.10ha]
- F. Land to the West of Maghull [50.90ha]
- G. Damfield Lane, Maghull* [1.63ha]
- H. Land at Edge Lane, Thornton [4.28ha]
- I. Land at Chapel Lane, Netherton [0.79ha]
- J. Land at the Crescent, Maghull [5.99ha]
- K. Land at Melling Lane, Maghull [3.32ha]
- L. Lane to the East of Switch Island, adjacent to Brewery Lane, Melling [47.66ha]
- M. Oriel Drive, Aintree [19.26ha]
- N. Lane to West of Bull Bridge Lane, Aintree [4.31ha]
- O. Land to East of Bull Bridge Lane, Aintree [22.58ha]
- P. Land at Mill Farm, Aintree [4.74ha]
- Q. Land South of Wango Lane, Aintree [7.89ha]

**These sites have not been proposed before, either by the Council or developers*



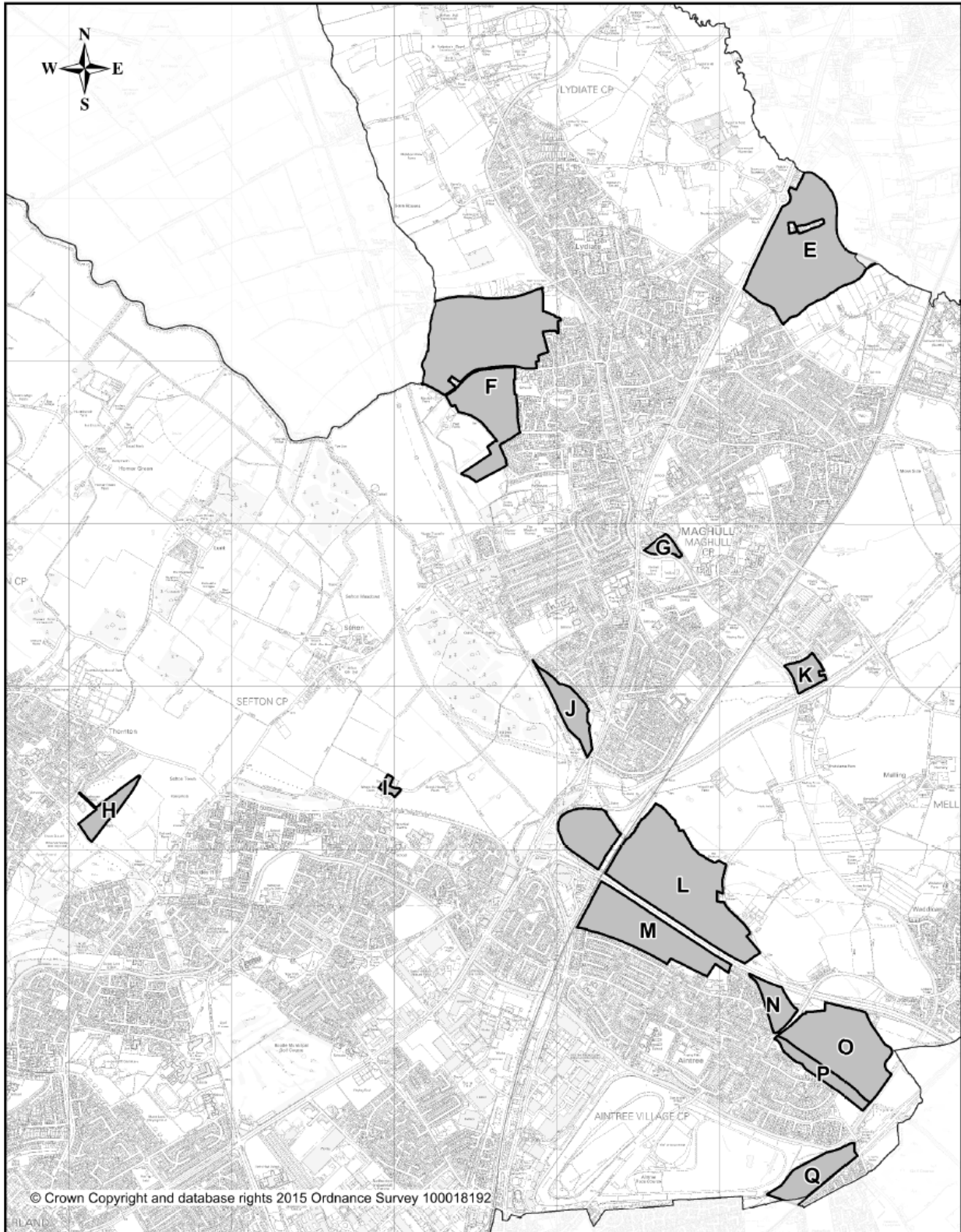
Sefton Council



**Department of the
Built Environment**
 Derek McKenzie
 Interim Head of Planning Services

Additional sites proposed by landowners/developers during Local Plan Publication Stage - Formby

Date: 1st June 2015

Scale: N.T.S.



