

St Albans Local Plan Examination in Public

Dacorum Local Plan Examination in Public

Stage 2 Matter 6

**Joint Hearing Session - Hemel Garden
Communities (HGC)**

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

- i. Hearing Statements are submitted by David Lock Associates Ltd on behalf of The Crown Estate (hereinafter referred to as **TCE**), promoter of land at **East Hemel Hempstead (EHH)** and **North West Hemel Hempstead (NWH)**.
- ii. Whilst The Crown Estate's history dates to 1760, its present-day business was established through an Act of Parliament, the Crown Estate Act 1961, to operate as an independent and commercial business. TCE is a significant national landowner with a diverse portfolio that includes urban centres and development opportunities, one of the largest rural landholdings in the country (including land within and surrounding HGC), substantial areas of London's West End and Windsor Great Park. TCE also manages the seabed and much of the coastline around England, Wales and Northern Ireland, playing a major role in the UK's world-leading offshore wind sector.
- iii. TCE pursues three strategic objectives:
 - it is a leader in supporting the UK towards a net zero carbon and energy secure future;
 - it helps to create thriving, mixed tenure communities across the UK, aimed at meeting generational needs; and
 - it takes a leading role in stewarding the UK's natural environment and biodiversity.
- iv. TCE is the owner and promoter of EHH(North), EHH (Central) and EHH (South), which are draft allocations ('Broad Locations') for mixed use development under Site Policies H2, H3 and H4 of the *St Albans Local Plan Regulation 19 Version* September 2024.
- v. TCE is also the owner and promoter of a significant element of the draft allocation for mixed use development made under *Site Policy Hm01 North Hemel Hempstead Growth Area* within the *Dacorum Local Plan to 2041 Pre-Submission Version* September 2024.
- vi. The four sites form part of the wider Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) programme area, awarded Garden Town Status by the government in 2019 and straddling the St Albans City and District Council (SADC) and Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) administrative areas (see **HGC01.01** evidence paper for details). HGC is allocated with and referenced throughout the draft local plans for each Council's administrative area.
- vii. TCE have signed Statements of Common Ground with both SADC (November 2024) and DBC (dated August 2025) and these remain an accurate reflection of the current position between the parties.
- viii. The main issues which form the focus of TCE representations and participation in the Matter 6 Hearings are summarised as:
 - a. Potential duplication and misalignment in draft policy relating to requirements for HGC Broad Locations within each Local Plan;

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- b. The status and function of the Indicative Concept Plan within both Local Plans;
 - c. The status and role of a number of supporting evidence base documents and future guidance referenced in policy, including IDPs and future HGC SPDs;
 - d. The boundary of the Green Belt currently proposed in the SADC Local Plan and shown on the Policies Map in relation to Site Allocations H2 and H4;
 - e. The lack of clarity provided in draft DBC Policy Hm01 wording in relation to policy direction for spatial arrangements and disposition of development components.

TCE DELIVERY STATEMENT**Outline Planning Application for EHH**

- ix. TCE is at a very advanced stage of preparing an Outline Planning Application for its land at EHH (the planning application site boundary includes SADC site allocations H2, H3 and H4 within a single Outline Application).
- x. Since November 2024 TCE has continued to engage positively with Officers on policy matters pertaining to the draft allocations to ensure that the emerging proposals for EHH can meet policy requirements as part of pre-application activity.
- xi. A PPA between TCE and SADC, DBC and HCC was signed in August 2024 in order to secure officer resource and agree a programme of pre-application engagement and inputs. Subsequent PPAs for stages of pre-application activity were signed in Aug 2024, Oct 2024, March 2025 and July 2025, the latest covering the current period up to submission of the Outline Application.
- xii. Since August 2024, PPA workshops involving the Core Officer Teams from both Councils, the County Council and HGC have been held on the following topics:

• EIA Scoping • Vision and Masterplanning • Green and Blue Infrastructure • Structure of the Application • Movement and Transport • Masterplan Development and Employment Area	• Character, Housing and Density • Local Centres • Nickey Line • Parameter Plans and Development Specification • A Guide to the Application
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- xiii. In addition, numerous technical meetings with statutory consultees and specialist Council officers have been held. In addition to agreement on the scope of assessment for EIA/Transport Assessment purposes, a summary commentary of matters progressed and agreed is provided below:
 - *Transport*: Meetings held with both HCC and National Highways. Matters at or close to agreement include: trip generation and distribution; modelling approach; on-site layout of transport infrastructure; key off-site sustainable transport interventions; key areas where traffic capacity enhancements are required; principles of the bus strategy; principles of Monitor and Manage Strategy;
 - *Landscape GI and Ecology*: meetings held with officers at both LPAs and Natural England. In principle agreements include: LVIA methodology, landscape approach and principles, drainage strategy principles, location of SANG; site wide approach to delivery of public open space delivery, allotment strategy and distribution, use of District Level Licensing for ecology mitigation; approach to BNG;
 - *Water Resources, Flood Risk and Drainage*: meetings held with both LPAs, LLFA, EA. In principle agreements include: approach to infiltration and overland flow routes,

