



**Knowsley Council**

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Our Ref: West Lancashire / JC  
Date: 30 May 2013

Dear Peter,

**RE: MODIFICATIONS TO THE WEST LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN**

Thank you for your letter dated 17 May 2013. We understand that you need to address the issues raised in the Inspector's letter and we would like to assist in this process.

As you correctly state Knowsley Council did not object to the submission draft of the West Lancashire Local Plan. This included proposals to make more efficient use of the existing Simonswood Industrial Estate through a remodelling exercise and thereby effectively create the equivalent of about 5 hectares of "new" employment land. The basis for our approach on this was that although in our view the existing Industrial Estate is not well located or attractive for a wide range of employment uses it is also poorly laid out and would therefore benefit from internal remodelling if this were practicable. A future remodelling of this area would also have offered the opportunity to improve the current environment of the industrial estate.

It is clear that the Inspector is not (on the basis of available evidence) convinced of the deliverability of the remodelling exercise and has therefore asked you to consider how the 5 hectares of new employment land could be otherwise provided.

Unfortunately we do not consider that the proposal to allocate the additional 5 hectares of employment land in the area identified in the "Simonswood Ownership Plan" attached with your letter is the best way forward. The reasons for this were set out in the evidence which we provided for hearing session 12 (in response to the objection by Peel). Our concerns about any proposal to expand the current industrial estate into the areas that you have identified include:

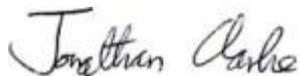
- The lack of evidence that these sites are in fact the most suitable to meet West Lancashire's needs given the minor nature of the highways which serve this area from the remainder of West Lancashire;
- the site is more closely linked to Knowsley in terms of accessibility but is not required to meet Knowsley's employment needs which are in our view suitably met by the diverse range and quality of sites for example in Knowsley Industrial Park; and
- the unnecessary competition that the expanded Simonswood site would present to the nearby Knowsley Industrial Park (KIP).

We would therefore stress the need for West Lancashire District Council to consider other alternative site options to provide the additional 5 hectares of employment land allocation requested by the Inspector.

If notwithstanding the above points West Lancashire does pursue a new site allocation at Simonswood the area edged in blue on the "Simonswood Ownership Plan" maybe slightly the least harmful. This part of the site is (unlike the area edged red on your site plan) at least adjacent to an existing employment use fronting Stopgate Lane and may therefore integrate slightly better with the character of the area. However, as mentioned above we would urge you to consider if there are better locations available in the West Lancashire area.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this matter again.

Yours sincerely,



**Jonathan Clarke**  
Policy Manager - Places