NOTE OF HEARING SESSIONS

MATTER 1: REQUIREMENTS, VISION, STRATEGY, OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY

22 & 23 OCTOBER 2013

Representing Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council:
Andy Duncan, RMBC Planning Policy Manager
Nick Ward, RMBC Planning Officer
Ryan Shepherd, RMBC Senior Planning Officer
Helen Sleigh, RMBC Senior Planning Officer
Noel Bell, RMBC Planning Officer
David Rhodes, RMBC Corporate Environmental Manager

Participating:
Mr. M. Good 588552
on behalf of the Home Builders Federation 588552

Ms. V. King 527934
on behalf of Yorkshire Merchant Securities 528329
on behalf of Noel Stackhouse, Denham House Holdings 664107

Mr. R. Bolton 556372
on behalf of Bruce Bentley 665307
on behalf of Fowler Sandford 559143
on behalf of Taylor Wimpey and others 528419
on behalf of CISWO 559145

Mr. V. Betts on behalf of Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington & Anston
Action Group 532909 (plus two behind, Mr. T. Hill and Mr. G. Capper)

Ms. J. Hodson 527926
on behalf of Ackroyd and Abbott 584299
on behalf of G.W.Woolhouse and Son 528391
on behalf of Trustees of GMT 528377
on behalf of Mrs. Moor 528150
on behalf of E.V.Waddington 559245
on behalf of Mr. White 664413
on behalf of Mr. J.Hughes 664840
on behalf of Mrs. Kilner 560112

Mr. M. Hepburn 588480
on behalf of Hallam Land Management 588479

Mr. A. Wood 738593
on behalf of CPRE South Yorkshire

Mr. S. Vincent
on behalf of Sheffield County Council 528305
Mr. J. Hobson 583687  
on behalf of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates 528086/528371

Ms. C. Harron 666106  
on behalf of Harworth Estates 533555

Councillor P. Wardle 528062  
On behalf of Dinnington St John Town Council

Mr. I. Lyle 527983  
on behalf of the Newbold family 5333547

Observing:  
Councillor C. Jepson 740152  
Sarah Smith (observer Sheffield City Council 22nd October)  
Laura Stephens (observer Sheffield City Council, 22nd October pm)  
Gary Dickson (observer Sheffield City Council 23rd October)

Mr. A. Jones Save Our Greenbelt (Bassingthorpe Farm) to read out their statement

The Inspector opened the hearing sessions into Rotherham’s Core Strategy and invited the Council to make an opening statement.

Mr. A. Duncan read the Council’s Opening Statement, a copy of which will be made available as an Enquiry Document.

Mr. R. Shepherd advised that following the pre-hearing in August 2013 there have been further additional proposed changes submitted and highlighted in the Focus Changes document which can be viewed by following the link on Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council’s Website to the Consultation Website.

Issue 1: Has the Council complied with all the legal requirements, and in particular the duty to co-operate, and are the Core Strategy’s proposals for sustainable growth deliverable, clear, sufficiently justified, effective and consistent with all relevant national policy?

1.1 What measures has the Council taken to comply with the duty to co-operate, with which local authorities has that co-operation taken place and what has been the outcome of that co-operation? What documentary evidence is there of that co-operation, and what evidence is there in the Core Strategy of the effectiveness of that co-operation?

The Inspector clarified that the definition of co-operate is that of the Oxford English Dictionary, as follows: ‘to work together, act in conjunction with another person or thing to an end or in a work’. It was further noted that co-operation does not necessarily result in consensus but is about a spirit of good will and local authorities being good neighbours with each other.

Mr. A Duncan commented that having read the statements from other participants there appears to be some confusion in terms of participants referring to the Background Paper which accompanies the Publication rather than the Statement of Co-operation (RSD/12) which accompanied the Submission Document. The Statement of Co-operation sets out the various authorities and bodies with whom the Council has had discussions and outlines the key issues which were raised as part of these discussions and, where possible, how the Council resolved these issues. This is further supplemented by the letter from Mr.
Mr. R. Bolton commented that it is not sufficient to simply show evidence that there has been confirmation between Councils but that it must be shown that the co-operation has been constructive. He believes that the Statement of Co-operation submitted by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council raises more questions about the outcomes rather than confirm what the outcomes are. In particular in regard to the Housing Market Area, it seems unclear as to what the Housing Market Area is and what the housing requirement within the Housing Market Area is and to what extent this plan goes towards reaching that. Reference was made to previous Core Strategy Inspections held with Coventry and Kirklees Councils. However, the difference between Rotherham and Coventry and Kirklees is that there is a desperate need to review the Core Strategy in order to address these issues. Mr. Bolton’s support of the plan is fundamentally dependent upon the proposals made within the plan in particular relating to the release of greenbelt in order to address the housing shortage – without this, Mr. Bolton believes that the plan is unsound.

Mr. Bolton went on to say that although the duty to co-operate has not been fulfilled, the problem between Rotherham and Sheffield is that they have not been talking about strategic numbers – we have no objectively assessed need for the City Region as a whole.

Inspector was reluctant to take such an early view but noted Mr. Bolton’s concerns.

Mr. M. Good concurred with many of the points raised by Mr. Bolton. Drawing some further attention to the Memo of Understanding between Rotherham and Sheffield however, Sheffield City Council had originally objected Rotherham’s plan because under the original RS, Rotherham were proposing to take some of the under delivery from Sheffield. Following the outcomes of the Memo of Understanding, Sheffield then withdrew their objection. HBF are concerned that whilst the Memo of Understanding does identify potential mechanisms it does not indicate triggers or objectively assessed needs for the whole Housing Market Area. These, he believes are fundamental flaws and so HBF are concerned that the duty to co-operate has not been fulfilled on the basis that it has not been effective and constructively put together.

Mr. J. Hobson concurred with Mr. Bolton’s and Mr. Good’s nervousness to accept the duty to co-operate. It is clear that the timings of the Core Strategy, compared to those of Sheffield are at different stages in plan making process. There is a case for early release of strategic greenbelt land making a firm commitment to strategic land allocations would give the confidence to ensure that a review of the plan could take place relatively quickly once Rotherham and Sheffield are in a position to able to undertake a housing market area assessment.

The Inspector queried the time period Mr. Hobson would propose that the review of the plan ought to be taken.

Mr. Hobson responded that it could coincide with Sheffield’s review of their Core Strategy which is scheduled for adoption at the end of 2014 and so would recommend the review takes place in 3-5 years’ time.

Ms. J. Hodson also confirmed her agreement with previous comments made. What is her concern is the likelihood of an early review due to the fact that the mechanism of rolling development plans forward are resource intensive and cannot be relied on to happen in the short term. With regard to the question of the effectiveness of the co-operation, it seems clear that the housing figure has not been bottomed out for the Strategic Housing
Market Area. The arrangement is to include the under provision in Barnsley in housing supply and add a margin through the safeguarding of land through greenbelt. Ms. Hodson struggles to follow the quantum through this exercise because we do not know what the quantum is. Ms. Hodson agreed that the worst thing to happen would be the stalling of the plan because The authority do not have a good supply of housing land which is only going to decrease further unless we start releasing sites. Clarification is required as to how the duty of co-operation is going to be effective.

Mr. V. Betts raised the issue regarding co-operation relating to flooding in particular with reference to Bassetlaw Council. Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington and Anston Action Group asked Kevin Barron MP to ask Bassetlaw Council if they had any co-operation with Rotherham. Kevin Barron MP has now received a response which Mr Betts summarised and a copy of which will be supplied as an Enquiry Document.

The Inspector requested that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council are provided with a copy of this letter to enable them to prepare a response to the issues raised later in this enquiry.

Mr. R. Bolton referring to the timescale for a review commented that this should not be tied to Sheffield as there does not seem to be any appetite to undertake that review in Sheffield. In contrast, Rotherham have made the decision to take land out of greenbelt to try to accommodate their needs. The Core Strategy should go through but with an immediate review, not in 3-5 years’ time. Such a delay for the review to be undertaken would mean a delay of 7-10 years in terms of bringing the sites out.

Mr. S. Vincent confirmed that their objections have been formally withdrawn. Sheffield City Council have been talking to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council over a longer period and at different levels. On the issue of strategic housing numbers, Mr. Vincent would argue that the co-operation between Sheffield and Rotherham has been effective. Timing is an issue, Sheffield’s Core Strategy was adopted in 2009 and predated the NPPF and the housing target within the Core Strategy is the same as that in the Regional Spatial Strategy. So when Rotherham set a lower housing target figure, Sheffield did have some concerns. However, it is now agreed that Sheffield and Rotherham do have a strategic housing market area, particularly for certain households and house types, e.g. family houses. Progress has been made on what the housing growth may be over the next 20 years but further work is required on household growth forecasts and the distribution of this is still open to question. Mr. Vincent stated that, in his opinion, enough has been done to enable Rotherham’s Core Strategy to progress. It is recognised by Sheffield that there is considerable flexibility within Rotherham’s potential housing land supply. It is therefore difficult to determine when a review is needed until further work is done.

In response to Mr. Bolton’s comments that there is no appetite for Sheffield to undertake the review of the Core Strategy, Sheffield have in fact indicated that an early review of the Core Strategy will take place once the Sites and Policies document is adopted, expected to be in Autumn 2014.

Mr. M. Hepburn welcomed Mr. Vincent’s comments. A key concern however, is that the outcome of the co-operation has not resulted in a joint strategic housing market assessment which is a fundamental requirement of the NPPF. Agreement to have an early review is far from ideal though has resulted in a resolution to dealing with other housing issues as it has led to flexibility in the plans which have been drafted.

Mr. R. Bolton referred to the need for housing for both the existing and future workers within the City Region. Poor demand has been raised as a reason for under supply however Mr. Bolton would argue this due to the fact that Barnsley, which has a much
smaller economy, has been producing over 1,000 completions a year compared to Sheffield’s 600 – this number of developments of 600 units includes a proportion of student housing which is incorrect as student housing should not be included in these calculations. In terms of site allocations, if we are to accept Sheffield’s assurance that it will be done by Autumn 2014 then a recommendation for an immediate review of Rotherham’s Core Strategy within this timescale is acceptable to Mr. Bolton.

Mr. S. Vincent acknowledged that Sheffield is up against constraints in terms of being located tightly next to the Peak District National Park on the western side of the city and the southern and eastern area is close to the district boundary. Therefore we could expect that Sheffield’s needs could be met by neighbouring districts such as Rotherham and Barnsley.

Mr. J. Hobson clarified his earlier position regarding an early review stating that is when he thought Rotherham’s Core Strategy would be adopted and was not advocating no work for the period of 3-5 years. There would be on going engagement and the review process would continue on from the Core Strategy being adopted.

Mr. M. Good, referring to Mr. Vincent’s comments regarding neighbouring districts assisting to meet the needs of Sheffield asked that since Rotherham’s statement says that they have not yet been asked to assist in this way can Sheffield advise how this is being done?

Mr. S. Vincent responded that the work that has been done so far on city region level does give some indication of likely scale of requirements across Sheffield and Rotherham districts. It is acknowledged by Sheffield that some issues have not been resolved but it is recognised that there is more flexibility within Rotherham to accommodate these requirements.

Mr. R. Bolton stated that the Inspector has to decide whether co-operation has produced an effective set of policies in cross boundary strategic matters.

Mr. V. Betts from a greenbelt perspective it is the way this will be handled as once greenbelt is released it will never likely regain the status so piecemeal release would be preferable.

Mr. A. Duncan responded that the RSS has been revoked and is no longer part of the plan. A local housing target has been developed, which is set out in the Submission Document. In addition to this, there have been extensive and constructive discussions with Sheffield City Council.

With regards the joint housing market area assessment, Rotherham have been in constructive discussions with Sheffield City Council and Sheffield University and have reached a Statement of Common Ground which has been submitted to the Inspector and will be discussed in more detail under Matter 3 of this Hearing.

A point was made about seeking the objectively assessed housing needs for the whole of city region. Whilst it is appreciated that this is an ideal, it is certainly not a requirement for one individual authority, notwithstanding this Rotherham have fully inputted into the Sheffield City Region housing population work and this is also documented within Rotherham’s submission to the Inspector.

Reference was made about Rotherham preparing the Core Strategy preparation being before the duty to co-operate came into force. This is correct, as previously stated within the Opening Statement work commenced on the Core Strategy in 2005. Prior to the Duty
to Co-operate being enacted there were still several formal meetings which took place, for example Planning Officers Meeting and Heads of Service Meetings etc therefore co-operation has been in place between the South Yorkshire Authorities prior to the Duty being enacted.

