

Chris Wedgwood. Statement 1

The Council submitted its Draft Local Plan in 2018 along with its evidence base documents.

In relation to the position of the Green Belt boundary in the plan, the Inspector has found that the submitted evidence base did not contain any substantive evidence[letter]

The Inspector then asked the Council to provide that missing evidence[letter].

The Council responded by producing “Topic Paper 1 Addendum”, undertaking a regulation 18 consultation on that document and submitting this it for Inspection.

The present question is therefore 'does Topic Paper 1 Addendum provide the evidence required?'

If it does not, then the position remains unchanged, namely that the Council has failed to provide 'any substantive evidence' to justify the position of the Green Belt boundary within this Plan.

Topic Paper 1 Addendum employs a flawed process of splitting the identification of the Green Belt boundary into 2 stages.

In the first stage it removes land from the Green Belt to create a temporary inner boundary. Whilst the second takes this as its starting point and further removes further land based on a claim that the land is 'needed for development' within the plan period.

The assessment of land needed to be removed from the Green Belt in order to full-fill projected development need is entirely confined to the second second stage and therefore no land removed in stage 1 could have been removed on that basis.

The question then becomes, 'On what evidence is the land that is removed in stage 1 being removed?'

In Stage 1 of this process Topic paper 1 Addendum identifies a ring of sites around the city that are presently located in the Green Belt by the RSS. It assesses each of these sites against the 5 purposes of Green Belt in NPPF s80.

All sites assessed are found to continue to fulfil Green Belt purpose. This is evidence that the sites that were assessed should remain within the Green Belt.

It is not evidence that any other site(which has not been assessed) should be removed from the Green Belt.

Topic paper 1 Addendum then arbitrarily removes sites inside this ring of sites from the Green Belt without any evidence to support its removal.

Further evidence is known to exist to demonstrate that some of these sites do fulfil Green Belt purpose. This evidence has been ignored.

One example of this is the Green Wedge of land identified in the Heslington Village Design statement, which the Council accepts as supplementary planning guidance(spg). This land prevents coalescence and protects the rural character of the Village of Heslington.

This land would be removed from the Green Belt by this Plan without providing any evidence to the contrary.

If the Council wishes to remove land under stage 1 it must demonstrate that the land it is removing does not fulfil any Green Belt purpose and it must consider all appropriate evidence in it's assessment. This has not been done.

Topic Paper 1 Addendum fails to provide any evidence to justify the removal of land which is removed through the imposition of an Inner Green belt Boundary at stage 1 of it's assessment.

The position of the Green Belt Boundary is not evidence based, is not justified and conflicts with National Policy on the Green Belt. It is unsound!