

**Save Macclesfield Greenbelt Residents Group should like to object** the inclusion of site **CS 41** Land between Chelford Road and Whirley Road in the revised Local Plan which involves rolling back the Greenbelt at this location. This forms part of Policy PG 3 to which we would also like to object. In addition, we are **objecting** to the low levels of housing allocated to Central Macclesfield **SL4**. Our **objections** also include the **growth figure increase to 0.7%** which makes the local plan unsound as it is undeliverable, unjustified with regard to the evidence and so has not been positively prepared.

**Save Macclesfield Greenbelt Residents Group request the Council to make the following modification to the Local Plan:**

1. Reduction in the growth figures to 0.4%.
2. That the Overall Development Strategy Policy PG 1 has an allocation of 100 ha of employment land, an OAN of 27,000 homes. That Greenfield sites are not released until the development of PDL land is undertaken.
3. The increase in housing from brownfield and windfall sites in Macclesfield at SL4 from 500 to 1,830 dwellings. The allocation of considerably more brownfield sites for housing to include the following sites – Gunco Lane, King’s School site Westminster Road, King’s School site Cumberland Street, Lyme Green Depot.
4. The deletion of strategic site CS41 Land South of Chelford Road.
5. The allocation of lower grade Greenbelt for strategic site allocations i.e. Danes Moss Tip in preference to Significant Greenbelt for Safeguarded Land.
6. CS 41 removed from the list of sites identified in paragraph 5 of Policy PG 3 Greenbelt and no change in the Greenbelt boundary along Chelford Road.
7. That the Spatial Distribution of Development in PG 6 reflects the infrastructure and Greenbelt constraints of settlements. Hence a reduction in allocation to Macclesfield of housing to 2,700 and employment land to 10 ha.
8. Policy IN 1 Infrastructure to include: ‘Development of sites will not occur until infrastructure development associated with them has been identified and secured’.
9. Policy SE2 Efficient Use of Land to include, ‘The Council will allocate development of sites in a sequential manner prioritising the redevelopment of PDL over Greenfield sites in the Local Plan.’
10. Policy SE 3 paragraph 4 to include: ‘Development Proposals which may have an adverse impact on a site with one or more of the following national, regional or local designations will not be permitted except where no appropriate alternatives can be found’.
11. Policy SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland to reflect the wording of the NPPF and include in its introduction: ‘Development proposals which may result in the loss of, or threat to, the continued health and life expectancy of trees, hedgerows or woodlands (including ancient trees or semi-natural woodland) that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or historic character of the surrounding area, will not normally be permitted except where there need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. Where these exceptional circumstances exist the adverse impacts of the unavoidable development proposals must provide and maintain significant net environmental gain by appropriate mitigation, compensation or offsetting’.

**The reasons for these changes are:**

1. The job growth figures should be 0.4%
2. This plan is not deliverable in the plan period
3. Unjustified removal of Greenbelt
4. Flood risk
5. Local Landscape designation
6. The unsuitable location of CS41 for development
7. Biodiversity
8. Highway congestion issues
9. The flawed evidence and site selection
10. The under allocation of brownfield sites in Macclesfield
11. The over allocation of Employment Land
12. The spatial distribution and HS2