Regarding the contribution from Barnsley – Mr. Duncan referred the Hearing back to the Statement of Co-operation which reports that discussions did take place with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and agreed that an element of their ‘excess’ could be contributed towards the Sheffield and Rotherham housing market area.

Flooding at Bassetlaw – refer to Statement of Cooperation (Appendix 2, page 14) which relates to meeting between Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and Bassetlaw District Council on 28th November 2011. This clearly confirms that this was discussed with Bassetlaw and they had no concerns about flooding. Notwithstanding that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council will provide a response to the new letter received from Kevin Barron MP which was presented earlier in the Hearing by Mr. Betts. The Council were subsequently able to provide a response following the lunchtime adjournment to the Programme Officer.

With reference to Mr. Vincent’s comments about flexibility, Mr. Duncan would concur that both Authorities have been flexible all the way through discussions, with extensive meetings and discussions leading to key changes to the Core Strategy. Flexibility is a key aim which Rotherham have tried their best to meet. Rotherham have been as flexible as they can reasonably be within the context of setting local targets to meets Rotherham’s objectives.

Mr. Bolton’s comments regarding lack of demand, Mr. Duncan again highlighted Mr. Shepherd’s letter (ED/10) within which a table outlines the outstanding planning permissions in Rotherham showing that the demand is there.

In closing this question, the Inspector stated that cooperation doesn’t stop at any given time, it is on-going. He suggested that the following wording could be considered for inclusion by Rotherham in their Core Strategy: “The council acknowledges the importance of on-going cooperation with relevant bodies. Cooperation will therefore continue with these authorities and with other bodies as appropriate, especially with regard to housing and employment development. This will take place as the planning strategy is monitored and reviewed in the light of such considerations as subsequent survey material, national planning policies and their implications for planning policies and proposals for the borough, district and county. Of special relevance in this regard are likely to be the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing, explored further on in this chapter.”

1.2 Have there been any discussions at any time with a nearby Borough or District to accommodate any unmet need, and has any nearby Authority requested the Council to meet any of its needs? And what was the outcome of any such request? For example, are any arrangements or understandings in place between the Council and Sheffield City Council? In which ways has the Council acted as a “good neighbour” in matters of town and country planning?

The Inspector asked Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council whether any authority or body involved written and said that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council have not co-operated.

Mr. A. Duncan confirmed that no such comments have been received by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. Although, Mr. Duncan went on to explain that following
Sheffield City Council’s initial objection, discussions took place following which the reasons for their objection were resolved resulting in Sheffield withdrawing their objection. Likewise, in setting the local housing targets Rotherham have sought to assess what the borough’s needs are, this process is documented. Nor have Rotherham had the need to ask other authorities to meet unmet needs from their perspective.

1.3 Are all cross-boundary issues satisfactorily addressed?

Mr. A. Duncan referred the Hearing back to the Statement of Co-operation (RSD/12) in which the introductory paragraph sets out how Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council have co-operated on cross boundary issues and highlights any issues of concern. The letter from Mr. Shepherd (ED/10) highlights that discussions have resulted in changes to the Core Strategy. Discussions with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council and Nottinghamshire County Council have resulted in Rotherham’s contribution to the revised aggregate. Mr. Duncan would point to submitted documents for evidence that this has been addressed with neighbours and how they have been resolved or are doing their best to address them.

Mr. R. Bolton commented that it appears that the housing matter has not been addressed. There are two other matters Mr. Bolton wanted to raise, the first being the issue of commuting. When there are not enough dwellings provided to promote economic growth there will be impacts on commuting. Similarly where development is not met but is pushed over boundaries there will also be an impact. Mr. Bolton’s submissions set out the likely level of workforce from Rotherham and Sheffield’s proposed level of housing and this has identified that there will be a shortfall which will increase commuting. This is a cost in environmental terms and to South Yorkshire as a whole. Rotherham should start modelling commuting patterns since commuting linked with employment and housing needs greater consideration.

The second issue is the area of Maltby which is up against the Doncaster boundary. It has previously been stated that there should be the potential to consider all sites rather than just those within the district boundary. At the Doncaster Core Strategy Inspection Hearing, Doncaster Metropolitan Council confirmed that they would have no objection to this providing if it was the preferred option for Maltby. As such, there should be reference to this within Rotherham’s Core Strategy.

Mr. M. Good would reiterate that the housing issue has not been dealt with satisfactorily. The regional paper forecast of population and households for the City Region. Whilst this looks at different scenarios for population growth it does not look at how the forecasted growth of jobs in Rotherham and Sheffield impacts on the housing demand. It is therefore unclear how this has been dealt with through this plan.

Mr. A. Wood raised a general point regarding the maps in the publication draft which give the spatial context for Rotherham perpetuate the notion of Rotherham being surrounded by ‘grey areas’ with no real context. It would be useful to show Rotherham placed more comprehensively within the Sheffield City Region and showed better visualisation of the kinds of interactions to get the message across better.

Specifically, as already stated by Mr. Bolton, there is a big issue with commuting. This emphasises the need to focus development on the public transport network and to use the spatial pattern of development to strengthen the potential of the public transport. The spatial pattern with particular regard to greenbelt and greenfield site releases would have the effect of dispersing developments and undermining public transport. More specifically, Maltby is more convenient for motorway and is less convenient for public transport.
Mr. A. Duncan spoke on the issue of commuting, referred back to the letter from Mr. Shepherd (ED/10) which highlighted Rotherham’s co-operation with SYRTE which led to some changes to the Core Strategy around the City Region Transport Strategy and the SY Local Transport Plan. There is the Sheffield/Rotherham tram-train trial due to start imminently and the Bus Rapid Transit Scheme, so having looked at commuting patterns and flows, there are projects and schemes in place to help to ease congestion and maintain traffic flows between authorities.

As regards the issue of Maltby, raised by Mr. Bolton, Mr. Duncan advised that this is a specific reference to a parcel of land just north of the boundary into Doncaster outside of the Rotherham borough. This has arisen as an individual with interest in the land has put it forward for consideration. Discussions have taken place between Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council as outlined in the Statement of Co-operation where Doncaster agreed that they may support release of this land, if necessary, subject to Member approval. Rotherham advised that this is an individual site, not required for the level of growth outlined for Maltby in the Core Strategy therefore there was no need to pursue this option. The outcome of these discussions has been communicated in writing to the person who promoted the site.

With regard to employment, Rotherham’s Housing and Economic Growth Background Paper (KSD/07, Part 2, Page 14) looks at future employment land requirements which was factored into the housing target and considers and answers the question as to whether employment growth aspirations and projections would necessitate any increase to the target. The answer to which is no, as only under the most aspirational and unlikely scenario would it require an increase in the local target.

Mr. R. Bolton stated that Maltby is identified as requiring land release in the Core Strategy in order to meet its needs and to exclude all land to the north of Maltby and Mr. Bolton does not believe that the evidence to this effect has not been presented before the Inspector to enable him to make this decision. Cross boundary cooperation should ensure there is a choice of all sustainable sites. It was an issue raised at the Inspection of the Doncaster Core Strategy and as such Mr. Bolton requested that this can be considered under the site and allocations discussion.

The Inspector advised that he will have a closer look at this area, along with others as part of this Hearing.

Mr. A. Duncan referred to paragraph 178 of the framework regarding planning strategically over local authorities. Due to the housing target that was set for Maltby it was not felt that this small to medium site was a priority and any discussions on this should be for the sites and policies document which supports the Core Strategy.

1.4 Is the plan period, 2013-2028, the most appropriate one? Should it be longer? Should it be unspecified, i.e the next 15 years?

Mr. R. Shepherd confirmed the Council’s opinion regarding the specified plan period of 2013-2028. If the start date is delayed to the date of the adoption of the strategy then this will add further years to the end of the plan therefore the Council is happy that 2013 is the correct starting point and the period of 15 years is the most appropriate. Concerns and suggestions put forward to the Council have been taken account of in coming to this conclusion. It was further noted that development does not stop at any point in during the plan period, we still have sites and planning permissions which will continue until the sites and policies document is adopted.
Mr. M. Good still has concerns about the proposed plan period, should an early review, as discussed earlier in the Hearing, occur. This Core Strategy will not be adopted until 2014 at the earliest. With reference to the Sites and Policies DPD, there are a significant number of items left over to that document. As this document is not due to be adopted until 2015, even assuming that things do run to plan, this would only leave approximately 12.5 years to complete the plan therefore it is not considered an adequate length of time.

Ms. C. Harron reiterated Mr. Good’s concerns and suggests that the time period should be extended to 2031 as she consider this will provide greater flexibility.

Ms. J. Hodson would suggest that the plan period should go to 2033, for a duration of 20 years, on the point that if it doesn’t get adopted the plan would not have 15 years from the adoption date as it is currently set out. There will hopefully be greenbelt releases in order to fulfil the strategy which could result in a long, drawn out process which will reduce the length of time to achieve the plan.

Mr. M. Hepburn fully agreed with the need to extend the plan period and not go for the bare minimum as set out in the NPPF. He emphasised the need for flexibility dependant on the Sites and Policies Document but agreed that the end date of 2031 should be a minimum.

Mr. R. Bolton confirmed that the NPPF states that 15 years is the minimum plan period and would question why the Council would opt for the lowest possible time period to deliver the plan. He would propose the plan period is extended to at least 2031 thus giving at least 15 years after the adoption of the Sites and Policies document and which would also assist in focussing the mind on what the planned greenbelt boundary should be as this should be set for this plan period and also beyond the scale of the plan. This would be a worthwhile and acceptable approach. Additionally, by extending the plan period would be a positive way of ensuring that the NPPF requirement of significantly increasing the housing supply of land can be achieved.

Ms. V. King suggested that the Core Strategy should go to the lifetime of the Sites Document which is 2033. The Core Strategy and the Sites and Policies Document should be aligned so that when there is a review the next local plan with a set start date can be agreed.

Ms. J. Hodson stated that Barnsley Council have now decided to formulate a local plan out of the Core Strategy and Sites and Policies Document in order to ensure we are clearly advised is this something Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council would be open to looking to do once the plan is adopted.

Mr. N. Ward stated that 15 years is not a minimum, but a preferable time proviso, as stated in the NPPF. The Council have provided evidence that the land is there to meet the need. In terms of greenbelt, there are a number of sites which, once allocated, can come forward quickly since there are no other constraints apart from them being greenbelt therefore these sites could be coming forward as early as 2016/17 following the adoption of the Sites and Policies DPD. The trajectory shows that the maximum peak of developments to meet the fully assessed need in the plan is 1,010 per year.

Mr. R. Shepherd confirmed in response to Ms. Hodson that the Council does intend to proceed with producing a Core Strategy and separate Sites and Policies document.
1.5 Does the Core Strategy adequately set out the main characteristics of the Borough, its main assets, problems (including various aspects of deprivation), its attractions, challenges and opportunities? How should the dispersed settlement pattern be regarded?

Mr. R. Shepherd confirmed that that the Council does feel that the Core Strategy does set this out fairly. In terms of settlement pattern, the Core Strategy has been prepared over a number of years and has taken account of all the work, in particular the South Yorkshire assessment which looked at settlements around Rotherham so the Council do feel that this has been set in context. The concerns raised by English Heritage have been responded to and have resulted in some changes to the plan. The Council believe that no further changes are required in terms of the settlement hierarchy or distribution, aside from those highlighted in the focus changes.

Inspector highlighted that under focus change No. 24 the percentage only add up to 99%. This is likely due to rounding up or down but these need to be checked and amended in order to bring it up to 100%.

Councillor P. Wardle stated that issues in particular around deprivation have not been addressed. The Council’s aspiration of safe, clean and green neighbourhoods seems to be contradicted by the proposals as in the Dinnington area there are only two areas identified as greenbelt which Councillor Wardle claims to be recreation areas, one of which is adjacent to the highest area of deprivation in Rotherham as highlighted by the Council. These are assigned as housing land within the sites allocation plan.

Mr. I. Lyle in relation to the heritage issues there were discussions in 2008 at the early stages of the plan whereby concerns were raised about the significant heritage value of Wentworth Woodhouse Estate not being given the adequate weight within the local plan. Whilst the focus change is welcomed since it does make a start to resolve the issues it only acts as a 'sticking plaster‘ and does not go to the heart of the matter.

The Inspector confirmed that Wentworth Woodhouse and Bassingthorpe Farm would be two particular areas for him to look at more closely. The Programme Officer will arrange for conducted tours to take place following the end of the final session, along with other site inspections required.

