



Murphy Group (RO: 1953)

SHLPEIP MATTER 4 Session 5

Allocations, Safeguarded Land and Green Belt
Boundaries: Garswood





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SHLPEIP MATTER 4

Allocations, Safeguarded Land and Green Belt Boundaries:
Garswood and Newton Le Willows

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INTRODUCTION

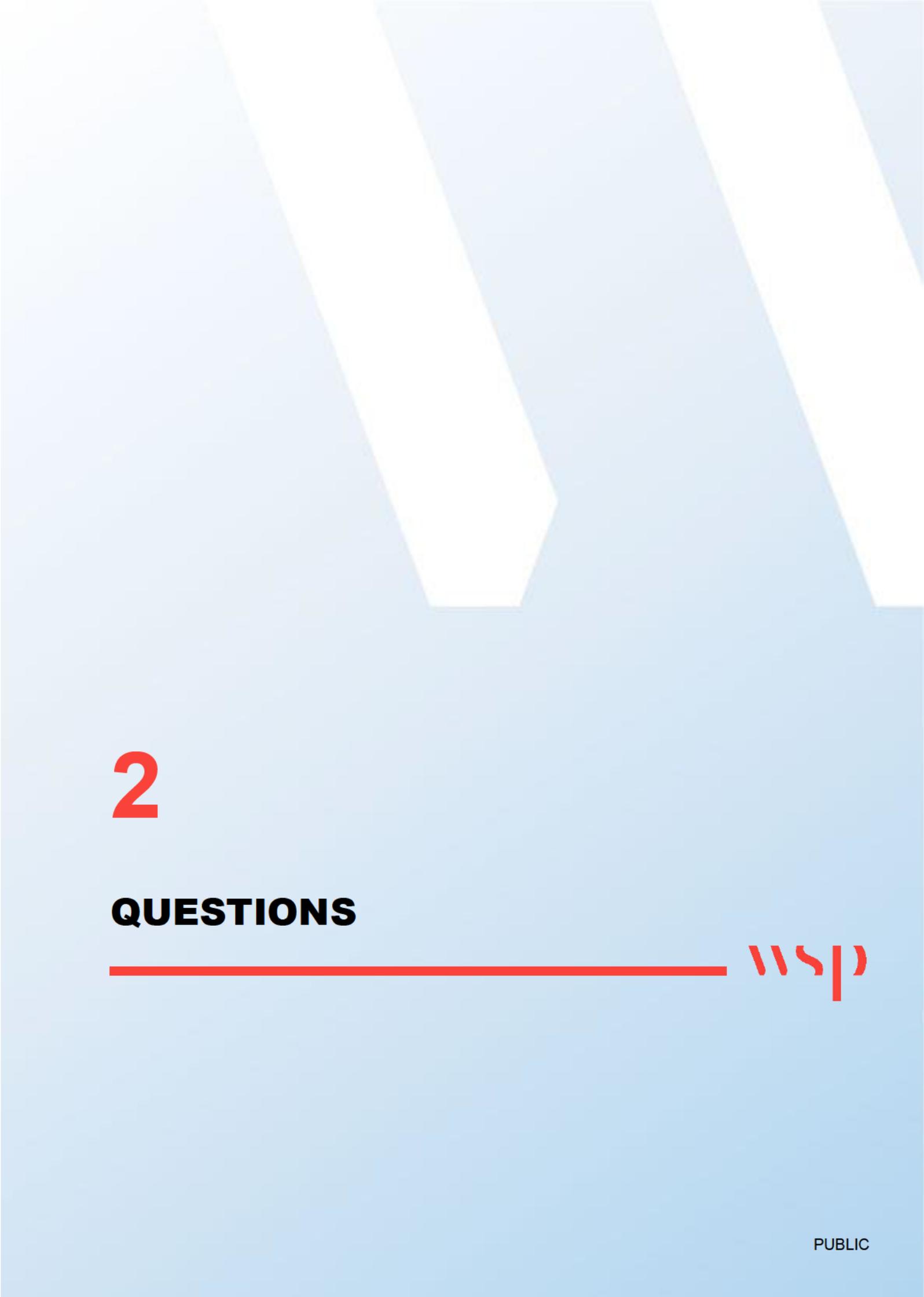


1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. WSP¹ has prepared this Hearing Statement on behalf of Respondent ID RO 1953: Murphy Group². An introduction to Murphy Group and a plan showing its land holdings in St Helens and adjacent to St Helens were appended to Hearing Statements Matters 1-3.
- 1.1.2. The Regulation 19 representations are contained from page 222 onwards in SD00821. The representations sought to re-designate 1HS (owned by Murphy Group) as an additional housing allocation.
- 1.1.3. The Statement relates to Matter 4, specifically to land in Garswood; the answers below conclude that:
- There are exceptional circumstances warranting the release of 1HA and 1HS from the Green Belt;
 - There are considerable benefits from delivering Site 1HS that mean it should be allocated rather than safeguarded to help make the plan sound (ie addressing issues of housing requirement and housing supply dealt with in other Hearing Statements);
 - Both sites 1HA and 1HS are capable and justified in being allocated for development in the plan period.

¹ Indigo Planning made representations at the Regulation 19 consultation on behalf of Murphy Group. Indigo Planning has since been acquired by and become part of WSP.

² Murphy Group is also known as J Murphy & Sons.



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QUESTIONS



2 QUESTIONS

2.1 ISSUE 2: LAND TO SOUTH OF BILLINGE ROAD, GARSWOOD (1HA) AND LAND TO SOUTH OF LEYLAND GREEN, GARSWOOD (1HS)

11. Do the Green Belt assessments support the allocation of Site 1HA and the safeguarding of Site 1HS and demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of the land from the Green Belt?

