

# 'Former Celanese must be in city council's housing plans'

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By CHRIS MALLET



DERBY City Council plans for where new homes could be built by 2028 are "unsound" because they do not include the former Celanese factory site, says Mid Derbyshire MP Pauline Latham.

In a letter to both the council and the Planning Inspectorate, the MP, whose constituency includes the 270-acre Spondon site, says its use could reduce the need for edge-of-city developments on greenfield land.

Inclusion in the plans, called the "core strategy" would make it much harder for the council's planning committee to reject an application for homes on the site.

Celanese has confirmed it "hopes to repurpose" the site before 2028.

But Paul Clarke, the city council's head of planning, has said there is no change in the authority's position that it cannot officially earmark the site for homes before that date.

He previously said issues with the site include heavy contamination of the ground, the need to tackle flood risk, and that it would "ideally" need a second road access.

In response to Mrs Latham, he said the issues remained, adding that the presence of a nearby sewage works and railway line were also potential stumbling blocks.

Mr Clarke said: "To be allocated as a suitable housing site, I need to be confident of the site being brought forward during that plan period, now until 2028."

A council spokeswoman added that national policy required certainty that plans were "realistic and deliverable".

She added: "The fact that the site is not included in the core strategy does not in any way prevent the landowner bringing forward a planning application at any time, which would, if appropriate, be viewed favourably."

Mrs Latham's letter will be considered as part of the last consultation on the core strategy before it is submitted to a planning inspector for examination.

It states: "This site is ideal in terms of its location, with good transport links to the A50 and the M1, and is situated adjacent to Spondon train station.

"The site is perfect for redevelopment for both housing, retail and business. It is close to many large businesses on Raynesway, including Rolls-Royce, and could facilitate the housing needs for many employees working nearby.

"In addition, the development of this land could meet the needs of a large proportion of the city's housing needs and avoid development on greenfield sites that are currently proposed in the core strategy."

Chris Radlett, manufacturing projects director at Celanese, said the focus was on completing the demolition works on the site by 2017.

He said: "Over recent years, we have worked on a number of land remediation projects on site.

"We are currently working on a detailed study of the site's further remediation needs. Once this is complete, we'll develop an appropriate strategy to deal with the remaining issues."