

Response to LCG questions from Jonathan Reynolds. We also comment on his responses.

The following is the extract from Mr. Reynolds' response which is **relevant** to our questions. We've organised these by A, B, C etc. *Mr. Reynolds' comments are in blue italics.* LCG = Longdendale Community Group.

A. Reynolds: We need more housing but I only support developments that contain a mixture of housing sizes, good design, and affordable homes. None of this information is available with regard to these sites, as this stage of the process only deals with land allocation.

LCG response: The GMSF plans do give some indication. For instance, regarding Mottram the sites should deliver **"where possible higher value development."**

B. Reynolds:young people and families paying extortionate mortgages, or not being able to afford a home at all. A huge number of working people in their 20s still live with their parents.....It's not right and we must do better. Failure to build any new homes at all would mean that within our lifetime home ownership would become a distance dream reserved for the rich, and homelessness would rocket. We have to plan new homes but we have to get it right.

LCG: an amplification of the question 4b? No comment re question 4b, on how "proposed housing on these 3 sites will help 20-25 year olds get onto the housing market?"

C. Reynolds: Housing in Greater Manchester (GM) over the next 20 years is currently being considered in the 'Greater Manchester Spatial Framework'. I think this is the right approach because planning housing on a GM basis means urban areas like Salford and Manchester can take a greater share than us. I strongly believe planning housing over the next 20 years is a better approach than simply leaving it to developers.

LCG: "*I think this is the right approach*" suggests he favours the spatial framework plans for Mottram, Godley Green and Stalybridge going forward, involving decommissioning the green belts there (ie removing its protection). This is the bottom line – green belt is there for a reason, to stop urban sprawl. Once we fiddle with the green belt it loses its meaning, which lies in its status as a designation, and so it's gone, forever.

D. Reynolds: "planning housing over the next 20 years is a better approach than simply leaving it to developers."

LCG: We say, **Local Plans should not be an excuse to design a Developers' Charter.** Local plans should not be used as an opportunity for developers to state their interest in land which landowners are willing to sell (**which is what has happened with the GMSF proposals, i.e. the GMSF appears to have been written by developers for developers!**). If greenbelt remains fully protected, developers would not have any opportunity to "snap it up" anyway!!!

E. Reynolds: I will not support new housing unless it comes with the investment in infrastructure that will be required alongside it.....For instance, NO housing should go in Mottram until the FULL bypass is built. In Stalybridge, it should be conditional on Metrolink being extended and the roads improved. In Hyde, we should consider building a new village with schools and services, and road and rail improvements, put in first.

LCG: Inferring that once we have the by-pass, it's OK to build on the greenbelts there? So it's OK to build on the green belt at Godley Green? All we need is the infrastructure? So are these his answer to question 3 (which asks, "Are you opposed to improvements in transport infrastructure triggering developments on green belt land"?)

F. Brownfield land should be the priority, and if there is insufficient brownfield land no more than 5% of Green Belt land should be allocated to development in any 30-year period. This is the best way to protect the Green Belt.

LCG: Removing a percentage of green belt can hardly be the best way to protect it! 30 year forecasts are more controversial, and relatively less accurate. More modest, 10 year predictions allow brown field sites to supply housing needs, rather than resorting to green belt.

Moreover, no brown field sites have been specified in proximity to the Mottram M67, Godley Green and Stalybridge (Sidebottom Fold) green belt sites, indicating that planners have not even attempted to utilise brown field sites first. Reynolds has not drawn attention to this aberration in the GMSF for our locality.

G. Reynolds, re: the ABC Waxworks site in Hyde. As this is public money I would not object to the state acquiring it by using CPO-powers

LCG: His only direct reference to CPO powers, which is not answering the question set. The question asked:

5. a. Will you oppose legislation proposals that use CPOs to enable developments which are not welcomed by the local community?

b. Will you oppose legislation proposals that use CPOs that will erode our green belt land?

H. Reynolds: I think existing town centres could benefit from higher density housing as part of imaginative regeneration plans. I would like to see specific funds allocated to work on this. However, I would not want to see a general return to the high-rise tower blocks of the 1960s.

LCG: Re: "*I would not want to see a general return to the high-rise tower blocks of the 1960s.*" – we agree.

However, re

"I think existing town centres could benefit from higher density housing as part of imaginative regeneration plans"

LCG response: – **we draw attention to the fact that the spatial framework plans for Mottram and Hattersley fail to give priority to Hyde Town Centre as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. This needs to be remedied in the redraft of the spatial framework plans.**

Hyde town centre has been in decline for some time. There is a high volume of empty properties, many of which have been empty for a long period. In the past, Hyde market was vibrant, with traders having to wait for a stall to come free. The remaining traders speak of poor takings, with one trader taking just £21 one day, which after the cost of the stall deducted (£18) was less than the cost of a pint. We ask "what is the planned investment and plan for the town?" It is nowhere evident on the GMSF!

