I attach a copy of the response of Sue Essex to the consultation in respect of the Green Belt proposal contained within the Local Development Plan. I, too, am in agreement with this response.
I would be most grateful if you could confirm receipt of this response, please?
Regards,
Sue and Richard Essex
Cardiff County Council Local Development Plan
Consultation in respect of Green Belt proposal
Response by Sue Essex M.R.T.P.I. (retired)

I am writing in support of Cardiff County Council’s decision to retain the green Belt designation in line with the Deposit Local Development Plan. I set out my reasons below:

1. The designation of a Green Belt sits well and truly within the local democratic framework. It was part of the policy of Cardiff Labour Council, alongside the commitment to deliver an L.D.P. The Green Belt policy was supported in all of the consultation stages of the L.D.P. process; and then unanimously endorsed by the Full Council a few weeks ago. The Green Belt policy, alongside all of the other major proposals for growth, is part of the strategic vision for the Council, and as such accords with other strategic policies of the County Council.

2. The Council should be congratulated, both members and officers, for bringing forward a long needed L.D.P. This is exactly what Welsh Government wants to see and will provide a major forward direction for Cardiff and the wider area. In the absence of a formal strategic plan for south east Wales, the Council has put forward a strategic direction that reflects its own views, but also takes account of the forward plans of neighbouring local authorities.

It has not shirked the need to provide for new housing and the introduction of a Green Belt designation complements that decision. It gives a spatial coherence to the Plan and respects the wishes of Cardiff people for physical growth to sit alongside adequate protection of vital green spaces. The two aspects together give an integrated soundness to the Plan that will reflect the wish to see a growing, green city.

3. The Green Belt designation is completely consistent with Planning Policy Wales. It is worth pointing out that for Wales there is a very different situation to that in England, where Green Belts sat alongside post war growth and were generally delineated as encircling open land to define and contain urban areas. Wales did not experience the same extensive pressure for urban / conurbation growth as England and consequently no Green Belts were designated. However, Planning Guidance brought in after the establishment of the new Welsh Assembly Government, contained policies for Green Belts / Green Wedges, which reflected that Wales was beginning to experience considerable pressure for growth. It was therefore timely to ask local authorities to consider protective designation for critical areas of land that offer physical openness (green space), which retain special identity and value. Cardiff Council has done just that.

4. The designated Green Belt area covers the northern escarpment to the city. It is a physically defined area and largely open space, partly connected to the wider Caerphilly Mountain area. It gives vital visual distinction and character to the city, one that is of environmental benefit, but also of economic benefit as adding to the appeal of the Cardiff. Standing from almost anywhere in the
Cardiff area looking northwards, the escarpment stands out as a visual, green and significant backdrop. This must not be compromised and there is no need to do that as the city grows.

5. Cardiff Council is making adequate provision for growth in the Plan Period; and as indicated by the Council Planning Officer at the recent Public Hearing, there are further areas that could be developed beyond the Plan Period without touching the Green Belt. In fact the suggestion that the designated land could be considered for development in the subsequent Plan Period just underlines the need for permanent protection. It is this very suggestion that absolutely reinforces the need for permanence now. The current landscape designation or the suggestion of a “Green Wedge” will not give a permanent protection.

6. The point made at the Hearing that because the area has not been the subject of many planning applications in the past and therefore a Green Belt is not needed, cannot be relied upon. There is no basis to automatically project this through to the future, as a growing Cardiff will be subjected to huge development pressures. A Green Belt designation not only gives protection now, but it sets out a cornerstone of spatial policy for the future.

7. There are no objections from adjoining local authorities to this designation and it has no adverse implication to the strategic future of south east Wales. The suggestion that this designation should wait for a possible strategic plan for south east Wales, if that should ever happen, is quite inappropriate. The Green Belt designation is of little strategic relevance to south east Wales compared with the projected economic growth of the city. The designation is correctly an issue to be dealt with at a development plan stage and within this particular Local Development Plan.

8. A “Green Wedge” may seem to be a compromise, but in my view would only be a fudge that would not work. This extensive landscape area is a critical part of the city’s overall green character, which with full and permanent protection, helps Cardiff to grow in a planned way in the future. This is at the core of the soundness of this Local Development Plan. It allows people to accept growth with the reassurance that the City’s green character will not be lost. It tells potential developers where growth can go and where it can’t, and helps to stop speculation.

9. I have lived in Cardiff for 40 years and this is one of those historic times when the City will face another massive step of growth and development. It is the purpose of planning to direct this growth in the public interest. The Local Development Plan does this in a variety of ways and the designated Green Belt is just one part on the Plan. But it is a vital part, to give confidence to us all that growth will not come at the cost of this special place; that planning is a democratic process, which brings a rational and fair way forward through competing interests; and is for the well being of future generations, as our Welsh legislation now requires.