



Newcastle Under Lyme Liberal Democrats

RESPONSE TO THE JOINT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

February 2018

Liberal 
Democrats

1. THERE ARE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AROUND THE FIGURES FOR HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT.



1.1 - Section 2.74 of the JLP document shows a requirement 2013-2033 for 11720 new houses, of which 1080 completed 2013-2017. The rate so far is 270p.a., leaving a requirement rate for the next 16 years of 665p.a.; 534p.a. if we build only on the sites so far identified.

Is such a huge increase in rate achievable or desirable ?

What new initiatives will NBC be taking to increase the rate of house building ?

1.2 - The implied population growth is questionable. Assuming the current 2.3 persons per household, the population growth for Newcastle becomes an increase of 26956 and the population growth for Stoke is 36984. Hence, increases in population are 14.6% Stoke, 21% Newcastle. The national average predictions are around 15%.

So why does the plan assume such a large increase in population for Newcastle ?

What new initiatives will NBC be taking to increase the uptake or development of employment land ?

1.3 - For employment development, section 2.31 shows potential for 63 hectares of land for the period 2013-2033, with an identified need of 68. Only 4 hectares have been achieved 2013-2017, i.e. one p.a. Even taking the potential (lower) figure, to achieve the remaining 59 requires a rate of 3.7 p.a.. We also note that Stoke has potential for more than the identified need.

Can the employment growth for Newcastle be achieved ?

1.4 - The plan does not give any detail about the different housing needs; in particular social housing.

We should identify the proportion of housing that needs to be social/affordable and the proportion that needs to be specialist elderly or student accommodation.





2. RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

2.1 - We approve of the very limited development proposed for the rural areas; in particular, very little in Madeley, only some in Loggerheads, nothing in Audley and Bignall End or Betley and Balterley, and very little in Maer.

2.2 - Greater development in these rural areas would be unsustainable and could involve building on green patches that would join up the existing built-up areas, destroying their character.



3. KEELE

3.1 - We note with approval the general statement in paragraph 2.29 "**it is essential that the preferred strategies for housing and employment are closely aligned**".



3.2 - We disapprove of the contradiction in the application of this principle between Keele (where major development of housing is proposed) and Chatterley Valley (where only major employment land is proposed).

3.3 - We disagree with the use of the term "Western Urban Expansion" as this implies that places like Keele are to be part of the urban area, instead of preserving the character of Keele and a green belt separating it from the urban area.

3.4 - The proposal to build all over the golf course is flawed; it would infringe the need to have a green belt between Keele and the urban area; it would have huge implications for infrastructure, for example the need for a new road through Silverdale; it would affect the habitats of various wildlife for which the existing green corridor plays a major supportive role, and constitutes urban sprawl.



3. KEELE (continued)

3.5 - The scale of the proposed developments at Keele is highly questionable, given the present rate of progress, though we are sure that significant development in employment and corresponding housing can take place. We are also concerned that the character of Keele could be radically changed or the facilities to support such a major development would be inadequate.

3.6 - We agree with some housing between Keele and the A53, but we object to the western two-thirds of KL14 because it is on a registered Historic Garden.

3.7 - Employment on NL24 can be part of the plan, but something needs to be stated about the priorities of implementation, given that NL40 is very far from completion and is at present being considered for living accommodation as well as workplaces; the latter suggests the employment demands are being exaggerated.

3.8 - The argument in paragraph 3.17 regarding housing needs to match developments at Keele University and Business Parks assumes that all employees will wish to live very close; this is not necessarily the case, e.g. if spouses do not work there, other parts of the Borough and Stoke have much better access to facilities such as shopping and entertainment, some will wish to access the Peak District etc.

3.9 - The argument in paragraph 3.21 that the development of knowledge-based industries could not be exactly matched elsewhere has some merit, but as the plan identifies, Chatterley Valley also cries out for a combination of major employment and housing need.