The Longdendale Community Group (LCG) was curious to know the opinions of shopkeepers in Hyde, regarding the plans proposed for the new District Centre in Hattersley, which will include another supermarket and other shops. We conducted a survey in the form of a written questionnaire posted to independent small retailers in Hyde Town Centre. Respondents could be either opposed to the plans, or to say that they wanted the plans for the development to go forward as they stand.

Of the 54 responses received, the shopkeepers were unanimous in objecting to the plans going forward as they stand. Of these, 1 respondent (2 %) considered Hyde town centre T.C. to be healthy and vibrant. 50 respondents (94 %) instead considered it to be in decline. 2 were unsure. One response was discounted (both, ie opposite alternatives ticked). The respondents were unanimous in stating that the reason given for objecting to the plans was that "Hyde town centre is in decline, so another supermarket on the edge of town will threaten to draw away more trade." 27 of the shopkeepers said they were not consulted about the plans. The remainder did not say they had been consulted, but gave no response. Forty one of the shopkeepers said they would like to have been consulted.

The continued out-of-town supermarket development at Hattersley is a huge threat to the well-being of Hyde town centre and the few remaining small shops in the outlying villages of Mottram, Broadbottom, Hollingworth and Gee Cross. The small shops in which we mingle and meet are the life and soul of our community. The shopkeepers know us and care about us. Many of our small shops have a traditional aesthetic appeal. Over the last 30 years the number of such shops has dwindled, because supermarkets have put them out of business. **The answer to this is not to build yet more supermarkets.**

The loss of a few small shops results in the increasing vulnerability of the supply chain and wider business network. This demonstrates that local shops and retail business networks form an important part of many local economies. A Friends of the Earth study of local food schemes found that on average just over 50% of business turnover was returned and invested back into the local economy. The study included farm shops, farmers' markets, box schemes and community-supported agriculture. In contrast, large retailers may return as little as 5% to the local economy. Small retail businesses can contribute more to the local economy than large ones if they are purchasing from local suppliers, employing more staff per sale and if the shareholders or owners of the business are spending any profits in the local area. Small shops provide social cohesion as an essential centre for social contact. For example, retirement and subsequent migration to rural areas results in a high concentration of elderly people. This group of consumers rely on small shops to provide a hub for interaction with others and fulfilment of their day-to-day needs.

The cessation of trading by many small retailers located close to national multiples seems inevitable. One such example is Cupar in Scotland. *"Prior to Tesco, Cupar had 4 petrol stations – now we have only the one, at Tesco. Prior to Tesco we had 5 bakers –now we have 3. Prior to Tesco we had 3 butchers - now we have 1. The UK has lost nearly 30,000 independent food, beverage and tobacco retailers over the past decade. Between January 2005 and October 2005 around 700 newsagents went out of business"* [Source: House of Commons All-Party Parliamentary Small Shops Group Report (extract)].

[*I. Reynolds: Re GMSF OA26 Mottram M67 North and South I could not support any development at this site until the full Mottram-Hollingworth-Tintwistle Bypass is built.*](#)

LCG: Ditto our earlier comment – it's OK to build on green belt once we have the infrastructure?

J. Reynolds: I believe the proposal to build a Garden Village in Hyde is one of the most significant parts of the GMSF. Had any individual part of this site come forward as a proposal for a traditional housing estate, I would have opposed it. However, if we are serious about ensuring that new infrastructure is built alongside new housing, then the proposed new Garden Villages appear to be the best way of doing that.

LCG: This appears to be a big thumbs up for allowing the building of over 2300 houses on the greenbelt of Godley Green. Again, once infrastructure is in place, it's OK to build on the green belt?! We reiterate that this GMSF proposal is based on flawed, inflated, pre-brexite population predictions, combined with a 30 year forecast which is too long, controversial, and has been challenged by experts.

K. Reynolds: (Godley Green garden village continued) Building these as part of a village should also minimise the impact on existing roads.

LCG: How does Mr. Reynolds plan to do this? Where will he put the cars from over 2300 new houses?! Once the cars leave the village, they become commuters. And they will add to the congestion at the Mottram by-pass/M67 intersection.

L. Reynolds: I believe the Government should allocate funds to develop projects of this kind and, if possible, use those funds to offer to purchase at an uplifted rate any property within an agreed distance of the new development where the owners would prefer to relocate.

LCG: Indirect reference to CPOs – but what if they don't want to relocate?! See our comment re CPOs in the letter from Paul Ankers on this same web page. We requote it in part:

LCG comment: 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.

M. Reynolds: Re GMSF QA24 Sidebottom Fold, Stalybridge. I could only support development on this site if contributions from the site funded a major redevelopment of the road junctions leading to and from the area....

LCG: Again, development on green belt is OK once we have transport improvements?