<p>Sefton Council  Department of the Built Environment Derek McKenzie Interim Head of Planning Services</p>	<p>Additional sites proposed by landowners/developers during Local Plan Publication Stage - Sefton East and Thornton</p>
	<p>Date: 1st June 2015 Scale: N.T.S.</p>

4. Further studies planned / underway

- 4.1 To support the Local Plan as we approach examination and its implementation (which will in part be through Supplementary Planning Documents), a number of further studies are underway or due to be commissioned very soon. These are largely due to be completed by the autumn in time for the examination.

Update of Housing Requirement

Update of Sefton's housing requirement to take account of the recently published Household Projections by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Independent Review of Urban Housing Capacity

A review of possible additional sites in the urban area to assess if any sources of land/housing supply in the existing towns and villages have been overlooked

Assessment of Highways Network Capacity

An assessment of the implications of the proposals in the Local Plan on selected parts of Sefton's highway network to complement work previously commissioned and to identify locations where improvements may be needed.

Specific Transport Modelling in Southport and Formby

A study to assess the detailed impact of proposed development in Formby and Southport and to determine what improvements may be needed.

Employment Land and Premises Study Update

Update of the 2010 study which was refreshed in 2012.

Assessment to consider scope and level of Community Infrastructure Levy

Additional work to determine the potential for Community Infrastructure Levy and the level at which it might be set in Sefton

Retail Update work

Updated Health Checks for Sefton's town and district centres and a review of out-of-centre retail size thresholds proposed in the Local Plan.

Assessment of the demand for Custom Build Homes in Sefton

Assessing if there is any demand in Sefton for people who wish to build or commission their own homes, and how and where this need can be met.

5. Update on infrastructure

- 5.1 Many residents raised concerns that services and infrastructure would not be able to cope with an influx of additional residents. The Council will continue to liaise with infrastructure providers in order to ensure that services and infrastructure can be provided when they are needed.
- 5.2 A number of meetings are currently taking place with infrastructure providers to enable them to consider comments made during the recent publication of the draft Plan. In many cases infrastructure providers can only provide broad guidance and support at this stage in the absence of detailed plans, but are committed in principle to meeting the infrastructure required for development once the detailed needs are known.
- 5.3 The Planning Department will continue to work closely with such organisations throughout the plan period and to support planning applications as they are submitted. Planning for infrastructure is not a short term exercise that has to be completed and 'finalised' by time the Local Plan is submitted. A further update will be provided before the examination and will be reflected in a revised version of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will continue to be updated as the Local Plan is implemented.

6. Change in context: 2012-based household projections

- 6.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government updated their household projections in February 2015. Further work is being carried out to assess and the implications of these for our housing requirement figure are still being considered.
- 6.2 The preferred course of action is to submit the Local Plan as it stands and to deal with any issues arising from any amendment to the housing requirement figure through the examination.
- 6.3 If the Inspector is not satisfied that the Local Plan has fully met the housing requirement, (s)he may ask the Council to go back a stage in preparing the Plan and find more sites. This could cause a delay of around 18 months. Alternatively the Inspector may agree that this situation could be remedied through an early review of the Plan which it is already proposed to do for other reasons.
- 6.4 Further information will be sent out to Members in a supplementary report in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

7. Next steps

7.1 The Plan will be ready to be submitted soon. The Inspector expects the key issues arising from people's comments to be summarised and made available at the time the Plan is submitted.

7.2 The examination begins as soon as the Plan is submitted. The Inspector will carry out an initial assessment of the Plan. If (s)he wishes to query any aspect before the formal oral examination, (s)he will hold an exploratory meeting.

7.3 These are the key dates for the next stages:

- Late June/ early July: appoint Programme Officer to co-ordinate the examination
- Early July: representations made on draft Local Plan will be published on web-site
- End of July: submit Plan for examination
- Early September: possible exploratory meeting with Inspector
- Start of oral examination: late October/ November.