## 1. Job Growth Figures

- a. Since the Inspector recommended a reassessment of the job growth forecast, with the resulting increase from 0.4% to 0.7%, the UK GDP growth forecast has been slashed. In March 2014 the UK GDP forecast was 2.8% (1), whilst in March 2016 the GDP forecast for this year is 2% (2). A decrease of 29% in GDP growth. The forecast has even been reduced in since December 2015, 'Under the OBR's new forecast, the estimate for economic growth in 2017 has been cut to 2.2% from 2.5%, and to 2.1% from 2.4% in 2018. Growth in both 2019 and 2020 is now estimated at 2.1% compared with the previous forecast of 2.3% (3). Since the increase in job growth figures the UK GDP growth forecast has been slashed by 20% in the short term and 15% for the next 5 years. (Source: The Office of Budget Responsibility).
- b. The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an indicator of the economic health of that sector. When examining Cheshire East's employment statistics it's possible to consider the PMI for each sector in Cheshire East.
- c. The Services Sector accounts for 83.6% of employee jobs within the Local Authority Region. (Source: Official Labour Market Statistics 2014). Since the Inspector recommended a reassessment of the job growth forecast, with the resulting increase from 0.4% to 0.7%, there has been a decline in the Services Sector throughout the United Kingdom. Notably the 2016 February data which was released in March 2016 shows the sharpest down turn in three years. Economists recognise this as a serious economic indicator, as is demonstrated by the Financial Times, '*Growth in the UK's dominant services sector cooled significantly in February and recorded its weakest rise in activity since March 2013, according to a well-respected survey. The disappointing result has raised fears that GDP growth could weaken to 0.3 per cent, or less, in the first quarter of this year.*' (4)
- d. The Manufacturing Sector accounts for 11.4% of employee jobs within Cheshire East. (Source Official Labour Market Statistics 2014). Since the Inspector recommended a reassessment of the job growth forecast, with the resulting increase from 0.4% to 0.7%, there has been a decline in the Manufacturing Sector throughout the United Kingdom.
- e. The Construction Sector accounts for 3.7% of employee jobs within Cheshire East (Source Official Labour Market Statistics 2014). Since the Inspector recommended a reassessment of the job growth forecast, with the resulting increase from 0.4% to 0.7%, there has been a decline in the Construction Sector throughout the United Kingdom.
- f. The above 3 data sets, known as Composite PMI, signal a 4 year low in growth.

- g. The Monetary Policy Committee have now unanimously voted in favour of keeping interest rates at the record low (Source: Bank of England publications, March 2016). Significantly this was not previously the case when the Inspector recommended a reassessment of the job growth forecast, with the resulting increase from 0.4% to 0.7%. It is an indicator that the Bank of England envisages a slowdown of the economy ahead.
- h. In the Council's Response to the Inspector's Specific Questions Arising from the Schedule of Matters & Issues (5) paragraph 33 it makes reference to the jobs rate being ambitious and it could be argued that a jobs growth rate of 0.5% or 0.6% is more preferable for its migrating and commuting impact alone. If Cheshire East continue to ignore economic slowdown signals there will be an oversupply of housing due to the current 'ambitious' growth rate of 0.7%. This will stimulate unsustainable patterns of migrating and commuting which contravening guidance laid out in the NPPF Paragraph 18 (6).
- i. In the Council's Response to the Inspector's Specific Questions Arising from the Schedule of Matters & Issues (5) paragraph 45 it makes reference to some cross boundary authorities questioning whether the 0.7% growth rate is achievable, again this is prior the UK economy slowdown and forecast downgrades and so adds more weight to reverting back to the 0.4% rate.
- j. With the Services, Manufacturing and Construction Sectors making up a staggering 98.7 % (2014) of Cheshire East Employment Sectors it would be irresponsible of the council not to revisit the latest Economic Data and revise the employment growth forecast accordingly to amore justified 0.4% figure.
- k. The UK and Global Economies are in decline. If the current plan is executed using the unjustified employment growth forecast of 0.7% Cheshire East will be at the mercy of an undeliverable level of growth.
- l. In light of the current economic state and the significantly reduced growth levels for the UK economy, Cheshire East Council should take the opportunity to reduce, its unjustified growth forecasts to 0.4%.
- m. In the Council's Response to the Inspector's Specific Questions Arising from the Schedule of Matters & Issues (5) paragraph 51 it refer to jobs growth figures between 1998 and 2008 then between 2009 and 2013. It is unclear whether the historical data provided by the council actually includes 2008. If the data doesn't include 2008 then it will not include a year's worth of data during a recessionary period which could have a negative effect on the average growth figure stated of 0.7%/annum. Greater clarity is required.

