Doncaster Local Plan Examination

Hearing Statement: Matter 4

Longwall Property on behalf of Inherent Property
Q4.8. **Have exceptional circumstances to justify removing each of the eight housing allocations from the Green Belt been fully evidenced and justified?**

1. Yes, exceptional circumstances have been identified. Given the large proportion of the borough that is constrained by Green Belt, avoiding Green Belt release would prevent a significant number of settlements from meeting their own housing need. In addition, the particular constraint posed by flood risk in the borough means that avoiding Green Belt release would essentially necessitate more new homes being built in areas that are at risk of flooding, contrary to national policy. In combination therefore, these two factors comprise exceptional circumstances.

Q4.10. **Assuming that I conclude that the Plan identifies sufficient land to ensure that justified development needs can be met in suitable locations throughout the Plan period, would there be exceptional circumstances to justify taking additional land out of the Green Belt at the present time, for example to try to ensure that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered again at the end of the Plan period?**

2. Yes, there are exceptional circumstances for altering the Green Belt boundary so as to enable future development needs to be met. The council recognise that Green Belt is a constraint on development and that is unlikely to change in the future. Paragraph 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that when Green Belt boundaries are being changed, local authorities should look to “identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs.”
3. Safeguarding land does not bind future development strategies, as the Council seem to suggest in the Green Belt Topic Paper. Instead it provides future flexibility over the range of strategies that can be pursued while potential avoiding the need for further Green Belt release in the future. That is the whole purpose of safeguarding.

4. The Plan does not safeguard any land and is therefore inconsistent with national policy. To ensure soundness, the council should identify areas of safeguarded land in the Plan.

1 Examination Reference DMBC3