

August Borough Plan update

Borough Plan Inspection: further work and related matters

The Borough have received a letter from the Inspector of the Borough Plan: Anne Jordan. **She has concluded that the plan as it stands is not sound but can be made sound by some major modifications.**

The full text of the Inspectors' letter can be found here:

<https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/downloads/file/3454/inspectors-letter-ex-ins-06>

The Council's response can be found here

<https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/downloads/file/3455/councils-response-ex-nbc-41>

What follows is a selective summary of the Inspectors comments, focusing on issues most relevant to Keele Parish.

- **Transport links, specifically the proposed link road between the A525 and the A53.** She notes that no route is shown in the plan and so no such link could be implemented. She notes the Borough should therefore address the matter of the link with the relevant parties as a first priority by first establishing the nature of the link required, a broad indication of the safeguarded route, an estimated cost and how the route will be funded
- **Issues around mineral safeguarding**
- **Issues around flood risk for some of the site allocations.** She requests the Council provide further, detailed information
- **The employment allocation of between 43 and 83 hectares of land.** She notes that it is not clear how the allocations in the Plan will meet this requirement..
- **Keele University Development Sites.** The Inspector notes the absence of a masterplan from the University. She further comments that, In the absence of an up-to-date Masterplan for the estate there is no indication of the timescale for development and whether all of the site will be required during the Plan period. She asks that Council should consider how the Plan can address these concerns.
- **Land at Junction 16, M6.** The Inspector notes that, taking into account that the release of the site requires that exceptional circumstances be demonstrated, she is seeking further information in relation to why the Council consider it sound to allocate a site of this size, and whether alternative options were considered in this location, potentially for less employment space and involving a release of less Green Belt land...
- **Allocations for housing.** The inspector has concerns about Land at Clough Hall, land south of Newcastle Golf Club, Keele Golf Course (Lyme Park), land at cemetery Road, former Pool Dam pub site and land west of Gallingle View.
- **Lyme Park/ Keele Golf Club,** the Inspector asks that proposed masterplan be revisited to ensure that the housing allocations and extent of the Country Park reflect

the topographical and land ownership constraints of the site. The Inspector requires that the work should explain why the provision of a Country Park, which is to be kept permanently open, needs to be removed from the Green Belt.

- **Land south of Newcastle Golf Club.** The Inspector reminds the council of her concerns regarding the absence of details of a link road between the A525 and A53. She notes that the inclusion of this site within the Plan may need to be revisited. Notwithstanding this, the site promotor's indicative site layout shows a substantial area of landscaped open space, aimed at mitigating landscape impacts and providing a buffer for motorway noise. The developable area should be reviewed to retain the extensive areas of landscaping and open space within the Green Belt.
- **Compensatory Improvements to the Green Belt.** The Inspector notes that as drafted the Plan fails to provide a coherent strategy for compensatory improvements to green belt to offset the green belt released for development. The Council are asked to review each site allocation where land is to be removed from the Green Belt and provide convincing evidence that compensatory works are achievable and viable.

Keele Parish Council

August 19th 2025