## 2. Not deliverable in the plan period

- a. The plan requires an average of 2500 d.p.a. in the next 8 years, with its hybrid version of the Liverpool and Sedgefield model. This is not deliverable. It is not realistic. Cheshire East has on average delivered only 1000 d.p.a. and even in the boom years the highest level obtained was 1500 d.p.a. A similar lack of deliverability was evidenced in the Lichfield Local Plan. The Inspector's Report 16 January 2015 (7) Paragraph 56 states, *'I do not consider a figure of over 600 d.p.a. to be provided consistently over the entire 20 year period of the Plan would be deliverable when this has not in the past been consistently achieved even during the boom years of construction. It would be well in excess of the long term average net annual completion rate. Plans are expected to be aspirational but they are also expected to be realistic. National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 154. I do not consider such a high figure would be realistic.'* The uplift in housing causes the addition of this site to the plan. This level of housing delivery is not realistic. Hence the plan is not effective as the housing allocation is not deliverable.
- b. This is not a prudent strategy for the Council to employ. It places Cheshire East's Greenbelt and Greengap at risk from speculative developers. If CEC do not have a 5 year housing supply, developers will still be able to effectively challenge the policies of the local plan strategy in court. It will be impossible to demonstrate a five year supply with these inflated targets. In paragraphs 212 and 213 the Lichfield Planning Inspector recommends the Liverpool model as it is a realistic level of delivery
- c. There is a funding gap of £317,125,750 to £421,962,750 for infra structure such as schools, roads, health care and leisure facilities across the whole plan. Cheshire East states that it is aware it will not be all fund all of this from the Community Infra Structure Levy (8). However, no information is given as to the probability of the funding shortfall gap being delivered by other agencies.
- d. Currently the funding streams in education are unlikely to meet the expansion of and the capacity does not exist in the oversubscribed schools within Macclesfield. In Headteacher Update published on 2<sup>nd</sup> March (9), *'A recent survey by The Key found that 35 per cent of school leaders felt that their school buildings are unfit for purpose, and that leaders in six in 10 schools would like to improve or repair their current building 2016.'*
- e. Whilst the Guardian published an article on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (10) stating, *'A survey in January of nearly 900 mainly secondary headteachers and senior leaders by the Association of School and College Leaders confirms that more than 38% of respondents made redundancies in the previous 12 months, with even more staff losses hidden by the under-the-radar non-replacement of teaching (70%) and support roles (80%)'*. The problem of increased development is already being felt in schools in Cheshire East an article examining school funding gives a direct example

of this on Fiona Bruce MP's website on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Martin Casserley, Head of Black Firs, shared his school's experience: *"At Black Firs Primary school, the local house building has resulted in increased demand for places. With no local guidelines or requirements as to providing financial support for education provision, housing developers are building next to popular oversubscribed schools without making any contribution to the infrastructure costs in Cheshire East."* (11)

- f. The NHS is highly unlikely to meet Cheshire East's needs any better than education. In an article on BBC News 19 September 2014 entitled *'NHS finances 'worsening' as deficit nears £500m,'* (12) Rob Webster, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, which represents trusts, said: *"We have been warning for some time that NHS trusts will fall further into deficit as they try to balance rising demand for care against flat funding."*

### **3. Greenbelt**

- a. Cheshire East Local Plan Green Belt Assessment September 2013 ( BE012) assessed Green Belt parcel MAC 06 , of which Site CS41 is a part, as making a Major Contribution under Purpose 2 of the Green Belt. (13) This resulted in CS 41 receiving an overall assessment of "Major Contribution" and being omitted from the Local Plan Strategy Submission Version March 2014 (SD001).
- b. The between Chelford Road and Whirley Road meets all 5 of the purpose of the greenbelt. It was assessed as making a 'significant contribution' to the Greenbelt in the Greenbelt Assessment Update (14). However, its assessment is incomplete as the recommendations made by ARUP have not been undertaken by the council in respect of identifying the boundaries around Henbury village settlement which is washed over by the Greenbelt. This is despite numerous requests by myself and others including Henbury Parish Council to do so. Reassessment of this site with due regard for the settlement boundary of Henbury village would result in it delivering a 'major contribution' to the Greenbelt as it prevents the merger of settlements. The lower value of Greenbelt is inconsistent with similar sites between Macclesfield and Prestbury, because Prestbury has a settlement boundary. Hence its allocation is in contravention of the NPPF (6) paragraph 80.
- c. The inclusion of CS41 in this plan causes the merger of Henbury and Macclesfield. The site is less than 300m away from the houses of Henbury. Travelling between the two settlements at this point there are no permanent physical features such as rivers and roads, and elements of landscape such as topography that make this short distance seem like a separation between the two settlements.
- d. To accommodate the increased unmet housing need target the plan has increased its allocation of Greenbelt to be removed for development. Greenbelt loses in Macclesfield have more than doubled in this new plan. The additional allocation of CS41 as one of the new sites across the South West of Macclesfield completes the developer's master plan. This developer is no longer interested in urban sites as indicated by their withdrawal from the Gunco Lane development in Macclesfield. This is reinforced by their written comments on the development of the South

Macclesfield Development Area, a large strategic site not currently Greenbelt.

