

INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PARK**AREA ACTION PLAN****Matter 4 Proposed Revision of the Green Belt Boundary****Submission by Richard Cowen on behalf of CPRE North East***Question 4.1*

Having regard to (a) the need for/viability of IAMP; (b) the potential for it to be located elsewhere; (c) the harm caused as a result of the loss of Green Belt; and (d) any other potential harm, does the submitted evidence convincingly demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist to justify a revision to the boundary of the Green Belt in the AAP? And in particular:

- Has consideration been given to the location of IAMP on sites not currently allocated for employment use and not located in the Green Belt?*
- What is the mitigation referred to in section 6 of the Exceptional Circumstances for Releasing Land from the Green Belt Technical Background Report?*
- Does section 7 of the Exceptional Circumstances for Releasing Land from the Green Belt Technical Background Report adequately explain and justify the planning balance which has been undertaken in concluding that there is "a clear exceptional circumstances case" for removal of land currently in the Tyne and Wear Green Belt?*

CPRE is a national charity that works for a beautiful and living countryside. The charity has a number of Regional groups and in the North East of England, this is CPRE North East. There are also Branches and in the North East of England there are two branches, Durham and Northumberland. While the relevant Branch in this case is CPRE Durham, it was considered that this proposal is of such significance that a regional response was appropriate.

Nationally, CPRE has published a number of Planning Campaign Briefing Notes, one of which relates to the Green Belt. A copy is attached at Appendix 1. We have tried to address the AAP proposal with these Notes in mind.

This proposal involves a major amendment to the boundary of the Tyne and Wear Green Belt. CPRE is the only national charity that seeks to protect the green belt so this was a major consideration for us to address. Indeed, we considered the question relating to other sites as appears to be relevant to question 4.1. CPRE Durham is

CPRE North East

aware of major employment sites at Bowburn (Integra 61 which it is said will employ over 4000 people and is adjacent to Junction 61 on the A1(M)) and at Newton Aycliffe where the Hitachi factory is situated.

However, while not absolutely conceding the issue, CPRE NE accepted that this proposal revolves around Nissan, perhaps the biggest private employer in the North East of England. For that reason, CPRE accepted that there is a strong argument to say that there are exceptional circumstances in this case to say that any proposed new employment site should be located next to Nissan if its primary purpose is to serve that business. It was noted that Nissan proposed to commit to investing in further models at its Sunderland factory.

However, just before the letter was sent on behalf of CPRE North East, there was reason to question Nissan's commitment to the future of its factory in Sunderland as a result of the vote to leave the European Union. The issue was raised by Japanese representatives at the G20 summit and later this was a matter that was being openly considered and reported in the news both regionally and nationally and led to a meeting between the Nissan Chief Executive and the Prime Minister.

CPRE North East was in fact pleased to note that, following that meeting, Nissan did announce that it would commit to further investment at its Sunderland factory. It is accepted that this should have answered the concerns raised by CPRE North East in its letter dated 24 September 2016 which was incorporated in its letter dated 14 January 2017 in relation to the proposed Development Consent Order. However, since then there has been further developments regarding the nature of the way in which the UK may leave the European Union and the future of Nissan has again been mentioned in the regional news. This stated that North East MPs were to seek meetings with relevant government ministers to seek to resolve this issue. As a result of this, I emailed my MP to inform her of the stance taken by CPRE in this case. A copy of my email and my MP's reply is contained in Appendix 2.

Of course, on behalf of CPRE North East, I fully appreciate the sensitive nature of all of this and that nothing in life can be certain. However, as mentioned above, CPRE is the only national charity to seek to protect the Green Belt. For us not to object to proposals to make significant deletions from it requires us to make considerable concessions. I believe we have done that in this case and taken a wholly pragmatic and responsible approach. We have acknowledged the importance of Nissan not just regionally but nationally and as a result accepted that exceptional circumstances may well be made out in this case.

But that does depend on at least a reasonable certainty that Nissan will stay put in Sunderland and continue its investment there. If that should cease in the near future, then the whole premise of our concession changes, whatever the reasons for any change of commitment by Nissan.

While we appreciate that it is almost impossible to give any firm answer to this question, I still represent on behalf of CPRE North East that this question has to be addressed in the decision making process as to whether the proposed Area Action Plan is in fact sound in principle or not, given that the reasoning for this location depends so heavily on the potential requirements of Nissan. If Nissan changes this commitment as a result of the way in which the UK does leave the European Union, then CPRE North East does represent that other employment sites, including those at Integra 61 or Newton Aycliffe, may be just as appropriate from a commercial point of view as the proposed site around Nissan and so avoid any deletions from the Green Belt.

Question 4.2

Is the revised Green Belt boundary proposed in the plan soundly based and consistent with national policy, having particular regard to:

- *Land around West Moor Farm?*
- *Land in the River Don corridor between the northern and southern Employment Development areas*

While CPRE North East has not specifically addressed this question, we have welcomed the proposals to retain a green area around the River Don if the Plan is found to be sound and indeed to keep it in the Green Belt. It does mean however that the Green Belt at this location will be exceptionally narrow and it is submitted that as a result it becomes even more important for it to be protected vigorously. We welcome the wording of proposed Policy S2 in this respect and represent that, if the AAP is adopted, there must be no weakening of this proposal.