Mr. R. Bolton referred to the site specific issue raised by Councillor Wardle. When you look at the level of land being promoted in Dinnington and Dinnington East, within which there are several small allocations, there is the ability to deliver what the Council are requesting and to also include the recreation facilities required.

Mr. A. Wood is concerned that the Core Strategy does not articulate the extent of brownfield land that is available in the borough. The neglect of such land is a major constraint on the sustainability of the whole of the City Region in terms of social, economic and environmental wellbeing. It seems to be an oversight not to be making much more of a priority of these problems through spatial planning.

Ms. J. Hodson felt that there is insufficient emphasis on what comprises Rotherham Urban Area and in her opinion, this should include the conjoined areas at Bramley, Wickersley and Whiston.

Mr. I. Lyle clarified that English Heritage do have an objection outstanding to Policy CS1.

Ms. H. Sleigh confirmed that this is an outstanding objection but if the suggested changes are made then the objection will be removed.
Mr. R. Shepherd stated that in terms of brownfield sites, capacity surveys and site surveys have been carried out alongside the Core Strategy. These have shown there are an inadequate amount of brownfield sites. Policy CS3 does talk about prioritising brownfield sites which shows that this issue has been considered. Furthermore, there is on-going work on additional brownfield sites which are suggested to the Council. Specifically in terms of Bramley and Wickersley, these areas have been identified as a principle settlement for growth but it was recognised that these areas have their limitations due to the distinct characteristics such as different travel to work patterns despite being close to the Rotherham Urban Area and so the areas have a slightly lower level of growth compared to the Wath and Dinnington areas.

Ms. H. Sleigh replied to Councillor Wardle’s concerns about the two sites in the Dinnington area. These sites are LDF0219 and LDF0221. She confirmed that Council have looked at LDF0221 and it has been made clear that the Council suggest that there should be discussion with the land owners as to how much of the land should be released for housing and how much is retained as recreational land. At present this is privately owned and not used as recreational land.

The Inspector requested that this issue is dealt with outside the hearing.

1.6 Subject to discussions in more detail at subsequent Hearings, is the vision for the Borough and the 17 Strategic Objectives realistic and achievable?

Mr. R. Shepherd stated that the Strategic Objectives have been developed over a number of years and they are realistic and achievable. Some of the focus changes have improved and expanded the text around the flexibility of the document and dealing with the risks associated with delivery over the plan period. A number of assessments and supporting documents within the Submission also support the deliverability of the objectives. Discussions around a number of site allocations are still on-going and require further work. The Housing and Employment Background Paper (KSD7) makes it clear that housing and employment is aligned and that there are no issues here.

Ms. V. King would like to suggest a change to the wording of Objective 4 regarding Provision for Housing as she does not feel that the current wording goes far enough and should mirror the wording in paragraph 47 of the NPPF in terms of meeting the current objectives.

Mr. R. Shepherd referred to focus change 16 which amends Objective 1 and covers the suggested wording by Ms. King.

Ms. V. King still doesn’t feel that this takes Objective 4 far enough. The Inspector therefore asked her to provide suggested wording for Objective 1 and Objective 4 during the lunch adjournment for the Council’s comments. This was subsequently provided, as requested, following the lunchtime adjournment to the Programme Officer.

Mr. R. Bolton supports focus change 17 which proposes a slight change to Objective 2.

Mr. I. Lyle would like to ask if the Integrated Impact Assessment is fundamentally flawed since it was published prior to the recent Heritage Assessment of the Bassinghamthorpe Farm proposal which is clearly not included in the IIA.

Mr. A. Wood would object to focus change 17 as the phasing is fundamental to the achievement of the strategy.
Mr. R. Bolton commented that if you introduce a phasing the Core Strategy will not meet the assessed needs of the area and should be found unsound. Mr. Bolton confirmed that his support would be withdrawn should a Phased Policy be brought back in.

Mr. A. Wood responded by stating that without the phasing, Objectives 2 and 3 will be contradictory because without the phasing you cannot concentrate development in the most sustainable locations. Secondly, the sites which would be developed first would be those which are the most attractive to developers and not those which most effectively fulfil the spatial objectives of the strategy.

Mr. M. Good in response to Mr. Wood’s comments, whilst he appreciates the views of Mr. Wood and those he is representing, the Council’s viability assessments are indicating issues with some of the brownfield sites at this time. The plan needs to deliver from day 1 and the implications of the phasing policy, should it be included, would mean that some of these sites would not unfold due to viability and therefore the plan could not be delivered.

Mr. A. Wood confirmed that there seems to be a fundamental contradiction between 2 objectives that the Core Strategy is aiming to fulfil: To provide a number of houses over a given period of time; and to fulfil a spatial strategy which focusses development on the places where it is most appropriate. If you do the former and not the latter then there is no spatial strategy.

Inspector takes Mr. Wood’s point that there is a tension between the need for housing now and the need to promote housing in the most sustainable locations. That is not to say that the consequence of that is to say that anyone can build wherever they like.

Mr. M. Good stated that the Council’s Sustainability Appraisal looks at the issues of the sustainability of greenbelt locations in detail. The plan is about deliverability, if the sites in the urban area are not achievable then the plan cannot be delivered. Mr. Good does not see the conflict.

Mr. A. Wood responded that if you do not have phasing then all the greenbelt sites currently proposed to be taken out of the greenbelt will then have equal weight in how quickly they can come forward. The outcome of which will be that the sites which are most attractive to the industry would come forward first and if there is any fluctuation in the housing market over the plan period there would be no way to adjust in future if the best sites have been developed in terms of the market.

Ms. C. Harron stated that Policy CS3 clearly promotes the prioritisation of brownfield sites and would rectify the point made in terms of greenfield sites being put forward before brownfield sites.

Mr. R. Bolton would suggest that imposing a phasing policy is not in accordance with the NPPF. Furthermore, the developers he knows try to deliver sites where the market demand is highest, i.e. where people want to live.

Mr. V. Betts added that the Core Strategy does not take adequate account of the NPPF with regard to its commitment on greenbelt. In the Dinnington area there are large areas of derelict land which have been discussed with the Council and the impression given is that this is not attractive land for development. If the Core Strategy focuses on recycling of brownfield sites then surely the plan should take account of methods to make these sites more attractive to developers. The particular site in Dinnington referred to by Mr. Betts has the capacity for up to 400 homes according to the Council’s reports therefore if this site could be made attractive to developers then it would promote the recycling of brownfield land and reduce the impact on greenfield. There are derelict areas, high
unemployment and some areas of high deprivation and there are more houses for sale which have been on the market for an extended length of time – if there is a demand for housing why are these houses remaining on the market for so long.

Ms. C. Harron believes that the Core Strategy does seek to promote development opportunities on previously developed sites as outlined within Policy CS3.

Mr. R. Shepherd confirmed that Policy CS3 has only had a very slight change to the wording to confirm that the policy will apply to how we are looking at site allocations as well as phasing policy. This was submitted by the Council to the Inspector in response to Question 3.12. This will therefore be open to further discussion under matter 3 of this Hearing.

Ms. J. Hodson would support focus change 17 as it makes it clear what is going to happen. She acknowledges that we need to make changes to greenbelt land in order to deliver the Core Strategy. The Council have made it clear that greenbelt land will only be released in sustainable locations.

Mr. R. Shepherd emphasised that the overall hierarchy of strategy has looked at development of settlements that are most sustainable and the levels of development proposed have reflected the ability of those settlements to accommodate those changes proposed. The Council’s view is that the overall strategy has sought to deliver developments in those sustainable locations. Additionally, the Council have considered brownfield sites suggested by land owners, community groups and through their own site survey work and these have been assessed as part of the Sites and Policies work.

Ms. H. Sleigh responded to Mr. Lyle’s comments regarding the Integrated Impact Assessment. The Heritage Assessment on the Bassingthorpe Farm proposal was carried out after the final submission to the Inspector however, the Council does consider that the submitted IIA is robust.

Mr Lyle – Still object this point as it does not consider the key points from the Heritage Assessment and therefore the IIA is not considered as robust.

The Inspector confirmed that this issue could be covered in more detail later in the Hearing.

1.7 In general terms, and subject to later discussions, does the Core Strategy adequately take account of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)? Has the timescale for its preparation through its various stages allowed sufficient regard to be had to the Framework and, if not, what are the likely consequences?

Mr. R. Shepherd reiterated that a Planning Advisory Service NPPF Checklist (CSP/46) was completed. As previously stated, the Core Strategy preparation was already underway before the framework was introduced however the Council feels that there was adequate opportunity to take account of the framework and this has been reflected in the submission core strategy. There have been amendments made to the Core Strategy in light of representations made at the consultation stage and the Council are now happy that it is compliant. Overall the Council are satisfied that it takes into account the NPPF.

Mr. R. Bolton believes that the implications of the gestation period of the Core Strategy has had implications with regard to the ability to be compliant with the framework. The duty to cooperate is an agreement to reach agreement in the future, not to identify what the issues are to be resolved. There has been a consequence of the framework coming out
mid way through the process however, it is important that the plan to be adopted makes sure that it does not include within it policies which would frustrate the intentions of the framework. Specific policies of concern are included in Mr. Bolton’s response to the Inspector.

Mr. R. Shepherd clarified that previous comments made in this regard have been taken account of and responses have been provided on the Consultation website.

1.8 Has the Core Strategy been positively prepared and, if so, in which ways? Subject to more detailed discussions with regard to housing, employment and retail, does it fully meet the objectively assessed development needs of the area? And does it do so with sufficient flexibility to adapt to change? And what might be the consequences of any insufficient flexibility?

Mr. R. Shepherd confirmed that the Council’s response did set out the various documents in terms of how the Core Strategy and the Housing and Economic Development Background Paper have been prepared. In terms of some of the issues raised by other parties he emphasised that the Council have considered alternative development locations, all of which have been documented and assessed within the Sustainability Appraisal as part of the Integrated Impact Assessment which has been submitted. Through the Memo of Understanding with Sheffield City Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council have tried to show flexibility in terms of housing targets and cross boundary needs. Additionally, the Council have also taken account of the Heritage Impact Assessment and addressed the concerns raised by English Heritage. Subsequent changes made as a result of this have been accepted by English Heritage who only have one issue yet to be resolved however, if Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council make the change suggested to them then English Heritage will have withdrawn all of their initial concerns. As such, the Council do believe that the plan has been positively prepared and this is evidenced within the documents which have been referred to and submitted.

Mr. M. Good queried the reduction from the RS target down from 1,160 to 850. This is not considered to be within the ethos of positive planning and the NPPF requirement to significantly boost the supply of housing. Mr. Good would question why the annual need for affordable housing has not been given greater weight. In terms of flexibility, the minimum requirement stated by the Council does not go far enough and Mr. Good would ask the Council when they would be seeking to review the plan, if indeed this is their intention.

Ms. J. Hodson does not think that the plan is positively prepared as it is unclear about meeting the housing requirements. The way the under provision is being looked at against the RS target is incorrect. The plan should be to build in as much flexibility as possible and this means not holding back the release of greenbelt supply. The Council have acknowledged within their submission (KSD7) that they do not currently have a 5 year supply of sites, therefore if sites are not brought forward quickly to remedy the deficit then the Council will face S.78 appeals on preferred sites but not allocated, or worse from the Council’s perspective, on sites which are not preferred and out of kilter with the strategy in distribution terms.

Mr. A. Wood stated that in relation to phasing, the question of flexibility seems to have a different understanding around the table. Mr. Wood’s understanding is that in terms of the Core Strategy it is the ability to respond and adjust to changes without losing grip on the spatial objectives that you are aiming towards. He noted that the NPPF is silent on the issue of phasing therefore this is a decision which needs to be made locally. Mr. Wood reiterated his point that phasing is fundamental to flexibility otherwise there can be cherry picking of sites and that will not allow any room for manoeuvre in the later stages of the
plan. So, if we assume that we are entering the plan period when the housing market is not particularly ‘hot’ then if the best sites in terms of market demand are developed early then when there may be a need for increase in the rate of house building later in the plan period, then it would be harder to get those sites to come forward therefore this highlights why phasing is critical to the question of flexibility.

Ms. J. Hodson responded to Mr. Wood’s comments by stating that where there is a situation where there is no 5 year land, introducing phasing is at odds with the objective to boost the supply of housing and get sites delivered. Phasing is holding back land which frustrates delivery.

Mr. R. Bolton stated that you cannot increase flexibility by increasing constraint policies. If you extend the period of the plan e.g. to 2031 or beyond, the council will need to make extra allocations. In doing so they are planning for the future that gives them the ability to be flexible. If demand is not there then sites will not be taken up. Increasing the number of allocations in a planned way is the best way of achievement.