- e. Unmet housing need does not equate to removal of Greenbelt. This was reflected in the statements made with regard to the removal of greenbelt in Local Plans. In his statement on 1 July 2013 Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis issued a written statement to Parliament which said *'Having considered recent planning decisions made by councils and the Planning Inspectorate, it has become apparent that the green belt is not always being given the sufficient protection that was the explicit policy intent of ministers. The Secretary of State wishes to make clear that ...he considers the single issue of unmet demand...is unlikely to outweigh harm to the green belt and other harm to constitute the 'very special circumstances' justifying inappropriate development in the green belt'* (15). The local plan defines exceptional circumstances as unmet demand. The adverse impacts of this plan will outweigh the benefits from fulfilling the OAN.
- f. The position with regard to Greenbelt and unmet housing need was further clarified in the Green Belt Briefing Paper Number 00934, 5 January 2016 (16), which states: *'Do housing and economic needs override constraints on the use of land, such as green belt? The National Planning Policy Framework should be read as a whole: need alone is not the only factor to be considered when drawing up a Local Plan. The Framework is clear that local planning authorities should, through their Local Plans, meet objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.'* It cannot be clearer that planning policy does not use unmet housing need as a lever to destroy Greenbelt.
- g. Additionally in a recent Inspectors Examination Report for Lichfield (7) paragraph 131 he states, *'All of these other sites are in Green Belt and, to repeat a point made earlier, Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated. Moreover, one of the purposes of Green Belt is to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of urban land. It is difficult to see how releasing housing sites in the Green Belt as an alternative to developing urban sites ...would assist regeneration..'* Hence contrary to Cheshire East's assessment of this site in respect of the LPS Vision and Strategic Priorities it would not *'Support a major regeneration scheme in Crewe or Macclesfield town centre'* and would not *'enhance the vitality, viability and accessibility of a town centre.'* It will discourage urban regeneration. Allocation of Greenbelt which is so desirable to developers will halt their interest in brownfield sites that then remain or become land-banked.
- h. This desire by developers to make greater profits on Greenbelt is a driver for the vast number of unused planning permissions across Macclesfield.
- i. When assessing the potential of this site in respect of the LPS vision and strategic priorities it is described as being capable of maintaining and enhancing the separate identity of the settlements (17). Yet it reduces the gap between Macclesfield and Henbury.
- j. In the site selection process sites Greenbelt with a lower value, ones that make a Contribution to the Greenbelt are assessed. The details of their assessment are contained in the Site

Selection Report for Macclesfield (17), however no detailed evidence is given for the rejection of 12 of the 13 Contribution Greenbelt Parcels. Cheshire East Council Officers and the Leader of the Council Cllr Rachel Bailey agreed to provide detailed evidence on the site selection process for these sites on the 6/4/16. However despite reminders this has not been provided by the 17/4/16 and now cannot be included in this submitted consultation.

- k. One of these Contribution Greenbelt sites is Danes Moss Tip. It covers 68 ha and is now in a position to be allocated for future housing, if not in this plan period then as Safeguarded Land for the next plan period.

#### **4. Flood Risk**

- a. As is stated in the Site Selection Report this site contains a large pond. This land forms the start of the stream feeding both of the SBIs in Henbury, namely Cock Wood and Big Wood. The land is prone to surface water flooding.
- b. As such it does not *'safeguard land from development that is required for current and future flood management.'* Additionally it fails the Sequential Test by not *'steering new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding'* as other sites within the Macclesfield area have less flooding issues. Paragraph 100 (6)

#### **5. Local Landscape designation**

- a. This is traditional Cheshire farmland, dotted with ponds, crisscrossed with historical hedgerows and blanketed in a rich tapestry of fields. It is described in the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (18) as 'Higher Farms and Woods.' CS41 is described as *'very rural' with 'dispersed farms connected by narrow country roads which rise and fall with the landform.'* It would be a tangible loss to the people of Macclesfield. *'The intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'* is a core planning principle [section 17] (6). The nature of this landscape has not materially changed since its assessment for this publication in 2008.
- b. The land between Chelford Road and Congleton Road has been farmed since medieval times and provides uninterrupted views of Henbury Church, Sutton Common and Crocker Hill.
- c. The importance of this landscape is not considered in the site evaluation because it is ignored within the Character Landscape Assessment and so its allocation is not justified.