The Planning Campaign Briefing Note refers to the importance of strong boundaries to ensure any amount of encroachment into the Green Belt is minimised. We are uncertain about the existing boundaries for the Green Belt in this location but, without the erection of barriers such as fences, strongly support strong demarcation lines being clear in the vicinity of the River Don.

4.3 Does the plan provide adequate guidance on the possible future release of safeguarded land? Are any modifications to the plan in respect of this necessary for it to be sound?

We did not address this issue in our representations. However, we are concerned about the exceptions for highways and utilities and are interested to understand what the Review of the AAP referred to in proposed Policy S2 will entail. We are concerned that this could be a rather weak protection for the Safeguarded Land unless some guidelines are given.

4.4 Are the modifications which the Councils have proposed (Docs PSD6/PSD7) to policy S2 necessary for the plan to be sound and are they consistent with national policy?

We refer to the comments in the Planning Campaign Briefing Note concerning boundaries and in particular Annex B. We support the general thrust of the proposed modification as far as it affects boundaries assuming that the general concept of amending the Green Belt boundary is indeed accepted and the Plan is adopted.

Appendix 1

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Planning Campaign Briefing Note 2 – Green Belts

See Attached

Appendix 2

Content of emails with Roberta Blackman Woods MP.

Brexit and Nissan

Inbox x



Richard Cowen <richard.cowen313@gmail.com> Jan 24

to mail, Gillan

Roberta,

I have just heard on the BBC News that Labour MPs in our region are writing to the PM concerning the potential impact of her proposals, particularly in respect of Nissan.

We at CPRE have been concerned about this issue, especially with regard to the proposed IAMP which, as you will be aware, will require the deletion of significant areas of Green Belt. I think we have taken a pragmatic approach to this and generally supported the proposals BUT only so long as Nissan continues to invest in the North east. This appeared to have been resolved following the meeting between Nissan and the PM but the News today suggests the issue may be open to further consideration, depending on the ultimate Brexit outcome.

You will note that this correspondence has been sent by our secretary, Gillan Gibson, and I am copying this email to her for her information. You will also note that we have written on behalf of CPRE North east rather than CPRE Durham. This is because of the perceived importance of this proposal.

CPRE North East

I attach for your information copies of the letters we have sent regarding this. If you feel they are of any assistance in your arguments, please feel free to use them,

2 Attachments



Richard Cowen <richard.cowen313@gmail.com> Jan 24

to mail

I forgot to put my address on this email which is Rose Cottage Old Quarrington Durham DH65NN. My mobile is now 07397862833

2 Attachments



Roberta Blackman-Woods MP Feb 27 (9 days ago)

to me

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your email regarding Brexit and Nissan. Let me first apologise for the delay in my response.

As you may be aware, I was one of the 24 North East Labour MPs who signed the letter to the Prime Minister asking about the future of manufacturing in the North East following Brexit.

We are deeply concerned by the recent comments from the Chief Executive of Nissan that they will “have to re-evaluate the situation” following our departure from the EU. Nissan provides huge numbers of jobs to the North East and as we stated in our letter to the Prime Minister, we are worried that Theresa May’s decision to push for a hard Brexit “risks further damaging the North East of England, which benefits so much from overseas investment.”

Rest assured that my colleagues representing the North East and I will continue to put pressure on the Government to ensure that they protect jobs and manufacturing industries in our region both throughout the negotiation period and following Brexit.

CPRE North East

Thank you for sending me information from CPRE North East regarding the development of the IMAP.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to do so again with any further queries or concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Roberta

**Office of Roberta Blackman-Woods
Member of Parliament for the City of Durham**

Roberta may like to send you occasional e-mail newsletters from Westminster using this e-mail address. If you would NOT like to receive these newsletters please [click here to unsubscribe](#).

From: Richard Cowen [mailto:richard.cowen313@gmail.com]

Sent: 24 January 2017 07:24

To: mail@roberta.org.uk

Subject: Fwd: Brexit and Nissan

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Richard Cowen <richard.cowen313@gmail.com> Feb 27 (9 days ago)

to Roberta, bcc: Gillan

Roberta

Thanks you for this.

For information, the Examination in public regarding the IAMP starts in April and we have been invited to speak at the Green Belt session.

CPRE North East

I know we can't expect miracles but I have already mentioned to the Programme Officer that we wish to mention this issue. I know we are potentially straying into the commercially confidential information area but I feel we are entitled to ask, if we are not objecting to a sizable and important part of the green belt being deleted, there should be some guarantee as to the future of the whole project. While I feel this is a valid question from our point of view that needs to be pursued, I do not anticipate we will get an answer to it.

Incidentally, I will be at Westminster on Wednesday to see Jesse Norman at 2.30 with a group I am involved with that is considering wind farm noise. If you are available and want a quick chat about this I would be happy to see you

Richard