Mr. M. Hepburn reiterated points made by Mr. Good, Ms. Hodson and Mr. Bolton, in particular relating to insufficient flexibility of the plan. He would fully agree that the likelihood would be a number of planning appeals. The failure to provide much needed infrastructure, affordable housing and affordability problems go hand in hand, increased commuting and the problems associated with this. Mr. Hepburn added that Rotherham is the only local planning authority with a housing requirement below that which was given in the Regional Strategy – a matter which will be discussed under matter 3 of this Hearing.

Mr. I. Lyle To be positively prepared, the plan needs to cover the environmental, economic and social role of sustainable development.

Mr. R. Shepherd highlighted that a lot of the detail relating to comments made under this item will be covered under other matters. In terms of housing targets and Rotherham’s backlog, the Council have indicated that supply will take account of the backlog against the locally derived housing target which is based on the 2008 housing population projection. As previously indicated, the Regional Strategy is out of date and has been abolished and the Council’s view was that the most appropriate approach was to use the housing target based on 2008 projections.

1.9 What are the physical and environmental constraints to development in the Borough? To what extent does the Core Strategy take account of the Framework paragraph 112 concerning the best and most versatile agricultural land?

The Inspector added that as part of the submissions, Rotherham has a number of agricultural features that are a constraint to development, however he could not see reference to listed buildings and conservation areas, though he is sure they have been considered by the Council. Another point was regarding the administrative restraints mentioned around Sheffield’s boundaries and he asked if this is anything of significance with regard to Rotherham. Additionally, with regard to the HS2 Proposals, a copy of the plan of the Broad Route Corridor is to be provided to the Programme Officer.

Ms. H. Sleigh stated that the Council have been through a long process of looking at potential development sites around the borough in parallel to the Core Strategy. Early on in this process it was apparent that a Greenbelt Review would be needed and the Council proposed 2 areas for major development. The Council have looked at a number of physical and environmental constraints, those which are listed within paragraph 15 are the natural environmental constraints. There are also historical environmental constraints
which have been considered but which are not listed in paragraph 15, these are: listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and scheduled parks and gardens. In addition to these constraints other issues which have been considered are the presence of flood plains, air quality management areas and borough boundaries. Detailed assessments of all sites are included in the Sites and Policies document. In terms of the agricultural land quality, there is the limestone ridge to the east of the borough around the eastern part of Dinnington, a significant amount of which is Grade 2 agricultural land. It has all been assessed in the IIA. This is only one factor of a wide variety of factors which has been looked at.

Mr. V. Betts questioned whether Policies CS3 and CS20 do actually minimise the loss of quality agricultural land. He explained that some agricultural land to the west of Dinnington sits on a magnesia limestone ridge which is part of a unique strip within the UK.

Mr. I. Lyle stated that it is not clear that the Council have fully understood and taken into account the comprehensive nature and interlinking between heritage sites and listed buildings, specifically regarding inter-visibility between sites and assets. This would be a significant restraint.

Ms. H. Sleigh the agricultural land referred to by Mr. Betts forms only a small proportion of the land which is proposed to be put forward for development. Regard has been made to a number of other factors including protected species. If this area was to be the preferred area to proceed with then significantly greater analysis would be required. The connectivity to Dinnington town centre and transport interchange does make this area the more favourable for this reason. Policies CS3 and CS20 do look at minimising development agricultural land.

As has been previously stated, the Heritage Impact Assessment was not finalised before the plan was submitted. However, with the guidance and advice from English Heritage who have agreed with the Heritage Impact Assessment, efforts have been made with the two landowners (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and William Wentworth Estates) and a project group has enabled work on this to go as far as is possible and this is detailed within the sites and policies document.

Mr. V. Betts Dinnington West is not the only area which has over-wintering birds, this is also true for the Dinnington area in general. There are also other protected species which use the Dinnington area as hunting ground.

1.10 Have exceptional circumstances been demonstrated to justify any alteration to Green Belt boundaries? Is the matter adequately considered in the Core Strategy, or is too much reliance being placed on the Sites and Policies DPD? Should any additions or deletions be made to the locations identified in Policy CS4 for broad extent of changes? Are paragraphs 5.2.11 and 5.2.41 consistent?

The Inspector queries the relationship between paragraphs 5.2.11 and 5.2.41. Should paragraph 5.2.11 say ‘a’ strategic greenbelt review of all greenbelt in the borough has also been undertaken as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy. This review has assessed broad locations for their relative contribution to fulfilling the purposes of greenbelt policies as set out in the NPPF.
Mr. A. Duncan confirmed that this understanding is correct. He stated that this has been a two stage process. When it talks about ‘land parcels’ this is not site specific as it was a strategic review.

The Inspector moved on to look at 5.2.41 and asked would it clarify if it said ‘as already noted the Council has reviewed broad locations in its greenbelt to enable the allocation of sufficient land to meet its housing and employment land targets and enable the delivery of appropriate supporting services and facilities. In undertaking the assessment of sites against sustainability credentials and greenbelt purposes consideration was given to areas of search in the urban fringe. A more detailed examination is being made of particular greenbelt sites as part of the preparation of the sites and policies DPD.

Ms. H. Sleigh stated that the Council does consider that the exceptional circumstances have been set out in reviewing of the current target and the housing and employment needs. It was very clear that there is not enough land available. Studies have been done on potential development sites in the borough. The exceptional circumstance of not having sufficient land is justification for looking at greenbelt sites

The Inspector clarified the two main exceptional circumstances as being the assessed need and the inadequate supply of land on brownfield land and within the urban area given assumptions about densities and any limited prospect of switching employment land to housing.

Ms. H. Sleigh referred to amendments to policy CS4 in focus change 51.

Ms. C. Harron questioned, following the confirmation of the exceptional circumstances, is it employment needs or solely housing that requires the release of greenbelt.

Ms. H. Sleigh confirmed that it is employment land as well but did clarify that this is purely relating to release of greenbelt, not the safeguarding of greenbelt.

Mr. J. Hobson welcomed the approach for looking at exceptional circumstances. This demonstrates that the Council cannot justify sufficient land on brownfield sites or within settlement boundaries. There is still an issue in regard to the wait for the review to come forward. The strategic greenbelt review should be given more weight at this time to look at sites. There is an opportunity to look at the greenbelt sites sooner as part of the Core Strategy.

With specific reference to Bassingthorpe, there is a strong case to demonstrate exceptional circumstances, being the ability to deliver growth to Rotherham and the sustainability of the site. This has been assessed as part of the IIA in terms of alternatives. The two policies hampering this are CS4 and CS6, which is misguided.

The Inspector commented that he will be looking at this issue in more detail and flagged this issue up with the Programme Officer.

Mr. A. Wood referred to the recent Ministerial Statement indicating that the issue of unmet housing needs is not an exceptional circumstance and asked what the Council think the implications are of this.

In relation to focus change 52, asked if the Council have given sufficient thought to the idea of allocating some new areas of greenbelt in order to secure a sustainable settlement for in the future.
Why are some other areas of land not being put forward to the plan which have been suggested to the Council.

Ms. J. Hodson referred to an House of Commons library note which goes through the CPRE objections. There is a need to plan for the longer term. Ms. Hodson stated that she was unsure about the timing of the second tranche of work relative to the release of sites and site documents.

Mr. R. Bolton stated that the objective of a plan is to achieve sustainable development. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without some negative impact, for example, the release from greenbelt. The more important element isn’t the large single urban extension at Bassingthorpe, but it is a range of sites which have been correctly identified which will deliver both the needs of the district and deliver this in a sustainable way.

Mr. M. Good supported the Council’s position on a tough decision, particularly over greenbelt issues. However, it would be useful for more clarity on when the greenbelt sites will be brought forward to assist the Council in achieving the 5 year supply. Paragraph 4.22 of the Whole Plan Viability Study (KSD5) highlights the issues in Rotherham in terms of needing sites to be brought forward at an early stage. Policy CS4, would be useful if this was amended slightly. The Inspector requested that Mr. Good draft something in collaboration with Ms. Hodson and Mr. Bolton, where appropriate, for discussion later in the hearing.

Mr. V. Betts quoted from a letter from Nick Bowles, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Planning. Additionally, Eric Pickles has made a statement that the need for homes is not exceptional circumstances under the NPPF rules. Mr. Betts stated that the use of brownfield sites needs to be maximised if any greenbelt is to be saved.

Ms. C. Harron Supportive of CS 4 but questions the use of the word ‘limited’ within CS4 in relation to ‘limited review’.

Mr. R. Bolton stated that greenbelt is one of the aspects which has to be considered in terms of paragraph 152 in terms of impact.

Ms. H. Sleigh responded that the Council feel that they have evidenced exceptional circumstances to accommodate its housing and employment needs and any supporting services required. The densities used to assess sites is explained in the sites and policies document.

Mr. Hobson’s point is noted and will be discussed further as part of the Bassingthorpe farm discussion.

CS4 states that any the greenbelt boundary will be amended and any remaining greenbelt land will be protected. The Council are reluctant to point to specific areas as it prejudices the work in sites and policies document. Dependent upon the outcome of this process, there will be a further draft of the sites and policies document in February 2014 including the detailed greenbelt review.

The suggestion that Mr. Good made relating to the strategic locations is welcomed and the Council will be happy to look at rewording.

Mr. A. Duncan referred to Ms. Harron’s comment about the use of the word ‘limited’ and stated that there will be a focussed review taking account of the settlement pattern as set out in policy CS1.
Ms. C. Harron felt that this still contradicts the rest of the wording. The Inspector invited Ms. Harron to draft new wording.

1.11 Are the proposals for safeguarded land justified, with particular regard to the areas of search?

Ms. H. Sleigh added that the Council have removed reference to the map (focus change 56) and it is suggested that this map has been deleted. The broad areas of search for safeguarded land had focussed on the alternative urban extensions that had been considered in the IIA of 2011. It was subsequently identified that other areas ought to be considered as well.

Mr. A. Wood asked how this is workable in practice. It would be preferable for the sites to be left in greenbelt.

Ms. V. King stated that the 5 year period within which the Council will provide safeguarded land is not well beyond the plan period. General view is 10 or 15 years.

Mr. A. Wood asked if his interpretation of focus change 58 was correct in that safeguarded land has been identified without reference to its suitability for sustainability potential

Mr. J. Hobson reiterated comments made in terms of safeguarded land if one assumes that additional housing is required based on the assessment of the housing market are then it becomes apparent that the number of dwellings will be significantly more so there will no longer be the required flexibility.

Ms. C. Harron concurred with comments made that the period of safeguarding beyond the plan should be 10 years and not 5 years and as previously stated, the plan period should be extended to 2031.

Mr. V. Betts queried whether, once the review of the greenbelt boundary identifies the new boundary, does the greenbelt have to be released all at once or can it be released as and when is necessary.

Mr. R. Bolton also believes that the 5 year period is insufficiently and should be 10 years. The NPPF highlights clearly about safeguarded land and so this plan should clearly follow this.

Mr. V. Betts asked if developers have land banks which encompass safeguarded land.

Ms. H. Sleigh confirmed that the identification of safeguarded land is in line with the framework. The 5 year period is identified under focus change 55 and having taken advise from the Planning Advisory Service are still happy that this is adequate. The framework does not state that the quantum of developments has to be determined. Safeguarded land has the same status as greenbelt land but is removed from greenbelt. Only upon review of the plan would safeguarded land be released and only if it is safe to do so.

In response to Mr. Wood’s comments, the sites being identified as safeguarded land have been fully assessed at this stage. In reviewing the plan, the sites will need to be assessed again, they are not released for development now.
1.12 Have any reasonable alternative options been assessed to achieve the economic, social and environmental objectives in a sustainable way? Has the correct balance been achieved between these 3 dimensions? Does the Core Strategy set out the most appropriate strategy against reasonable alternatives? Why are the chosen locations for growth the most sustainable?

Helen Sleigh (RMBC) noted that the Integrated Impact Assessment (submitted in June 2013) - Table 1.1 - details the various stages of assessment of core strategy objectives, options and scenarios and policy directions and the SA work that was done in the early stages by various different consultancies.

In 2009 looked at urban extension options - 3 Options for growth, employment, land and strategies against it and Rotherham Town Centre. The SA report at that time was prepared by WSP on the Council’s behalf. The SA was published at the same time as the core strategy. In 2011 the Council moved towards a final version of the core strategy with the revised open extension options and the draft policies and they were assessed against the baseline. The Council has considered various options for sustainable growth through plan preparation and detailed the processes undertaken and each stage they have summarised the key stages in the core strategy document.