3.10 - We support the development of about half of the Golf course, around 500 (possibly 800) dwellings, together with some development for housing between Keele and the A53. A measured development plan would deal with all the objections raised above and preserve the attractive character of the area.





4. CHATTERLEY VALLEY

4.1 - We support the proposed employment development in the plan, but this cries out for a corresponding housing development.

4.2 - We propose a major housing development around the junction of the A34/A500, which could be achieved without building on both sides of the A500, thus preserving a green strip between Kidsgrove and Newcastle.

4.3 - Such a development not only links with the proposed employment site, it has excellent communications, including that with Crewe for the purpose of HS2.

4.4 - Further transport development could be envisaged, such as bus services including between this area and stations on the Crewe to Stoke route which could see more services; improvements to the A500 have already been agreed.

4.5 - We believe such a housing development will provide for the needs of employment, enhance the economy, make a major contribution to the overall requirement for the Borough, could easily be sustainable and will have little or no impact on existing residents.



5. SUSTAINABILITY

The document covers this very inadequately. For example, any significant development at Keele will require greatly improved public transport and amenities; the statement that it has already a good bus service is deceptive, since already large numbers of students and staff cannot access this bus service and need to use cars. Similarly the impact of HS2 on the whole of North Staffordshire needs to be fully considered.



6. INFRASTRUCTURE

A full and thorough analysis of all infrastructure implications must be carried out urgently before the plan is completed; while this means working with the County Council, we are convinced it is essential.

It should be obvious that improvements to roads (the Bentilee link road and widening the A500 are not the only requirements associated with this joint local plan), rail and other public transport, water mains, sewage, public facilities etc are a part of any plan that will attract people to remain or move into the area.



7. GREENBELT

We agree that it is necessary to build on some greenbelt land, **but feel very strongly that the concept of a green strip around urban areas and between the urban area and the rural villages should be preserved.**

In particular we support the plan in so far as it does not propose any development on very visible sloping green areas such as Bunny Hill, the Butts, Keele Bank, slopes above Apedale and the lower slopes of Mow Cop.



8. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

We believe it is the duty of the local planning authority to respect and work with any groups that are devising neighbourhood plans; we understand, for example, that Keele's neighbourhood plan is being rapidly developed.





9. TOWN CENTRE

9.1 - We are disappointed that this is not adequately addressed; we need to encourage greater footfall in the town centre while reducing the proportion of people needing to travel some distance to the town centre and having permanent residents in or near, rather than relying on students.



9.2 - The plan should include development of more housing in and near the Town Centre; for example the garage site near Higherland, the Blackfriars car park and the old bus depot are all sites that should be changed from business development to housing, together with other sites that are likely to become redundant or if business schemes fail.

10. AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

10.1 - There should be no building on play/sports areas, nor on the well-used open spaces.



10.2 - Outdoor activities should be developed on part of the golf course and further developed at Apedale; both of which have potential, especially in view of the assumption that the population is to grow during the plan period (even if not quite as much as assumed).

11. IMPLEMENTATION

11.1 - This should be a partnership and not leave the matter to developers alone, in order to build at the required speed and according to identified priorities in need and location. In particular the council's role is essential in social housing and other 'build to rent' schemes.

11.2 - The Council should support and work with Aspire and/or any other social housing associations.

11.3 - The Council should work with the two Universities to devise a corresponding plan for the needs of staff and students that is realistic, achievable and satisfies sustainability criteria.





Produced by **Nigel Jones, Chair**

**ON BEHALF OF NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS.**

25th February 2018

CONNECT WITH NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

CHAIR

Nigel Jones | chair@newcastlelibdems.org.uk

COUNCIL GROUP LEADER

Cllr Marion Reddish | marion.reddish@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

SECRETARY

Hilary Jones | secretary@newcastlelibdems.org.uk

[@nullibdems](#) | newcastlelibdems.org.uk | facebook.com/nullibdems