design of attenuation ponds in valleys, catchment characteristics, principles of SuDs on plot and along street corridors,

- *Education, Health and Service Provision*: meetings held with both LPAs, HCC, Integrated Care Board and NHS. In principle agreements include: overall quantum and location of primary and secondary school site requirements; approach to on-site health facilities and specification for medical centre; provision of elderly/extra care; overall scale and mix of uses within local centres;
- *Heritage and Archaeology*: meetings held with both LPAs, LLFA, EA. Programme of trial trenching agreed and currently underway.

- xiv. Other technical meetings including matters relating to noise, air quality, utilities, sustainability and energy, Public Rights of Way have also been undertaken. Outputs from these meetings have fed into the Outline Application material and cost plans.

Independent Design Review

- xv. Two Design Reviews have taken place for East Hemel, undertaken by the Design South East Quality Review Panel and involving Officers from both Councils, the County Council and HGC. The emerging proposals were positively received by the Panel on both occasions:

- the first (Dec 2024) considered the vision and key principles governing design, and the Panel concluded that:

"It is encouraging to see the amount of work that has been done at this early stage in the design process. We commend the vision for the site, which sets out guiding principles and puts innovation and future thinking at the forefront of the design. This project is an opportunity to serve as an exemplary project for high-quality, sustainable development on a large scale, and we are encouraged to see such bold aspirations coming forward", and

- the second (March 2025) concluded that:

"The response to the recommendations in the previous report is well structured, and strong efforts have been made to justify design decisions and strengthen the core design principles, which has enabled the panel to be confident with the direction of travel of the masterplan".

- xvi. The DRPs confirmed the Panel were *"comfortable with the key moves across the masterplan"* and agreed that three key structuring themes identified - *movement framework, local centres and topography* – should shape *"more detailed design stages of the masterplan to ensure alignment with the wider HGC vision"*.

- xvii. The detailed recommendations of the DRP informed further masterplanning work during 2025 which is now reflected in the Parameter Plans, Illustrative Masterplan and Design and Access Statement in the final stages of preparation for submission in support of the Outline Application.

Proposed Commercial Development

- xviii. TCE has been working with Herts IQ since 2024 to ensure that they are supportive of the emerging proposals for East Hemel Central (H3) and to ensure that the range of jobs to be provided across the employment area aligns with wider Herts IQ objectives.

Public Engagement

- xix. Extensive public and local stakeholder engagement has taken place for East Hemel, including design workshops, study tours, drop-in public exhibitions, and Member Briefings for Councillors at both authorities.
- xx. Three of the four stages of TCE's Engagement Programme set out below have been completed (the fourth stage to take place just prior to the submission of the Outline Application), with a total of c.1,400 participants and c.260 formal feedback responses.

Oct - Dec '24	Dec - Mar '25	Apr - Jul '25	Aug - Oct '25
Stage 1 Scoping Issues & Opportunities Stakeholder Workshop Community Drop-ins	Stage 2 Emerging Masterplan Cambridge Study Tour Site Visit Community Design Workshop Community Drop-ins	Stage 3 Detailed Masterplan Review Briefing Workshops Community Drop-ins	Stage 4 Pre-Submission Preview Community Drop-in

- xxi. This feedback has provided valuable local knowledge and insight which has shaped the emerging proposals and enabled in-depth engagement and enabled constructive dialogue with key local groups and individuals likely to be involved over the life of the development.
- xxii. The outline application material for East Hemel is currently being finalised for submission in Q4 2025.

Proposed Development at NWH

- xxiii. A Vision document for NWH has been prepared by TCE for land in its ownership within Policy Hm01 as part of TCE's Reg 19 Representation to DBC. This sets out a broad level spatial and land use framework for the site, informed by preliminary landscape, highway and ecology discussions and informed by the HGC Framework Plan and evidence studies prepared by HGC.