Section 5 looks at options and policies of the core strategy and it assesses the core strategy objectives against the sustainability appraisal objectives in Table 5.1.

Paragraph 26 – at each stage of policy development the SA and the integrated impact assessment has recommended changes to policy which the Council has made every effort to encompass within their policies and at every stage have amended policies or looked at the key concerns arising from the sustainability appraisal and the integrated impact assessment - which includes a health impact statement and an inequalities impact assessment.

Section 5.3 highlights the assessment of the policy directions. This approach has been summarising sustainability appraisal work that has been done previously by the other consultants but in the Council’s view it is a very good summary of what has happened previously and how the consultation that has been undertaken and the SA have influenced the direction of travel.

Section 5.9 is a summary of the urban extensions considered.

Section 5.7 looks at the various alternative open extensions that have been considered i.e. Dinnington East & West and Bassingthorpe Farm and these have all been mapped within the document and these along with the individual assessments are available to see.

Topic Papers – these are produced for each of the sustainability appraisal topics and then assess the contribution or otherwise the policy would make to the achievement of that sustainability appraisal objective. These are detailed from Section 6 through to 20. The results have been incorporated from every stage into the core strategy. It sets out how the Council came to a decision as to why they have selected Bassingthorpe Farm and Dinnington East against the alternatives.

Mr Lyle:-
2 criticisms. Firstly in terms of the alternatives that have been promoted there are 10 options listed and these seem to relate to individual sub-areas of the disperse settlement pattern of the borough. There are a few options at Dinnington and Kiveton Park but there seems to be only one main option which is Bassingthorpe Farm. So in terms of the
question – have any reasonable alternatives been assessed to achieve the economic, social and environmental objectives in a sustainable way, then there does not seem to be an alternative that has been considered as part of that process, although some of the other alternatives such as Rawmarsh North, Ravenfield etc. might go some way towards that. There does not seem to be a direct comparator to the Bassingthorpe Farm extension process. Questioned whether there has really been reasonable alternatives? Throughout the process it is the view that insufficient weight has been accorded to the issue of protection enhancement of heritage assets as required by NPPF. One of the key environmental objectives of NPPF is “contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural built and historic environment”. It is as much a key point of sustainability as its use relating to adequate housing land and protection of other environmental assets.

Mr Hepburn:-
Disagree that alternative options have been assessed. Concern that preferred chosen locations are more sustainable particularly in relation to Dinnington, Wickersley/Bramley/Ravenfield. The Council have assessed East and West Dinnington. East Dinnington includes areas of landscape value, more versatile land, agricultural land and is very close to 2 special sites of interest which would exacerbate congestion in central Dinnington. In relation to Bramley the core strategy identifies 6% growth but for Wickersley/Bramley/Ravenfield this should be 9% to achieve parity with the other principal settlements. Rather than the number of small allocations that have been selected the clients say LDF 452 is a more sustainable location for growth and would provide a larger masterplanned extension to the settlement and would enable proper planning of the area.

Ms Hodson:–
The Sustainability appraisal has looked at the 11 locations but could not see that different levels of growth in the different locations had been appraised (in relation to map 5 of the submitted plan). Not sure if a variant has been looked at with various amounts of growth in different locations. Secondly on the chosen locations had noted that in Dinnington there was an issue with the land to the East of Dinnington (page 41, para 55 of SA) and that sets out problems with the agricultural land at the East of Dinnington and have noted some of the issues with Bassingthorpe Farm – listed buildings and heritage issues. The main point is cannot follow rationale of the growth locations – not clear in translation from the SA to Map 5 of the plan which shows the distribution.

Mr Bolton:–
Firstly it does not appear that the integrated impact assessment of the core strategy considered alternative levels of housing provision. There are reasonable alternatives to the levels of housing provision that is being made. They include what would previously have considered reasonable in terms of Regional Strategy and they would suggest the figure they propose under matter 3 which is a figure which has been proposed for a number of submissions. There are 2 other higher alternative figures which could have been considered. Referred to cases in line with European acts which clearly identifies in the guidance that when undertaking spatial planning should look at higher and lower levels of provision as part of a reasonable assessment. ACTION:- Mr Bolton to give copy of European Act to Programme Officer for the Inspector

As well as looking at general locations for growth, the integrated impact assessment looked at suitable locations like Wickersley and Treeton and they would support this. In terms of Rawmarsh they would suggest that the assessment took into account an old landfill site in Rawmarsh and would suggest that in that area there is still the capability of delivering housing north of Rawmarsh. Third point – should be aware that there is integrated impact assessment for sites of policies document May 2013 and that looks at the actual allocations e.g. East of Dinnington and assesses them at a lower scale. In
relation to the amendment would draw attention to Appendix F which does assess role of individual sites in terms of their green belt function.

Mr Wood:–
Raised the question about strategic options starting point. His view is that there is a missed opportunity because strategic objections are starting from where can we accommodate the growth that we need to find space for. Would argue that the question should be can the development we wish to see in the borough contribute to a broader set of strategic needs. A higher or lower scale of development could contribute. Council should consider that Rotherham has several challenges other than the need for new homes. New development could be used as a lever to tackle challenges i.e. brownfield land and providing affordable homes and putting these developments on greenfield sites is a missed opportunity. Would like to see considerations for options how the implementation of policy can achieve broader strategic objectives.

Mr Bolton:–
There are problems with the soundness of the plan and to take the approach to move away from clear guidance to not produce a plan would be another invitation to lawyers to challenge the soundness of the plan so he would advise against it. There is no point allocating sites that cannot be delivered. NPPF compliant schemes have not been able to deliver everything, partly due to other costs of development. Need to be clear when looking at sustainability and look across all 3 aspects.

Mr Good:–
It is important to say that NPPF is pro growth. Concern regarding the level of growth which has been assessed and believe that it hasn’t considered the higher levels of growth and impact on districts and the sustainability of the plan.

MR Wood:–
There is an idea that the needs of the present seem to get a raw deal which seems entirely wrong. Nothing has been highlighted as anti growth or development. The growth and development that is needed should be a key mechanism to deliver the broader strategic objectives – the plan is not just to build houses.

Mr Good:–
Agree it is about a wide range of objectives and housing needs the require further consideration.

Helen Sleigh
Spatial Strategy - In preparation of the strategy the Council did look at different options for delivering the regional spatial strategy target for housing in 2009. Looked at options of over 30,000 homes, how they could deliver that level of growth within the borough and assessed 600 sites at that time. Jacobs assisted and had undertaken sustainability assessments in 2005 which was done on behalf of SY sub-region to support regional spatial strategy. All sites were assessed and a database of sites has been maintained. A number of factors were looked at and inputted into the site allocations database and this has guided the selection of sites and 2 broad locations of growth referred to in the core strategy. They have assessed a higher housing number which is not included in final impact assessment. It was prepared as an independent strategy and is based on more than just the sustainability of location sites but on actual location of sites. Appendix D makes it clear why the Council have reached their decision for the core strategy in identifying 2 locations of growth. Map 5 shows how much development will be accommodated in each settlement grouping. Much information has already been made publicly available.
Site Assessment - In 2013 they did a detailed assessment of all sites which is available for the Inspector to see. It’s not just about locations for growth but also about a number of other sites including brownfield and greenfield which are not in the greenbelt which have been identified and reassessed to feed into the map, numbers and targets in core strategy policy 1. The Council have a good track record of delivery on brownfield sites. Waverley is on an opencast site that had a former coking works and deep mine; they reclaimed Wath Manvers in the Dearne Valley area delivering housing and employment land; reclaimed Dinnington colliery site through English partnerships to create substantial areas of employment land. There has been significant numbers of planning applications where they do bring forward housing and employment opportunities. Integrated impact assessment has highlighted issues relating to individual sites and for Council to select alternatives. Regard has been given to woodland rights of way – emerging sites and policies document will deal with issues. They have relied on a landscape character assessments and a landscape sensitivity analysis has been undertaken of particular areas. The Council have looked at sites but have to make sure the plan is deliverable. They have done extensive consultation at every stage and feedback was submitted at each stage.

Historic Environment – clarified that the integrated impact assessment had not included the final results of the Heritage Impact Assessment. The Council was looking for growth at Bassingthorpe Farm for various reasons documented at Appendix D of the Integrated Impact Assessment. The Heritage Impact Assessment has resulted in a revised concept framework and English Heritage support the work that has been done.

Mr Betts:-
Alternative site issues – feel there is an inconsistency of reasoning from one area to another. RMBC state that Bassingthorpe Farm is close to Sheffield. Dinnington East is far away and so the better alternative site would be Dinnington West

Ms Hodson:-
It has to be clear that sustainability appraisal has informed the strategy. The Council has accepted that the translation to map 5 is not clear but there is a missing bit of interpretation against that document and the document they have. The document the Council is relying on is dated May 2013 but that is after plan was drafted and consulted on.

The Inspector queried Ms Hodson’s comment that she was not 100% sure about the link between the sustainability appraisal and map 5 and she thinks there is a missing link. Ms Hodson confirmed that was correct.

Andy Duncan
The documents were submitted in June 2013 and complied with the regulations.

The Inspector queried if Ms Hodson would have expected some months gap between the sustainability appraisal and the submission of the document. Ms Hudson confirmed that was correct.

Andy Duncan
Sustainability appraisal work has been on-going for many years. The final IIA is dated June 13 to coincide with the submission of the other documents. The IIA and SA purpose is not to take decisions but to inform the strategy and arrive at the best solution to accommodate growth. Ryan Shepherd confirmed that previous iterations of the Integrated Impact Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal have been submitted to the Inspector.
1.13 How relevant to the Core Strategy is survey material which informed the Regional Strategy?

Mr. A. Duncan stated that the settlement hierarchy in the former RS policies YH4 and YH5 envisaged Rotherham being a sub-regional town and Dinnington being a principal town and the implication of that being that they would take commensurate levels of growth as part of the region as a whole. This was based on some work undertaken for the whole region. Since then the Council have carried out a lot of work looking at settlement hierarchy and capacity of settlements to accept growth, which builds on and possibly supersedes the regional ‘broad brush’ work. As such, in terms of spatial strategy, the local level work is deemed to be more relevant by the Council.

Housing targets will be discussed under Matter 3.

In terms of employment land, there was some broad brush work to inform the regional strategy however, further work has been done at a local level which is more relevant.

The Council’s work with Doncaster Council in particular and also Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils on Minerals has taken Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council forward in terms of understanding their requirements.

The only regional evidence being relied upon is the Low Carbon and Renewable Energy study done for the Yorkshire and Humber however this was also supplemented by a local study. This is to be subject to a discussion later in the hearing.

1.14 Is there a clear vision for the future pattern of development with particular regard to housing, employment and transport proposals? Should any settlement be added to any level in the hierarchy?

Helen Sleigh re-iterated that the integrated impact assessment contains justification for the broad spatial strategy set out in the Core Strategy.

Mr Hepburn:-
Bramley/Wickersley – Raised concerns the housing growth and policy CS1 is 5% for Bramley/Wickersley compared to 9%. This was picked up at 5.2.20 – page 47 of core strategy. Within that paragraph discussion of Bramley/ Wickersley acknowledges that it is in close proximity to a rural location and close to transport – these locations are good to provide new growth. LDF 452 would provide a single site that could deal with the amount of growth for Bramley. Employment Opportunities – cannot see justification in reduction in comparison to other principal settlements for growth.

The Inspector queried the growth increase from 6% to 9%.

Mr Hepburn:-
Noted that the Focused Changes would take the growth to 6% which would equate to 700 dwellings, and the 9% suggested would be 1100 dwellings (so another 400 properties).

Mr Wood:-
If there is greater spatial emphasis on the Sheffield side of borough then there would be more scope for integrated public transport

Ms Harron:-
Waverley is situated further down the settlement hierarchy. This has not been justified and should be identified as a principal settlement for growth.
Ms Hodson:–
Growth at Wickersley/Bramley would provide good transport links. It is good for growth and delivery of homes and employment and links to Hellaby which is positive. More should be made of this area and they are offering 2 scenarios. The first is the increase in percentage of growth specifically to the Wickersley and Bramley area or secondly include them in greater urban area and uplift growth to urban area. Either of these alternatives would have growth in strategic locations. She queried why Swinton and Kilnhurst were not included as a higher settlement location as they have good transport links. She supports the increase to 9% asked what the figure would be to Rotherham Urban if Wickersley/Bramley was to be increased.