#### **6. The unsuitable location of CS41 for sustainable development**

- a. CS 41 is not located near the town centre near the train and bus station for sustainable transport. It has a limited bus service and most people will use cars for work and leisure activities. It is not near the primary care services provided in the town centre.
- b. It is not located in the 'corridor of opportunity' described by Cheshire East.
- c. It is not near the developing transport systems of SEMMS/MAELR network.

#### **7. Biodiversity**

- a. *The NPPF requires sustainable growth. Defined as '...sustainable development is about positive*

*growth - making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.'*  
This is not making environmental progress for future generations.

- b. This land forms the start of the stream feeding both of the SBIs in Henbury, namely Cock Wood and Big Wood. It offers a continuous, and highly significant, green corridor on the western fringes of Macclesfield that continues from the Sandy Lane SBI area to Cock Wood and then on to Big Wood. The continuity of this corridor is essential to maintaining biodiversity across the area without introducing fragmentation, and the protection of the water source is key in ensuring the preservation of the value of the SBIs. Development on this site would therefore be contrary to NPPF 11.117
- c. The hydrology works that would be required to develop this site would negatively impact on the SBIs that are fed by this stream. These wide ranging impacts on biodiversity from developing this site will affect biodiversity across the south west of Macclesfield. Its allocation for housing is in contravention of NPPF and the Local Plan Policy SE 3.
- d. The site is considered semi-improved grassland for the main part, historically there having been only limited agricultural improvement. This has resulted in an array of wildflower species rarely found in the local area, including a range of sedges and rushes in the wetter parts. Britain has lost more than 95% of its unimproved grasslands and, since 1939, the Cheshire region has lost 99%. In the Cheshire Grassland Inventory only 860ha of unimproved grasslands were found. (19)

## **8. Highway congestion issues**

- a. The development levels of the submitted Local Plan were identified as causing increased congestion Macclesfield. *'The level of development is predicted to lead to a 15% increase in traffic in the town during the morning peak hour, and an 18% increase in traffic in the evening peak hour'*. (20) For this study there was an allocation of 3,500 houses and 15ha of Employment Land. The link road is not included in this modelling for the May 2014 Submitted Local Plan.
- b. The link road across the south west is simply an access road for the developer. It is not listed as a infra structure development strategic highways studies in 2016 for the Revised Local Plan. (21).
- c. It does not have a strategic benefit. Traffic travelling from the South and South West of Macclesfield into Macclesfield town centre would have no reason to take the link road across the south west. Traffic from south of Macclesfield would already have had the opportunity to join the A34 for South Manchester at Congleton or at Marton. Hence no need to travel into Macclesfield to travel along this south west link road. Traffic from the South of Macclesfield heading north into Poynton will not change route onto this road but continue on the A523.
- d. Highways study shows significant delays on Chelford Road heading to the Broken Cross roundabout. The updated highway study in 2016 for the additional allocation of housing to Macclesfield (22) shows a 15% rise in journey times with the allocation of these additional sites in the plan period. This is a significant rise for an area that is already operating at full capacity.

These results are flawed in that they are formulated on the basis that there is a link road across the south west of Macclesfield. This will not happen in this plan period as it requires 1000 houses to be built across CS10, CS32 and CS41. This may happen in the next plan period or it may not. Its inclusion in the next plan period depends on the Safeguarded land being released to developers.

- e. This road was objected to by residents, was not supported by the highways assessment carried out by Cheshire East, and when queried directly with the council was rejected. An example of this is the email from Councillor Michael Jones, the then Leader of the Council, on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013 to Save Macclesfield Greenbelt and Cllr Andrews. *'To be clear the proposed road from Chelford Road to the Congleton Road across SW Macc is most definitely NOT to be included in the local plan. It has been rejected after consultation. The relief road mentioned should be the Congleton relief road or the South Macc Development. I think, and I apologise, if we have confused you, this consultation may contain information that would reflect former consultation but I can confirm we are focussing on central Macc highway priorities.'*
- f. A similar level of confusion occurred Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October at Macclesfield Town Hall Resumed Hearings when the Inspector was informed by Adrian Fisher that the only link road being considered was across the South Macclesfield Development Area and that there was not one being considered in the Local Plan. Mr Fisher and then the Head of Highways both agreed that the people of Macclesfield did not want the loss of Greenbelt that would result in this road being built and that its benefits to Macclesfield are marginal and do not warrant its development. Yet here it appears again in the local plan.
- g. The Planning Inspectors report of 1997 which included the same road [paragraph 4.412] stated that *'looking at road T5, this is only to facilitate development.'* (23)
- h. 3500 people signed a petition handed in to the council by Save Macclesfield Greenbelt against the removal of Greenbelt and the building of the south west link road.
- i. Henbury Parish Councils have objected to inclusion of these sites as have Macclesfield Town Council. They have raised serious unanswered issues with lack of brownfield development and the removal of Greenbelt.
- j. The MP David Rutley is on public record objecting to the removal of Greenbelt across the South West of Macclesfield.

