

Response from Paul Ankers, with comment from LCG regarding CPOs

Mr. Ankers answered the questions he was “happy with without adding a caveat.” Here is his caveat, with our response.

Ankers: The politics of our greenbelt, our housing crisis & the needs of jobs for Tameside cannot easily be reduced to such simplistic Yes/No answers. I have answered most questions, but many need more discussion. What use is Werneth Low to somebody who has to move to Gorton to get a house? And conversely, what use is a house in Godley that destroys the whole character of Godley? I am sure you have all considered these issues in the round, much like an MP should.

I support the greenbelt because other countries without this protection end up with never ending urban sprawl. Our system creates a planning tension but it allows areas of beauty like Longdendale to thrive. I believe we should build on brownfield sites first. I believe previous town planning in Ashton in particular has wasted local space, killed the town centre to build a Five Guys and those decisions create the pressure to build on the greenbelt.

We should not build industrial estates on our greenbelt. We should find a way that our young people can get on the housing ladder. The developments of over 2,000 houses are too much. 20-25 year old won't get on the housing ladder anyway. The housing market makes that a near impossibility, so we should find policies that get them on the housing ladder as soon as they can.

I do not know what plans you refer to that involve compulsory purchase orders and would benefit from more information.

LCG: Re “the plans you refer to that involve compulsory purchase orders.”

This refers to the Government’s recent Housing White Paper.

In our LCG response (sent 2.5.17) to the consultation on this White Paper, we made 4 points to the Government. We stress that this is an extract from our response to the Government consultation on the Housing White Paper, not our response to Paul Ankers.

The Housing White Paper (HWP) quotations are denoted in violet. **Points we raised of special importance are in red.**

Point 1. On Page 38 (section 2.18) the HWP stated: *We need to work with mayors and local leaders, taking a place-based approach, to better empower them to drive delivery of homes.*

The LCG response: We disagree with the statement on page 38 stated above if this means **mayors and leaders using their power to push through developments which are not welcomed by the community nor are not in their best interests, through developments that erode our Green spaces. This may include the heartless application of such power to compulsory purchase our homes.** However, we do welcome leaders who will use their power with humanity or stop greenbelt grabbing developments.

Point 2. *HWP Page 42 (2.43). Compulsory purchase law gives local authorities extensive powers to assemble land for development. Through the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Neighbourhood Planning Bill currently in Parliament we are reforming compulsory purchase to make the process clearer, fairer, and faster, while retaining*

*proper protections for landowners. Local planning authorities should now think about how they can **use these powers to promote development.***

LCG response: We disagree. These two sides of the coin are mutually incompatible. **It is difficult to envisage how proper protection for landowners can truly be retained, while the compulsory purchase power is to be used to encourage development.** This is an issue of grave concern to many residents, and they are right to be worried. Residents should not be driven from their homes to make way for new homes: this seems incongruous and too high a community price to pay. **The stress that this incurs can be so great as to increase the mortality rate, as has happened locally, in which the mortality rate increased by 12 people above the average rate in an area of social housing that was cleared to make way for retail development.** There should be particular sensitivity and care towards elderly residents in this respect, since stress is less well managed in the elderly, and is an important morbidity factor. The document needs to spell out clearly what are “proper protections for landowners” – or we will be in a situation where “exceptional circumstances” incorporates “housing need” and there is no protection against CPOs.

Point 3. *Re HWP Section 2.45: In addition, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), will take a more proactive role on compulsory purchase, by working closely with local authorities, and other parties where appropriate, to use their compulsory purchase powers to support the development and regeneration of land for housing.... (2.46): We will keep compulsory purchase under review and welcome any representations for **how it can be reformed further to support development.***

LCG response: We disagree. See our response to the previous point (Page 42: 2.43). This strategy makes an increasing number of residents’ homes and their land vulnerable, creating insecurity and stress. Whilst you “welcome any representations”, what is really needed is dialogue and engagement with responses. Will this be a two-way process, or will representations merely be acknowledged and then filed away?

4. In our recommendations for further 2-way dialogue, we added that extended mayoral powers should be used to afford protection to residents, and **not to railroad through compulsory purchase against residents’ will, particularly affecting the elderly.** Thus compulsory purchase reforms should maintain or even extend proper protection for landowners.