- 2.1.1. Exceptional circumstances are demonstrated by virtue of the housing need position, allied with the sustainability credentials of Garswood as a Key Settlement and the findings of the Green Belt assessment.
- 2.1.2. The Green Belt assessment, the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the need to provide a robust strategic framework (including flexibility, headroom and contingency to ensure deliverability of the plan) should support a conclusion that both sites be allocated, rather than one site be allocated and one site be safeguarded. The Council's decision to allocate 1HA and safeguard 1HS is based on inadequate evidence and on a subjective consideration of the Green Belt matters.
- 2.1.3. In terms of the Green Belt, paragraph 5.2.17 of **M1.11Ci** (appended to Hearing Statement 1 and prepared by Hankinson Duckett Associates) provides an assessment of the cumulative effects of both sites being allocated.

12. If exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated have these been clearly articulated in the Plan?

- 2.1.4. No, they have not been clearly articulated in the plan; neither in LPA02 or the explanatory text around it or in in paragraph 4.6.8. The evidence base supporting the plan attempts to explain the exceptional circumstances justifying the release of the land but does not do so explicitly (and nor the decision whether to allocate or safeguard the two parcels).
- 2.1.5. The local circumstances, in terms of sustainable patterns of development, the purposes of the Green Belt and general socio-economic and environmental matters, constitute the exceptional circumstances, in conjunction with the need to identify sufficient land to deliver the plan effectively, including with sufficient flexibility and contingency.
- 2.1.6. Garswood is a rightly identified as a Key Settlement. However it has experienced much less housing growth in the past two decades compared with other towns in the borough: no more than 32 additional homes have been developed since 2001, with only one site having been allocated in the UDP (on which Murphy Group anticipate commencing development in 2021) and none in the Core Strategy. With a good range of facilities including two primary schools and a railway station, bus services, medical centre, shops, playing fields and open space, its sustainability credentials are notable and there is no reason not to allocate two sites at the town, to compensate for the plan's inadequacies noted elsewhere in WSP hearing statements.
- 2.1.7. Garswood can withstand 507 homes across 1HA and 1HS in the plan period, as supported by the Council's own Green Belt review. There is sustainable access to existing and proposed employment sites, including outside of the borough, including South Lancashire Industrial Estate, Haydock Cross/Haydock Industrial Estate, Stone Cross/Golborne and Florida Farm North. It has good schools with capacity, it has rail connections to both Wigan and St Helens, it has many bus

connections. New development at 1HS will provide allotments that have been identified in SHBC003 as being social infrastructure long sought after in the parish and ward. New development at 1HS can help sustain local facilities, can turn the adjacent playing pitches, play area, community centre and medical centre into the heart of the existing and new community, fostering social cohesion. It creates a new town green, surrounded by community uses and new homes for all sectors of society.

14. Would the adverse impacts of developing Site 1HA (Green Belt impacts, highway safety) outweigh the benefits?

- 2.1.8. No.
- 2.1.9. However, the benefits of developing Site 1HS would provide greater benefits and similar adverse impacts compared with 1HA.
- 2.1.10. Developing Site 1HS allows for compensatory improvements to remaining Green Belt land including improved environmental quality along Down Brook and new and improved networks of public rights of way, in a manner consistent with the Framework and PPG. Developing Site 1HA does not allow this.
- 2.1.11. Developing Site 1HS will give better definition to the edge of Garswood and provide a better gateway to the town from the north and west. **M1.11Ci** paragraph 5.3.2 produced by Hankinson Duckett Associates provides more detail in this regard.
- 2.1.12. The owner of Site 1HS can offer flexibility in planning and delivery: Murphy Group can create a wide mix of tenures, sizes or specialist homes, Murphy Group can deliver and own the utilities assets and bring their knowledge of power and water to the design of the development in a highly sustainable, low-carbon manner.
- 2.1.13. Developing Site 1HS would ensure no effects on highway safety and promote active travel around the town, as evident from **M1.11D** provided by Transport Planning Practice.

15. Are the requirements for Sites 1HA and 1HS within Appendices 5 and 7 (Site Profiles) positively prepared and effective?

- 2.1.14. The requirements for Site 1HS in Appendix 7 show that the Council has already considered the delivery of the site through the development management process. If the site was allocated, the plan would be effective and have been positively prepared, but as the land is safeguarded and would need to go through a further local plan review process before it can be delivered, the plan is not currently positively prepared – and as highlighted elsewhere in WSP Hearing Statements, the likely shortfall of homes being built in the borough as a result of inadequacies in the plan would render it ineffective.
- 2.1.15. **Without allocating 1HS for residential development within the plan period, the plan is not positively prepared and will not be effective.**

16. Are the indicative site areas, net developable areas, minimum densities and indicative site capacities within Tables 4.5 and 4.8 justified and effective?

- 2.1.16. Yes.



17. Will infrastructure to support the allocations be delivered at the right time and in the right place?

- 2.1.17. TRA006 and SD013 identify very few infrastructure requirements needed to serve these sites, noting only that drainage will need to be in accordance with the hierarchy with no watercourse available for either site. As a leading provider of infrastructure including for the water industry, Murphy Group are alive to this requirement and can and will ensure delivery of sustainable drainage.

18. Are there any barriers to Site 1HA coming forward as anticipated by the housing trajectory?

- 2.1.18. No. Nor are there any barriers to Site 1HS coming forward within the plan period, if the plan was revised as such to allocate the site rather than safeguard it.







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