## **9. The flawed evidence and site selection**

- a. The site methodology is flawed in the allocation of sites. Only sites actively promoted by large developers are included and those in current use are screened out, even when the intent of the owners to relocate is known by the council. This includes sites that have been submitted for planning permission which is contrary to their own methodology.
- b. The highway assessment of sites in the south west of Macclesfield utilises a road which may not

be built even in the next plan period. Hence the evidence for their assessment is fatally flawed.

- c. The Sustainability Assessment is flawed. It contains incorrect assessments for CS 41. For example the oversubscribed secondary school is over 1km away, the post office is over 1.5km and the medical centre is over 3km away. They are not coded correctly on the assessment table.
- d. The site figures which were provided to the council are the developers and underestimate the size of Greenbelt sites in Macclesfield as well as underestimating the potential overall build/housing densities.
- e. Greenbelt sites continue to contain incorrect information even though the Council is aware of the validity of the error e.g. Henbury School demolished near CS 41.
- f. The site selection cannot have been based upon the Sustainability Appraisal as the document contains significant sections which were not produced by Enfusion until February 2016 (24). The local plan was published in February 2016.

## **10. The under allocation of brownfield sites in Macclesfield**

- a. In the Inspectors Interim views paragraph 61 he states, '*As CEC says, there may be a finite and diminishing source of such sites in the future...*' (25) The concept of a decreasing amount of brownfield sites is not substantiated by the evidence. The Office of National Statistics in their Land Use Database show that the area of PDL land in the North West over a six year period from 2004 to 2009 has increased from 2,730 ha to 3,870 ha. Additionally, the area of land that is suitable for development in this PDL has increased from 930 ha to 1,670 ha. An increase in building land that is PDL of 80% that is suitable for housing. Whilst the number of potential dwellings that could be built on PDL rose from 37,460 dwellings to 74,860 dwellings over a six year period. This represents a 100% increase in the number of houses that could be delivered on PDL land. (26) Hence, the empirical evidence clearly demonstrates that historical rates of delivery on brownfield sites can be maintained and potentially increased. The argument put forward by the council is erroneous and makes their disregard for the historical evidence of Brownfield site housing delivery unjustified and the plan unsound.
- b. Completions of dwellings in Macclesfield for just under first 5 years of the plan starting on 1st April 2010 are 608 to 30 sept 2015 which equals 122d.p.a. (17)
- c. At the same rate for the next 15 years to the end of the plan period in 2030 there should be 1830 dwellings completed from non-greenbelt sites. Not the 500 allocated to SL4 Central Macclesfield.
- d. When added together historical annual completion potential from non-greenbelt sites (1830) and the SMDA (1050) there is capacity for 2880 dwellings.
- e. The commitments and completions for Macclesfield are already 1,443 dwellings as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015. The balance required of 2807 dwellings would be met by the non-greenbelt capacity of 2880dwellings. Hence the allocation of Greenbelt sites is not justified by the evidence.
- f. The Planning Reform Briefing Paper on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (27) states that '*... the Government's aim*

*to ensure that 90% of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020.' Additionally 'The Housing and Planning Bill 2015-16 contains a number of different planning measures which include: ... creating a zonal system for brownfield land creating automatic planning permission in principle for housing.'*