Mr Bolton:–
Table 15 of his August 2012 submission sets out proposed redistribution for the whole area. With regard to use of percentages it is difficult but there is an ability to increase. There is capacity to increase Swinton, Wickersley, and Anston and Treeton. Supportive of level sought in Dinnington

Mr Wood:–
Wickersley/Bramley is more accessible to the motorway than than the town centre. There is more opportunity in Waverley. There are also ideas in the pipeline for growth in Handsworth, Sheffield which is close to Waverley and so there are opportunities to consider more sustainable development in that area.

Mr Bolton:–
Waverley Expansion – there is a bit of greenbelt between Waverley and Handsworth which has been promoted. This has been to address Sheffield needs and will not impact on the levels and needs for Rotherham.

Ms Harron:–
Housing in Waverley – need to recognises that demand is deliverable and so Waverley should be higher up the settlement hierarchy.

Council Response:– Ryan Shepherd
Directed the Inspector to responses that have been given to past consultations but highlighted that Bramley/Wickersley have different characteristics to the Rotherham urban area and the view is that a slightly lower level of development than other principal settlements for growth is appropriate. In terms of the railway at Swinton, the services at the station are poor so the sustainability credential is misleading. In response to Waverley the Council’s strategy has regard to existing planning permissions that are in place so Waverley has not been identified as a principal settlement for growth because they are not looking at further growth in the future.

The Inspector asked the Council to clarify the different characteristics in Bramley/Wickersley

Council Response:– Ryan Shepherd
In terms of the settlement it is linked by the main road but separated by green belt from the urban area and early work looked at travel to work patterns and that area is different.

Ms Harron:–
Waverley – In relation to the Council’s justification for not moving Waverley higher up as they say there will not be a significant amount of development in future. There are only a 100 houses at moment but more are in the pipeline over the plan period so this is significant.
Mr Hepburn:– 
Bramley/Wickersley – Do not see this as a distinct village. He states it has a capacity as a settlement growth to increase to 9%. The Council settlement report dated 2009 says that it could provide necessary growth as other than greenbelt there are few other constraints

Ms Hodson:–  
Firstly, states no gap between Bramley/Wickersley and main urban area as it is co-joined on the main Bawtry Rd and so he does not consider you are entering a separate settlement. Secondly, Bawtry Rd has got a high level bus route. Thirdly there are several sites that are under construction in the area. It is an area where homes are delivered and are coming forward now which indicates its an area where people want to live and bring houses to the market.

Mr Bolton:– 
Supports Ms Hudson in that the area can be relied upon to deliver.

Council Response:– Andy Duncan  
It is clear that parties are representing clients that have sites around the borough and that has a bearing on settlement hierarchy. The Council have drawn up the settlement hierarchy and policy CS1 based on extensive work on settlement capacity and sustainability. The Council would have to agree to disagree on Bramley/Wickersley regarding the Rotherham urban area – the Council’s view is that is is separated by Rotherham Greenbelt. The Council would agree with Mr Wood not to add more traffic congestion to the motorway in the Wickersley/Bramley area. The Council considers that policy CS1, growth and reasons in core strategy are a sound argument.

1.15 Should the Core Strategy identify land at Bassingthorpe Farm as a broad location for growth? What are the constraints to its development, and how could they be reduced or overcome? What are its sustainability credentials? What is the basis of the estimate of 2,400 dwellings? How would its development assist the regeneration of Rotherham town centre (see Fact Sheet No 4 – CSP/17) and the objectives of Rotherham Renaissance?

Inspector – would like to discuss what prevents Bassingthorpe Farm being identified in the core strategy as a strategic allocation. Would that mean that the start of its development could be brought forward and would it mean more dwellings could be delivered within the plan development?

Council Response:– Helen Sleigh  
Work has been ongoing by the Council to investigate the delivery of Bassingthorpe Farm as a significant element of the core strategy. A significant amount of work is being undertaken to support the framework and the Council has undertaken a viability appraisal to ensure delivery of the site. The Council has had significant support from Atlas and they have facilitated the way we have worked and ensured they provided sufficient information to the Inspector as a significant area of growth in the future in terms of employment and residential needs in the heart of Rotherham urban area. BF is close to the town centre. The Council looked at transport movement, consultants were appointed and entered into discussions with the transport team in Council. The Council has modelled transport impacts throughout the borough in relation to BF and services ie. School and shops. However there are services and facilities in Greasbrough and Riverside House, Library which is not far from BF. There are links on how we get people from the proposed new development into town centre. Studies in 2012/13 have concluded that fed into
development of concept framework. Signet Planning leading on this. When draft was completed it had a viability assessment done which identified areas of further work that needed to be done. Undertook consultation on concept framework – have previously done consultation in BF area in 2009 and again in 2011.

Nothing prevents it from coming forward at present as a strategic allocation. The Council have done an assessment of alternative urban extensions that looked at where the greenbelt boundary could be re-drawn.

**Inspector** – Could the core strategy say that Bassingthorpe Farm could be identified as a strategic allocation?

**Council Response:** Andy Duncan
At the time the Council began work on the Core Strategy it did not feel it could be a strategic allocation but they have now done extensive studies and so have reached a point where the evidence base has gone ahead of where it should have been but a bit too late to make that change at the last stage before submission.

**Inspector** – Housing Numbers – looking at 1700 new houses – presume the plan period is 2013-28. On that assumption does it mean that the bringing forward of the land as a strategic allocation means that development could start quicker and what is impact in terms of numbers

**Council Response:** Helen Sleigh
Confirmed this could be brought forward quicker. The Consultants who did the viability assessment did look at whether an early start could be made on site and how many homes could be delivered. They considered 125 dwellings per annum which showed positive residual value and commitment from partners to bring the site forward and would aid the delivery of 1700 dwellings.

**Mr Hobson:**
Encouraging comments in terms of looking to reassign the site as a strategic allocation. In terms of accelerating the site in terms of delivery if could secure the strategic allocation then it would secure commitment to move work on. They would want commitment of strategic allocation before moving things earlier. Even if this is given it would be a challenge to get up to 1700 dwellings over the life of the core strategy. Because they believe BF is critical to deliver homes then it is important that commitment is given at this stage of core strategy.

**Inspector** – The main effects of identifying Bassingthorpe Farm as a strategic allocation rather than broad location for growth were summarised as: providing a pro-active vision, greater certainty and quicker delivery of homes and presumably it is more effective for delivery of the core strategy.

**Mr Wood:**
Glad for protection of greenbelt. In terms of strategic allocation is there a difference in planning permission process?. The Council played up proximity in relation to town centre but have not referred to value as green wedge which would brings benefits in to town. Development on sites objected to would have overall harm to function of green wedge. In relation to phasing and spatial emphasis to Sheffield – BF could go back to a later phase which would buy more time that some of the controversial issues could be dealt with. In other cases planning permission has been given which does not meet the Masterplan so would need to see stronger assurance that what turns out fits the masterplan.

**Mr Lyle:**
Would prefer that Bassingthorpe Farm is not identified as a strategic allocation. They accept that there will be some potential for development in the wider context of the site that would not have potential harm to heritage sites. In making it strategic allocation then it is making it a recommendation.

**Inspector** – confirmed he will weigh up all the evidence and then write to the Council. Any modifications would be publicised and there would be a consultation period of 6 weeks. If he is persuaded to make it Strategic Allocation then the infringement would be it would be suitable for some amount of housing during the plan period. Modifications will be publicised and then possibly another hearing. He would give as much opportunity as possible for people to comment.

**Mr Lyle**:-
Queried whether this would allow the reintroduction of greenbelt group to make comments to main modifications

**Inspector** – It is natural justice to allow comments. If there was a consultation on the main modification it would be on whether it would be a strategic allocation NOT on BF as a whole.

**Mr Lyle**:-
Remaining objection from English Heritage – statement on common ground – policy CS1 – wish to maintain 2nd objection to the policy. If would recommend strategic allocation then would need to be accompanied by other policies to address concerns from English Heritage

**Mr Bolton**:-
The timescales given and delivery rates do not suggest that 1700 houses will be delivered in plan period. If had a 10 year build would build 1250; – if 11 years of build would build 1375 and 12 years gives 1500 builds so 200 short.

**Ms Harron**:-
Noted that higher levels of completions were achieved at Waverley at 150 plus per annum.

**Mr Hobson**:-
Clarified that a strategic allocation is a formal allocation for development. In terms of the issue of green wedge – study area 1 to 250 hectares- 90 hectares would be used for housing etc and the rest for agricultural so would be able to manage a green wedge around BF.

**Mr Good**:-
Flexibility of plan – need to make sure that all sites come forward as early as possible in the plan.

**Inspector** – para 61 say that development at BF can help contribute to delivering aspiration in population to the town centre i.e. people using services and facilities etc. Isn't there a danger in terms of shopping that new people at BF will go to Meadowhall to do shopping? Increase in online shopping – wonder to what extent can expect new residents to shop in town centre at Meadowhall and Parkgate. Para 72 – notes that BF is 2km away from town centre – how long to walk or cycle – is there much provision for cycle parking in town centre?

**Council Response**:- **Ryan Shepherd**
Confirmed Rotherham was not competing with Meadowall. It would promote the renaissance of the Town Centre which provides a range of civic, leisure and other functions. Need to make clear that the BF development enhances Rotherham as the
borough’s primary civic and service centre, and provides other facilities that would be of benefit to BF. The site is close to the town centre so residents are going to need and want to use the facilities in the town centre. The town centre is the main transport hub for all Rotherham residents. Cycle parking cannot comment at moment – will provide more details to the Inspector at a later date.

Helen Sleigh  
Strategic Allocation would be an allocation to progress with master plan and design codes. The Council would support a strategic allocation and this would enable us to move forward quickly. The strategic green belt review has moved away from terminology of green wedge. Have been careful to look for sites that tie in to existing communities and settlements quite tightly rather than having remote communities.

Master plans – Policy CS2 delivering on major sites and detailed master planning and appropriate design codes. The Council have been doing more detailed master planning but not yet got into design code work but have started to look at this in some detail. These will be encouraged on all sites and will be encouraging these processes to take place.

1700 new homes – DTZ have looked at this issue and the Council would hope that like the Waverley delivery of 150 per annum then 1700 dwellings would be delivered during plan period at BF.

Mr Wood:–  
Not reassured that the master planning carries weight at the planning stage.

ACTION:– Inspector asked for all comments on suggestions by 5.00 pm on Friday 8th November

Mr Hobson:–  
Gradients/cycle paths – This has been considered within the concept plan alignment of cycle paths through the site have factored in gradients that would be acceptable to cyclists and pedestrians.

Council Response:– Andy Duncan  
Re: Mr Wood’s concern – The Council will follow a similar approach with Waverley and enter into a planning agreement that in determining outline planning permission would tie into the masterplan. The Council are alert to the fact that the developer doesn’t get permission but it is built into masterplan.

Concept framework done by DTZ – 1700 dwellings over the plan period. Waverley is exceeding that number per annum. Green wedge would no longer be greenbelt. Will seek information on cycle provision for Inspector.

Ms Harron:–  
The masterplan approach is very detailed – has links to conditions in the Masterplan.

At the invitation of the Inspector Antony Jones Save Our Greenbelt (Bassingthorpe Farm) read out a statement on behalf of the Save our Greenbelt Group for Bassingthorpe. He covered main points from majority of the questions listed in today and Tuesdays hearing sessions.

Inspector referred to - Page 4 of the statement, 3rd Bullet point final sentence– "Rotherham also has a large number of unoccupied dwellings which should be used before considering development according to Government Neighbourhood Statistics latest figures
Rotherham has 1.4% of total housing stock valuation list empty”. Inspector went on to say this was a low percentage.

**Mr. A. Jones Save Our Greenbelt (Bassingthorpe Farm)** – stated he didn’t know how this affected other parts of the country but if this percentage is available then it should be looked at as a matter of urgency.

**Inspector** said – a good number of points had been raised and he had already received comments from the Council covering exceptional circumstances, what the Councils view is on this and whether it has been applied, the phasing has been looked at in detail and its advantages/disadvantages, looked at recycling of Brownfield land – looked at in further detail at next Wednesday hearing. Participants were asked to comment on what Mr Jones has said in his statement.

**Mr. J. Hobson** on behalf of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates said some specific issues around Victrex and referred to the constraints plan and the concept framework documents – within this the ring of tiers referred to in statement, he went on to say that these don’t extend to where the development is being proposed, but has been taken into consideration in the framework plan (he asked members to refer to page 80-81). He stated that the site deals with the manufacture of polymers, the chemicals on site are not as hazardous as other sites which manufacture similar products.

