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| Sefton Council | **Stuart Barnes** **Chief Planning Officer****Sefton Council****Magdalen House****30 Trinity Road****Bootle L20 3NJ** |
| **Mr Ken Hounsell,** **Chair-Thornton Parish Council**  | Telephone: Email: local.plan@sefton.gov.ukDate: 28th February 2017Our Ref: 1\_22\_09/ site allocations |

**The future of Thornton Parish**

Dear Mr Hounsell,

Thank you for your email informing me of the above matters, responses to questions and issues raised are provided below.

Whilst I am aware that many people felt that we should not build in the Green Belt, Sefton Council concluded that this was not an option that would lead to a ‘sound’ Local Plan being produced, and that we should submit a Local Plan in which we met the Borough’s needs for new homes. The Inspectors final report is expected in March and will set out in greater detail his views on the Local Plan (including housing allocations).

As part of the process of preparing the Local Plan, I can assure you that we have not allocated any sites in an identified flood plain, although given the flood risk constraints in Sefton, this has proved challenging. Where sites have a higher risk of flooding, our expectation is that these areas should not be developed but used for ancillary and less vulnerable purposes.

The Local Plan has also been prepared with the knowledge that significant investment in infrastructure is needed to support the new developments proposed around Thornton (and elsewhere in Sefton) in the Local Plan, in particular in relation to schools, medical facilities and public transport. This will be critical to the creation of sustainable communities across Sefton.

The need for additional infrastructure was extensively discussed at the Local Plan examination and considered by the Inspector. In his initial findings (February 2016), the Inspector endorsed the Council’s strategy for meeting housing needs and has agreed with the Council’s proposal to allocate all of its proposed housing sites in the Local Plan (including all of the proposed housing sites in Thornton). In order to endorse these housing allocations the Inspector would have needed to be satisfied that infrastructure issues were currently acceptable or could be made acceptable through financial contributions from developers.

Where there are particular infrastructure needs for individual site, these are set out in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan. This includes a requirement that the two allocated sites in Thornton make a financial contribution towards the cost of implementing the A565 Route Management Strategy between Thornton and Crosby, as well as a requirement to create a pedestrian and cycle route to connect each site with its neighbours and the route north of the cemetery, and information relating to site access.

However, I appreciate that these do not refer to the social infrastructure to which you refer. I can assure you that we have not allocated housing sites without any thought to the infrastructure that is required to support them. These matters were also considered by the Inspector as part of his analysis of the evidence we prepared to support the Local Plan. In particular, I would draw your attention to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy-including-local-plan-and-modifications-and-neighbourhood-planning/local-plan-examination-library.aspx> (Reference - MI.1), which we are required to produce to show how the infrastructure which is needed to support the proposals in the Local Plan can be provided.

Discussions are continuing with all relevant bodies such as the Clinical Commissioning Group about future health provision across Sefton. We also liaise closely with our Education colleagues about future school provision. To this end a Practice Note setting out the requirement for development to contribute towards new primary school places has been approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control. This will be consulted upon shortly. It requires developers to make a financial contribution for each new dwelling towards the cost of new primary schools and will be imposed on all new developments to address the shortage of school places.

With regards to additional shopping requirements, this was discussed in great length during the Local Plan hearings, but our evidence is that there is no need for additional shops to be provided. However, we have recognised that there is a need for further investment in a number of the designated centres including Crosby, which will meet emerging needs.

Further information is provided in the Local Plan Examination library – please see:

* MI.6-Letter Re Local Plan and Schools (Sefton Education Department)
* MI.7-Letter Re Local Plan (United Utilities)
* MI.8- Letter Re Local Plan (Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups)
* EX.25-Progress of Infrastructure Working Group recommendations
* TR.2-Transport Assessment of Local Plan Housing and Employment Allocations
* TR.18-Thornton Transport Note

Finally, as you will be aware, Sefton Council is currently preparing to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which allows local authorities to raise funds from development in order to pay for important infrastructure. When adopted (i.e. finally approved), the revenue raised from CIL will go toward paying for essential infrastructure projects in Sefton. The Council has consulted on its Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (1st consultations stage) and will be consulting on the Draft Charging Schedule (second consultation stage) later this year. The CIL will then be subject to independent examination and is expected to be adopted during 2018. The latest information on progress can be viewed at the following address: <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/cil>

I hope this helps to reassure you that the new housing proposed will not take place without the appropriate infrastructure being provided.

Yours sincerely



Stuart Barnes

Chief Planning Officer