- g. This impetus for brownfield development is not reflected in the under allocation of brownfield sites or PDL in SL4, the wording of Policy SE 2 and the rest of the local plan.
- h. The government is also intending to encourage the use of PDL in Greenbelt. *'The government will amend planning policy to ensure the release of unused and previously undeveloped commercial, retail and industrial land for Starter Homes, and support regeneration of previously developed, brownfield sites in the greenbelt, by allowing them to be developed in the same way as brownfield sites elsewhere, providing it delivers Starter Homes.'* The changes in planning policy are not reflected on PDL sites such as Alderley Park.
- i. Additionally the government have stated their intention to increase emphasis on Brownfield in their planning reform proposals, *'We will ensure that brownfield land is used as much as possible for new development. We will require local authorities to have a register of what is available, and ensure that 90 per cent of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020.'* (27)

## **11. The over allocation of Employment Land**

- a. The allocation of this Greenbelt site is part of a rolling back of the Greenbelt not because it does not fulfill the 5 purposes of Greenbelt but rather because Cheshire East Council intend to develop the land. This land makes a Significant Contribution to the purposes of Greenbelt (14).
- b. The employment land completion data used in the site selection report for Macclesfield (17) shows completions and commitments up until 31-5-2013. This was queried with the planning officer (Pam Cunico) on 30<sup>th</sup> March at the Macclesfield Town Council Consultation Meeting and was recorded by Cllr Dooley. Yet no clarification has been given for this data being to 2 years and 6 months older than the housing commitments and completions. This plan is not positively prepared since it utilises outdated figures for calculating employment land needs.
- c. The Employment Land requirement in the Local Plan - Submission Version 2014 there was an allocation of 300 ha as stated in Policy PG1: *'Provision will be made for a minimum of 300 ha of land for business, general industrial and storage distribution uses over the period 2010 to 2030 to support growth of the local economy'*. (28) This is repeatedly stated as 300 ha within the document. In paragraph 8.6 it states, *'The overall provision set out in the Employment Land Review equates to an annual provision of between 13.2 hectares and 15.4 hectares. Extrapolating this across the 20 year plan period gives an overall requirement of between 265 hectares and 308 hectares between 2010 and 2030. The minimum provision of 300 hectares of employment land as set out on Policy PG1 is toward the upper end of this range which is an appropriate figure for a strategy based on jobs-led growth'*. Paragraph 8.5 states that this already includes a 30% flexibility factor. Yet in Appendix A Table A.12 Employment Land Distribution: Totals, there is 351 ha allocated in the plan for employment land. This over allocation beyond the 30% flexibility factor is not justified.

- d. This submission figure for employment land has now been increased in the revised plan to 380 ha to provide 31000 jobs. The Sustainability Appraisal Addendum (29) states in the Alignment of Economic, Employment and Housing that an extra 27 ha is needed. This would take the total of employment land needed as 327 if added to the PG1 figure of 300ha. It has however been added to the Appendix A figure of 351 and rounded up to 380ha. Since the original figure of 351ha is unjustified the new value of 380ha is also unjustified.
- e. In the first three years of the plan to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 there was only 1.6 ha of completions on employment land. There was at the end of this period 46.7 Ha of employment land still available in Cheshire East. (30) This evidence does not show a lack of employment land. If this rate of development of employment land was maintained across the 20 years of the plan period there would be a need for 10.67 ha of in Cheshire East. The Local Plan allocates 380 ha. This requires a 3,500% increase in the rate of employment land development for it to be utilised. There is a significant difference between theoretical projections and reality. There should be no more than 100 ha of employment land allocated in the local plan.

## **12. The spatial distribution and HS2**

- a. The allocation of this site results from the view that the spatial distribution reflected in the submitted local was not justified as the allocation of a HS2 Hub to Crewe was not certain. In the revised local plan the distribution of housing and employment land is increased in the North of the region to reflect this view. However the HS2 hub at Crewe is now confirmed and the spatial distribution needs to return to that of the submitted local plan.
- b. This is justified by the evidence provided by Cheshire East who state that there will be *‘An additional uplift of £1.8 billion to the UK economy by 2030 from development in Crewe, above and beyond the existing HS2 benefits to the UK; An investment of £880 million in the South Cheshire economy through development contracts; 20,000 additional jobs in and around central Crewe; 5,000 new homes directly linked to the station transformation; The potential for a massive increase in advanced engineering and manufacturing within the UK, building on both Crewe’s rail heritage and the existing massive skills base’*. (31) If this evidence for development is not reflected in the local plan, then the plan is not justified or positively prepared.

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