**Mr Hobson** went on to cover the issue of mineshafts and ground conditions, he stated that this has been looked into in detail and understand that there have been open mines and mineshafts in the past which have also been explored regarding sustainability and place making and viability assessment which has pushed them to look at master planning. Further aspects were in relation to the viability and infrastructure provision. He stated that they are looking to balance viability by providing infrastructure to make the scheme sustainable from day of construction. He stated that this is a factor which has been part of the decision making process. Mr Hobson did say that challenges are still to be looked at regarding viability and consideration will be given to policy requirements. He stated there are issues in terms of building costs and stated there are to be different alternatives looked at for funding to deliver the sustainable development. He referred to the issue raised on CIL payments being reduced regarding Bassingthorpe Farm, he stated that this has been balanced against the list of the Section 106 agreement measures within the development. He stated that this will continue to be explored between Fitzwilliam Estates and the Local Authority.

**Mr. V. Betts** on behalf of Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington & Anston Action Group - commented on issue raised by Fitzwilliam Estates – the issue of the mining area, casts and shafts has been looked into, however there has been no results of that investigation brought to this meeting and questioned why?

**Mr. J. Hobson** on behalf of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates stated that the assessment work was undertaken by WSP regarding the ground conditions and identified areas where there are likely to be more disturbance, he went on to state that where this is the case, clear mitigation measures had been sort in order to overcome constraints.

**Inspector** said - the Coal Authority has commented on Bassingthorpe Farm and they stated it should be noted that there is a mining legacy there.

**Inspector invited Mrs Jones to speak** – a series of mitigating circumstances had been put forward which indicated that it would not make a desirable site for developers. Mrs Jones stated that people would not want to live next to chemical works or landfill sites.
There are no mention of what the costs would be No one seems to know costs to what these might be, these have not been elaborated.

Mr. J. Hobson on behalf of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates – referred to work carried out by DTZ in terms of viability, an assessment of costs were clearly identified for the work, planning obligations an assessment identified a housing market and demand in area. He stated they had looked at the attractiveness of the area and the housing products which have already been delivered work well. He stated the other aspect of design and place making approach, 4 specific character areas were looked at for linkages into the Town Centre He stated that Bassingthorpe Farm is a new Character area that would develop closer to Greasbrough.

Mrs Jones said – why is development not starting from Town outwards when the point is to generate the Town, She stated that there are locations where building can commenced first from the edge of Town outwards – why not proposed plan?

Mr. J. Hobson on behalf of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates – stated that with regard to the character and market areas, one of the first priorities will be the location closest to the Town Centre and releasing that land first, this will allow opportunity to deliver simultaneously other areas that can bring forward communities and deliver sense of place sooner and get build out rates required to deliver housing strategy.

Mrs Jones said – she looked at the concept plan and the dates for delivery of sites, some developments close to Town Centre, when other areas were looked at on development plan that are moving into the middle of the greenbelt, she stated she couldn’t understand why this needs to happen – this is of no benefit to the community, but more for the builders, planners and developers.

Mr. J. Hobson on behalf of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates said that these areas probably need further sensitivity testing and will include the technical aspects and to delivering in a sustainable manner. He state that this is an additional area of work recognised and will be developed into the master plan.

Helen Sleigh, RMBC Senior Planning Officer (on behalf of the Council) was in support of what Mr Hobson stated and accurately outlined work already undertaken. The Council stated that baseline studies have been discussed and summaries of studies are available on the Council Local Planning web pages. The Council stated that not all have been submitted, but have made clear the one which have been. The Council went on to state the concept framework does summarise these issues.

Helen Sleigh referred to Para 1.2 of response, and stated it is unclear what it is referring to re: figures – this could be growth point Sheffield City Council were finance body who received money from Central Government to fund growth point, nothing to do with development on Greenbelt.

Helen Sleigh stated that it was already covered previously in relation to exceptional circumstances, the justification for changing Greenbelt in Rotherham, the delivery of growth strategy, greenbelt review, had regard to national planning policy framework. The Council has already discussed the impact assessments and covered earlier today the successful Brownfield Strategy in Borough.

Helen Sleigh referred to the issue regarding Dr Paul Buchanan Para 1.15 from the environment agency. The Council stated that they have consulted with them, and held a seminar with English Heritage and Natural England who have passed their comments as
were unable to attend, and has been added to the consultation statement submitted along with comments from Yorkshire Water.

**Helen Sleigh** asked to correct one final point relating to Para 1.19 – Development on Flood Plain – Flood zone 3 which is adjoining to Screwby Lane – this is not a flood plain it is a flood zone 3 The Council explained that development was not intended to go within this zone.

**Mrs Bates** – to provide a written note regarding response to Dr Paul Buchanan question for the inspector.

**Inspector** said – requested site inspection no arrangements have been made and invited Mr Hobson to attend, he wanted to clarify that there would be no issue of entering private land. He asked that Wentworth Woodhouse is covered with Bassingthorpe Farm on the same day.

**Mr. J. Hobson** on behalf of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates – suggested an itinerary is drawn up of where they will see the site from and who should attend.

**Inspector** - asked Mr. Hobson, Mr. Lyle, The Council, Mr & Mrs Jones meet to draft Itinerary.

**1.16 Does the pattern of development, particularly the settlement hierarchy, promote the use of sustainable modes of transport? Subject to the discussion on Monitoring and Implementation, to what extent can the Council implement the various transport proposals and expectations? Should the distribution of growth be slanted more towards Sheffield to reflect the close association of the City and the Borough?**

**Inspector** asked the Council to add to Paragraph 63-64.

**Helen Sleigh** said – the development of core strategy options were looked at in 2009, one of the key elements from that was the development of transport corridors, this was key driver for determining hierarchy and selecting two broader locations and linkages between these areas and the Town Centre, Dinnington and Rotherham urban area. Waverley is mentioned, but was dealt with separately. Waverley had been looked at as part of the development plan, The Council knew at that stage it was opencast coaling operations was still to continue beyond the planned period. Once this is drawn to an end, a decision would be made about how the landfill would be put back and compacted. Transport links and accessibility is a key concern given the close proximity to Sheffield with it being on the border. Joint working on the master plan and delivering planning commission was undertaken with Sheffield City Council to ensure consideration was given on transportation and access issues. The Council went on to say that a study had been done to look at implications of development in the Borough on local highway network. This transport link has been done to support the submission of the core strategy. This study has been submitted to the Inspector. The Council stated that it has investigated all areas and been very supportive of Waverley.

**Mr. V. Betts** on behalf of Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington & Anston Action Group – stated that in addition to Waverley which is close to Sheffield and from speaking with Sheffield, they exports the need to host and imports the labour from Rotherham, with regard to any development this should be close to motorways and public transport, therefore consideration needs to be given to commute times, he mentioned the carbon footprint and fuel costs, highway maintenance. The shorter the journey the less of
an impact it will have on such things. He stated that therefore the answer was yes that all proposed sites the part of the sites closer to Sheffield would be the preferred option.

**Inspector** – clarified Mr Betts statement – as a general principle the closer the site to Sheffield the better it is in terms of location, public transportation.

**Mr. M. Hepburn** – suggested putting development on the western side of Dinington next to the new improved dual carriage way junction rather than to the East side which is furthest away from Sheffield.

**Ms. J. Hodson** – pointed out that this is an enhancement on points raised earlier in the day of growth distribution between Wickersley & Bramley. Bawtry Road is a high quality transport corridor – in her view this area can take more development, given it has good linkages back to centre of Rotherham better than some of other locations, to which some of them are in the eastern part of the village which don’t have that level of accessibility of public transport.

**Inspector** – requested a plan of public transport routes would be useful, possibility some indication of the bus frequency. The Council were asked to provide this information on general routes. Ms Hodson will provide timetable for Bawtry Road.

**Mr. R. Bolton** – stated that when the Council looks at how this is translated when looking at the number in size for proposed sites within the hierarchy do tend to reflect the size of the settlement which in turn reflects the level of public transport available, therefore in principle the way the Council proposed to implement the core strategy does promote the use of sustainable transport, however this is just one aspect that leads to the proposed allocation you have to look at other aspects. Mr Bolton referred to Treeton has being one of the smaller settlements which does have public transport system and Primary School.

**Andy Duncan**, RMBC Planning Policy Manager (on behalf of the Council) – asked to clarify comments from Mr V. Betts – the question of Sheffield overspill, which was described as a reoccurring theme when the plan was drafted, in a previous version of the strategy when it was drafted to accommodate the RSS targets as known then, did allow some of Sheffield’s growth, Rotherham’s core strategy target did include Sheffield growth at the time. Andy Duncan went on to say that the version submitted explicitly a local target that has been derived based upon what the Council consider and therefore is Rotherham’s growth alone. It was confirmed Tuesday under 1.2 RMBC has not asked a neighbouring authority to accommodate growth and vice versa. Andy Duncan clarified the query in regard to the Money aspect, this was purely to do with South Yorkshire growth status, Sheffield Council was the accounting body for the central government funding, who received the money and distributed to the rest of the South Yorkshire Authorities. Andy Duncan stated that this was not a payment to develop Greenbelt, but to provide infrastructure to support new growth.

**Andy Duncan** covered the issue around sustainable modes of transport, which is a founding principle of the strategy. Earlier drafts asked the question regarding consultation and how the Council should distribute growth, where it should go, how, regard to public transport etc. He stated that the passenger transport executive is a close partner, as is the highways agency has commented at various stages of the process. Andy Duncan asked the meeting to look at the work on Sites and Policies document which refers to 600 sites that have been assessed using a model of the transport authority which looks at proximity to transport, routes, frequency, and is based on a Red, Amber, Green assessment of sites.
Mr. V. Betts on behalf of Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington & Anston Action Group – asked to clarify the point he made was that there was no insinuation made that there was overspill from Sheffield, he stated his information was based on what he was informed by a Sheffield Representative at Tuesdays session.

1.17 Are the Core Strategy’s proposals to deliver sustainable growth clearly articulated and adequately justified? Does it adequately set out how much development is intended to happen where, when and by what means it will be delivered?

The Inspector invited the Council to add anything further to paragraph 66, 67 and 68 in relation to representation received;

Helen Sleigh, RMBC Senior Planning Officer on behalf of the Council stated in relation to Para 65 which sets out the amendments made to the core strategy policy CS1 and the increase in numbers which have been added to make clear how the deficit is dealt with at publication stage, this is based on percentages. Helen Sleigh went on to mention that it is stated that they do follow the site selection process they do aim to meet targets of requirement from the core strategy and will aim to meet with sites allocated in future. Helen stated that at this stage the Council has not yet done a detailed phasing policy at this stage, yesterday Policy CS3 was discussed and a suggested change was made to the policy it will be made clear that in considering sites to be allocated, Policy CS3 is about how the sites are selected and how the criteria is set out and the purpose of phasing and it would help for phasing sites to come forward before development. The Council envisage that it will determine the phasing policy and the sites and policies document itself similarly to what has been done for Bassingthorpe Farm, the Council will know the numbers that will be delivered per year and will phase sites to come on at various points in time and dependent on where the access can be obtained at the time. Prioritisation and the most sustainable sites in terms of Highway access and proximity to services and facilities, and where possible to reuse of previously developed land, Helen emphasised that the supply of previously developed land is diminishing and a lot is not available in terms of sufficient size. There are some sites available within Council ownership to which Council is undertaking work to bring these forward in particular with the Housing Association.

Helen Sleigh, RMBC Senior Planning Officer on behalf of the Council referred to the detailed review of Greenbelt, this is being undertaken to support sites policies document setting out the sites that should come forward. She stated that the Council are mindful of the need to maintain the 5 year land supply, as raised earlier in relation to Bassingthorpe Farm, the leading period in terms of bringing these sites forward is master planning, to design the outline of planning applications to which approvals can take up time. In relation to the list of preferred allocations for 2013 changes will be made to these allocations, possible changes to boundaries, which will impact on numbers and actual changes in sites selected. She stated that the Council does not want to pre-determine the sites and policies document too early as there are still things to be done. The Council is aware of the sites allocated and need to ensure these come forward. Discussion are being held with Education in relation to Primary School places, this is still a large and on-going issue. Section 106 agreement has been clarified on sites and site specific requirements which will be essential in certain areas.

