



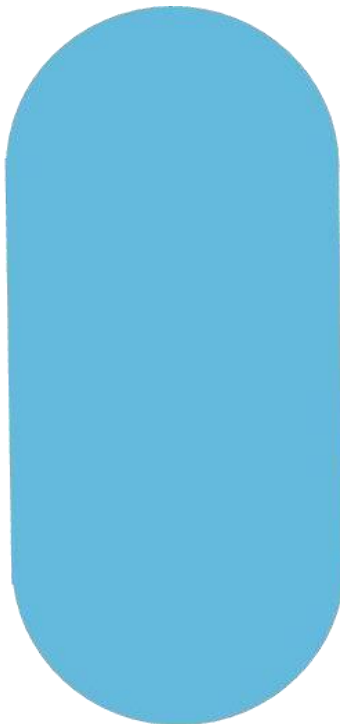
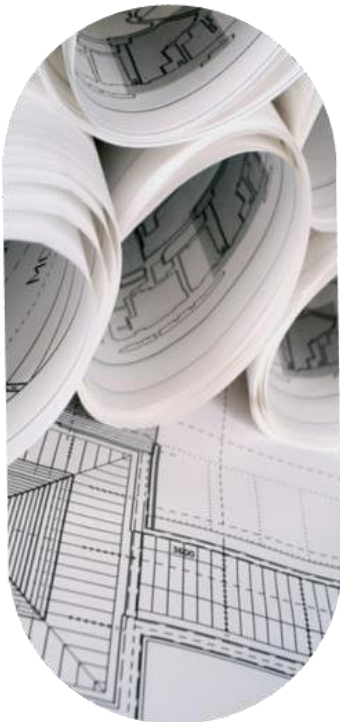
 Part of Shakespeare Martineau

St Albans Local Plan Examination

Matter 1 Hearing Statement (Stage 2)

Prepared on behalf of
Martin Grant Homes and Kearns Land Ltd

September 2025



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Matter Number	Author		Checked/Approved	
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Matter Statement has been prepared on behalf of Martin Grant Homes and Kearns Land Ltd (the Promoters) in respect of Matter 1 relating to the procedural and legal requirements of St Alban District Council's (SADC) Local Plan. This responds to the Inspector's Stage 2 Matters, Issues and Questions.
- 1.2 The Promoters have interests in the District at Land to the East of Redbourn, Redbourn (the Site, HELAA reference R-18-21). The Site is identified within the Plan as part of allocation site M6. Representations have been submitted at earlier stages of Plan preparation through Regulation 18 and 19 consultations, and in response to Stage 1 of this Examination.
- 1.3 This Matter Statement responds to the Inspectors' questions and have been considered in the context of the tests of 'Soundness' as set out at Para 35 of the NPPF (December 2023¹). These require that a Plan is:
- Positively Prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - Consistent with National Policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

¹ The Plan is submitted under the transitional arrangements of the NPPF 2024, and as such is to be considered against the NPPF 2023.

2. Issue 2 – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Q.1 How does the additional evidence consider surface water flood risks?

2.1 As set out in our response to Stage 1, we consider the Council has taken a methodological approach to site selection which has considered a range of relevant factors, including the various sources of flood risk.

2.2 In respect of surface water flood risk the Flood Risk Addendum (SADC/ED77, July 2025) highlights that this source of flooding is a factor which often can be managed on-site through directing development away from areas at risk or mitigation through design (para 4.2). As a result, surface water flood risk was not considered as part of the sequential test for the rational below:

it is not anticipated that the sequential test for surface water would normally require alternative sites at lower risk to be considered, because the widespread and dendritic nature of surface water flood risk differs conceptually to river and sea flood risk

2.3 Nevertheless, the Council now acknowledge that there may be instances where alternative sites should be considered, for example, for relatively small sites that are substantially affected by surface water (para 4.3).

2.4 Section 5 of the Flood Risk Addendum identifies that for site above 0.4ha there is an assumption a proportion of the site would be utilised for uses other than built development i.e. open spaces. The gross to net ratio increases with site size, up to 60% developed / 40% undeveloped for sites over 2 hectares in size.

2.5 As detailed in the Addendum there are relatively few sites subject to a significant surface water flood risk (more than 10%). Predominantly this relates to small sites which are reviewed through Table 1 identifying how residential dwelling capacity should be adjusted to reflect this.

2.6 Site M6 South of Harpenden Lane is identified as a larger site (over 2 hectares) which is at potential significant risk of surface water flood risk. However, para 5.3 clarifies this has already been taken into consideration at site selection stage and therefore no further adjustment is required.

2.7 Site M6 is subject to a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (EDH 03.20) which, alongside other forms of flood risk, considers the implications of surface water flood risk on the Site, including allowing for climate change. This highlights that whilst an important consideration, surface water flood risk does not preclude development across the Site.

2.8 The Council has made a judgement on what capacity Site M6 can support, taking into consideration the constraints posed by flood risk. The indicative capacity of 68 dwellings across 12.04-hectare site reflects this.

2.9 We consider this is therefore a justified position based on the methodological process undertaken by the Council.

2.10 Further, this is consistent with updated national guidance on the sequential test which states:

In applying paragraph 175 a proportionate approach should be taken. Where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (therefore addressing the risks identified e.g. by Environment Agency flood risk mapping), without increasing flood risk elsewhere, then the sequential test need not be applied.

Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 7-027-20220825

2.11 The Promoters control part of Site M6 and have instructed technical and environmental consultants with a view of submitting a planning application for the Site in the coming months. This includes detailed flood risk and drainage assessment in line with the requirements of the Plan, including site allocation.

2.12 The outcome of this work is as set out in our response to Matter 7 Issue 5 (residential site allocations) which helps clarify the part of the Site controlled by the Promoters can suitably support residential development.

2.13 The outcomes of the Council's evidence base, including Flood Risk Addendum, in respect of surface water flood risk and the sequential test are justified and align with national policy.

Q.2 Are the suggested changes necessary to make the submitted Plan sound?

2.14 For the Council.

Q.2 Subject to the suggested changes, is the Plan consistent with national planning policy insofar as flood risk avoidance and mitigation is concerned?

2.15 The NPPF 2023 states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (para 165) and that strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources (para 166).

2.16 Para 167 – 168 highlights how flooding should be considered through Plan-making, through applying the sequential test and steering new development to areas with the lowest risk of

flooding. Para 169 notes that where it is not possible for development to be located in areas with a lower risk of flooding (taking into account wider sustainable development objectives), the exception test may have to be applied

- 2.17 As set out above and in our other matter statements, we consider the Council's approach to site selection including in respect of matters of flood risk is a sound approach.
- 2.18 Where deficiency has been identified, in respect of how surface water flood risk had previously been considered in the SFRA, this has been rectified through production of the Flood Risk Addendum.
- 2.19 As a result, the Council has demonstrated a sequential process has been followed. In some cases, notably a number of small sites and Site M6, this includes consideration of how development could be sequentially located within a Site and indicative capacity adjusted accordingly.
- 2.20 We consider the Plan would be, as modified, consistent with national policy in this regard.