Ms. J. Hodson referred to the issue of phasing in CS3, in terms of how and when this is going to be done, she stated that in her opinion this shouldn’t be done, given the way CS3 has been phrased at present “in allocating and determining which sites are the most sites sustainable” in her opinion, she states that they are all going to have to be sustainable. Mrs J. Hodson referred to Criteria A – the need to prioritise the development of the most sustainable sites, she stated the Council will not be allocating sites that are not
sustainable, there is a subdivision with allocation of very sustainable or not sustainable that would imply that, otherwise allocating sustainable sites that can come forward, to which she sees the need for clarity on this section. Mrs J. Hodson referred to the points raised in CS3 are not in her opinion in order of priority, in relation to question about the need to encourage the reuse of development land. In allocating sites there needs to be clarity in what order of priority this is going to be done.

**Mr. R. Bolton** stated that Policy CS3 is introducing a phasing policy which is contrary to national guidance, the points relating to maintaining 5 year land supply is from previous Government guidance, in that the Government is trying to increase housing land and part of this is about delivery, to which the Framework is clear on. Mr R. Bolton stated that to simply maintain a number of sites which the Council state can come forward for development does not ensure that sustainable development is achieved. Therefore the level of completion is just as important as the 5 year land supply. Should the Council be correct in terms of the level of housing requirements and is meeting objectively defined needs and according to Par 47 include demands, enough allocation is being made to meet such demand these allocations will not be build out more quickly than set out in the plan, but will come forward at appropriate times, it has to be trusted that the Council will allocate the most sustainable sites in order to meet the variety of demands. Mr R. Bolton felt there was any need for phasing policy and is unnecessary.

**Inspector** – clarified Mr R. Bolton’s response in that CS3 is unnecessary, and asked if Mrs J. Hodson was in agreement.

**Mrs J. Hodson** reiterated the criteria she was not in favour of and noted her agreement with Mr Bolton.

**Ms. V. King** added that the Wakefield EIP and South Lakeland EIP in both of those cases the phasing policies proposed by councils, the Inspector during the Wakefield EIP removed the phasing policy and South Lakeland the word “iterative” had been inserted in front of phasing. She stated that in phasing terms it was not popular.

**Mr M. Good** stated that he would not feel the need for Policy CS3 its presence would perpetuate the under delivery of housing.

**Ms J. Hodson** mentioned the point about “does it adequately set out how much development is intended to happen where, when where and when” Ms J. Hodson referred to Map 5 of the core strategy page 54, she stated that the numbers will have to be updated in accordance with what is available and what the number ends up becoming. At present its stated at 14,890 on the proposed change with an additional 1,600, she pointed out that not all of these are on new land, some are already committed – her point of clarity of when you look at Map 5 that refers to totality of requirement, but is not clear on the documentation how much is committed through existing commitments. She stated that it would be useful if it was known how much new land is required over and above what has been committed.

**Andy Duncan**, RMBC Planning Policy Manager on behalf of the Council referred to Policy CS6 of the core strategy in respect of the phasing issue which sets out the Councils intention to include a phasing policy, this is looking at the detail of housing allocations and when they may or may not come forward. Andy Duncan referred to page 25 on the sites and policies document (Policy SP8) is the latest draft of the detailed phase policy and refers to phase 1 and 2 highlighting where the list of allocated sites will fall and is determined in the final draft version which is to be consulted on in early 2014. The reason behind this is set out in the Policy CS3. Andy Duncan stated that one of the main purposes is to try and promote Brownfield Land first, when it is down to detail in releasing
sites in settlements, Andy acknowledged Ms. J. Hodson’s point that all land allocated should be sustainable. When determining the final sites there will be a list of Phase 1 and 2 sites to try to ensure when land is released we do release the most sustainable where possible. Andy stated this was the Council’s reasoning behind CS3, CS6 and Policy SP8 of the Sites and Policies document. Andy Duncan clarified Ms. J. Hodson regarding clarity on targets for each settlement and what amount of that is existing commitments/new allocations. The core strategy sets out the growth level, distribution, what, where and when. The sites and policies document - detailed supporting appendices sets out each settlement in detail on growth, how much new allocation, how much is available on existing commitment.

**Inspector** – clarified with the Council in relation to their reservation about deleting CS3 and suggested amending the policy. Mr R. Bolton suggested to delete the word “phasing”. The Inspector clarified with Mr R. Bolton that he would be satisfied with the policy CS3 stating “In allocating and determining which sites are the most sustainable regard shall be given to the following consideration”

Ms J. Hodson raised a further point about the bullet points are fine and everything that you would expect to find when allocating a site, she referred to Andy Duncan’s response in that the Council are interpreting bullet B to determine which sites are in phase 1. The policy doesn’t state that as the “prime tests”. She stated that Andy Duncan indicated that phasing policy and the sites document would try and deliver the previously developed land first. Ms. J. Hodson stated that the policy CS3 is not stating this.

**Inspector** – clarified Ms J. Hodson’s point and state that if policy CS3 was to say “in allocating sites for development regard shall be had to the following considerations which are not in any order of priority”.

**Andy Duncan**, RMBC Planning Policy Manager on behalf of the Council stated that there was no implication that Brownfield land would be the overarching consideration, it is one of the considerations on the selected sites.

Ms. C. Harron on behalf of Harworth Estates – Waverley is a commitment but is also proposed to be an allocation of site locations. She asked the Council for a point of clarification on Policy CS6 point C (Ms. Harron read out the statement on the policy). She asked the Council to confirm that even though Waverley will be an allocation and they consider that allocation has already been released it wouldn’t have met that test.

**Helen Sleigh**, RMBC Senior Planning Officer on behalf of the Council responded and stated that Waverley is not a broad location of growth. In an earlier draft it was suggested that Waverley was a broad location for growth and referred the panel to the end of the policy CS1. It is a commitment.

**Mr. J. Hobson** on behalf of Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates referred to Policy CS6 Bassingthorpe Farm, this is still down as not bringing forward until 2018, as part of the assessment as to whether it’s a strategic location or not, it will have implications back to the policy – just a point of clarification on his part.

Ms. C. Harron on behalf of Harworth Estates – is it necessary to restrict development in broad locations for growth to 2018, unsure of the reasoning behind this on the policy.

**Helen Sleigh**, RMBC Senior Planning Officer on behalf of the Council responded by saying that if it could be shown that they were required within the next 5 years they should have been strategic allocations. Bassingthorpe Farm is now supported as a strategic allocation as there are now sufficient levels of evidence to support this.
Inspector – suggested that if he suggests a main modification for Bassingthorpe Farm being a strategic allocation, then at the same time he would ask for the implications of this on the core strategy text to be taken into account. The Council welcomed this.

Mr. V. Betts on behalf of Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington & Anston Action Group state that his understanding of the NPPF that there should be a prioritisation of Brownfield Sites.

Inspector – stated the Framework does refer to Brownfield land and will be covered in a later Matter.

Ms. V. King referred to Policy CS3 and supported what was agreed, but questioned the need for Criteria A. In her opinion points B-J cover this already.

Inspector – Points A-J or B-J are exhaustive in terms of sustainability criteria, he stated this would be looked into. He state that it may be added that “Inspector suggested rewording”. He also stated that if the Policy is altered does it amount to a main modification. The Council was asked for their thoughts and the Inspector to draft the note.

1.18 Is there enough emphasis on good design, bearing in mind that it is indivisible from good planning? Are the references to design sufficient to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness and integrate new development into the natural, built and historic environment?

Inspector – read out the emphasis on good design statement from the NPPF. He asked for this to be added to the list of things to be taken into account in Policy CS3. This is with the Inspector to deliberate.

Noel Bell, RMBC Planning Officer on behalf of the Council – taking forward the comments already submitted Noel Bell referred to Policy C28 which deals with sustainable design and reflects the priorities in Rotherham and will be applied to new developments to ensure principles of sustainability and sustainable design is considered. The policy has been developed in light of specific characteristics and assets the Borough has and will contribute to the natural and historic environment. The NPPF provided the basis for the Council in terms of drafting the plan, in avoiding unnecessary prescription or detail but to concentrate on the overall guide and scale and height of landscape. The approach taken was not intended to impose an architectural style taste or stifle innovation. The Policy should be seen as an overarching statement of design principles. Noel Bell went on to state there are various other policies which tie into the design policy already referred to in CS. CS13 Transforming Rotherham Town Centre, CS19 Landscape, Green Space and Dealing with Flood Risk, this can be seen to cover a number of elements in the core strategy. CS1 and CS2 refer to master planning regarding delivering development on major sites.

1.19 Are the proposed measures to tackle climate change justified, effective and adequately in line with the policy in the Framework of meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change? In particular:

a) Does the Core Strategy set enough and sufficiently specific targets, for example in respect of sustainable building requirements?

b) Are its climate change measures clear, effective and adequately justified?
Noel Bell, RMBC Planning Officer on behalf of the Council noted a number of significant changes on the proposal. This was in recognition of a shift in Government approach to this in particular recognition of the NPPF (Para 95-97) and the recent housing standards review consultation. This progressive strengthen in building regulations, the need for us to provide additional carbon compliances on site, renewable energy production standards has been removed and part of Policy CS30 – the carbon compliance are removed and been replaced with reference to compliance with building regulations, this was submitted with comments on appendix 1 – this details what the amendments are supposed to be.

Mr. M. Good on behalf of the Home Builders Federation supported the changes the Council have made, however queried whether the first part of policy required anymore, or if it could simply start at Part 2.

Noel Bell, RMBC Planning Officer on behalf of the Council in response to Mr M. Good – how its presented is it continues on energy hierarchy that’s presented immediately above and falls within the first section of the policy, which is about ensuring good fabric insulation, efficient fixed building services and integrated renewal. Noel wanted to emphasise the importance the standards are minimum.

Mr. M. Good on behalf of the Home Builders Federation – stated that if the Council is intent on keeping first part he suggested it reads “The Council will encourage developments to reduce carbon dioxide emissions”.

Inspector - asked the Council to think about this and respond via the Programme Officer and to take into account Mr M. Goods’ suggestion.

1.20 Does the Core Strategy provide a suitable basis for the delivery of a sustainable future that balances economic, social and environmental interests (including a radical reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change) and does it adequately support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure (Framework paragraphs 6, 8, 17 & 93)?

Noel Bell, RMBC Planning Officer on behalf of the Council wanted to clarify what is already written in CS3 in favour of sustainability which refers to the NPPF. Policy CS27 on community health and safety, refers to the unacceptable levels of air pollution to the detriment of public health and other land uses. He stated that as a general approach the core strategy seeks to encourage the use of public transport. Alternatives to the car which will reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution and the protection and enhancement of function process which will play a key role in climate change.

Mr. V. Betts on behalf of Save Our Greenbelt Dinnington & Anston Action Group commented that implicit to building new homes is increase in greenhouse gases and pollution, in the short term of manufacturing of materials which is outside of the Rotherham area, he presumes the Council has little control. He went on to state that where he feels the Council can control, is where in the long term, where the energy meets the users of the homes. In terms of the electricity generated outside Rotherham area is still polluted on CO2, the degree of transport in private cars and fewer CO2 emissions are actually released. His point being the closer the homes can be to work, will lower pollution. On the other part of this the Council has control to a degree of reduction of CO2 absorbers; crops, grass, trees, etc.
Mr. R. Bolton – reiterates what is said in Para 93 – Planning does play a key role in safe places and radical reductions in greenhouse gases. The amount of new developments is a small percentage of overall level of housing, the difference at building in code level 4 and 6 is nothing in terms of greenhouse gas emission, the older housing stock is in need of improving, he accepted the wording of the framework. In relation to the policy this is acceptable, but there is a need to be careful given Mr V. Betts argument in that building houses will have consequences regarding greenhouse emissions, but if they are in a position and need to build houses in Rotherham to meet the needs of the country, he feels the impact is the same. It is not a choice of to build or not, but it’s where to locate them. In terms of the policy he accepts this, but politicians dealing with a percentage of the housing stock isn’t going to radically change.

Noel Bell, RMBC Planning Officer on behalf of the Council – agreed with the points raised by Mr R. Bolton, he stated it is important to recognise in a few years’ time a significant proportion of homes that exist now will still exist in the future. The new homes will be built to a more demanding standard which will influence their carbon rating and fabric rating and influence the emissions created as part of the construction. Issues raised by Mr V. Betts these have been discussed over the past few days.

Helen Sleigh, RMBC Planning Officer on behalf of the Council stated that Rotherham does have a dispersed settle pattern, the settlement hierarchy to maintain and create sustainable communities by allocating an industry so that there is proximity where you live and work, but do have in mind public transport networks as previously discussed.

1.21 Are all forms of renewable energy given adequate consideration?

Noel Bell, RMBC Planning Officer on behalf of the Council felt that the response submitted already covered this question, which is yes in both studies look at the range of renewal energy of Rotherham.