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- xxiv. TCE intends to commence the preparation of an Outline Planning Application for this land following the adoption of the Dacorum Local Plan (assumed by the Council to be early 2026), supported through a Planning Performance Agreement with the Council and with Hertfordshire County Council.
- xxv. TCE anticipates the submission of an Outline Planning Application for NWH in mid-2027.

Cherry Tree Lane Community Garden and Westwick Row

- xxvi. TCE is already demonstrating its commitment to support for the wider HGC Programme through progressing two early demonstration projects:
- Planning consent was granted in November 2024 for Cherry Tree Lane Community Garden; the creation of a publicly-accessible garden on TCE land immediately to the west of site H2, designed and run by a local Charitable Trust (the Sunnyside Trust) one of the potential stewardship bodies for TCE's land at HGC;
 - As part of TCE's commitment to introducing innovative models of housing design and delivery, TCE has partnered with TOWN to prepare a full planning permission for residential development of a new participative community of c 75 homes on land at Westwick Row. The scheme will deliver different tenures; is shaped by its future residents and local people through meaningful processes of engagement, coproduction; and is underpinned by a community-led stewardship model. This will be a demonstrator project for development at EHH in its delivery of best practice, operational and embodied carbon targets. The project also represents an important opportunity to test innovative new models of housing, sustainability and delivery that can influence the wider TCE offer at HGC.

MATTER 6 – HEMEL GARDEN COMMUNITIES (HGC)**Issue 1 – Justification for Strategic Growth**

The HGC Evidence Paper prepared by St Albans City and District Council sets out the various stages in the evolution of HGC to date (Core Document HGC01.01). In 2019 the proposal was awarded Garden Town Status. The extent of the HGC Programme Area is shown on St Albans Local Plan Figure 3.1 and Dacorum Local Plan Figure 7.

Q1 *What is the difference between the HGC Programme Area and the HGC Framework Plan area? Is it sufficiently clear in both the St Albans Local Plan, and the Dacorum Local Plan, what HGC is and which areas it relates to?*

- 1.1 We anticipate that the local authority will respond on this point. However, we offer the following commentary to assist.
- 1.2 Within the SADC Local Plan Figure 3.2 of the SADC LP shows the Growth Areas, to which the HGC Framework Plan relates, in yellow. The Programme Area shown in Figure 3.1 is more loosely defined to show the broad geographical area within which several development sites (including the Growth Areas) and other HGC projects fall.
- 1.3 Similarly, Figure 7 of the DBC local plans shows the Growth Areas in yellow, positioned within the wider Programme Area shown as a brown dotted line.
- 1.4 HGC's principal objective is to deliver the transformation of the wider Programme Area. Site allocations have been made in both local plans for land within the Growth Areas, and development within these allocations will be brought forward by landowners and developers and determined in accordance with the policy context set out in the local plans to which each relates.

Q2 *To be effective, should both Local Plans include a breakdown, in policy, which sets out the component parts of HGC and what is expected from each parcel?*

SADC Approach

- 1.5 The SADC Local Plan provides a breakdown for the HGC Growth Area within its boundary. Four 'Broad Locations' (Site Allocations) are identified - H1 to H4 - each with its own criteria-based site allocation policy setting out the requirements to be met for each site, and together equating to 5,500 dwellings and 53 ha of employment land. H2 H3 and H4 site allocations are owned and promoted by TCE, with Bloor Homes/Pigeon Investments jointly promoting site allocation H1.
- 1.6 TCE are content that the approach taken by SADC is appropriate and generally provides sufficient clarity against which to assess development proposals from a development management and delivery perspective.

DBC Approach

- 1.7 The DBC Local Plan takes a different approach; a single Site Allocation - Hm01 – is made for the allocation of the 5,000 units within its boundary. It should be noted that this allocation covers multiple land ownerships.
- 1.8 Site Hm01 is expected to deliver 1,500 of the 5,000 units within the Local plan period, but at present the policy does not specify where those 1,500 units should be located. We can confirm that TCE is well-placed to deliver this amount of development within the Local Plan period on land that it controls at NWH.
- 1.9 We make two observations:
- (i) In order to assist in the co-ordinated planning and delivery of the DBC element of the HGC Growth Areas, TCE has made previous representations seeking further clarity in Local Plan policy about where the first 1,500 dwellings should be located, and what infrastructure should be provided in support of these dwellings. DBC has not proposed any change to the wording of Hm01 in subsequent versions of the plan to clarify this matter and has indicated that it does not currently propose any Modification to Hm01 to address this.
 - (ii) In the absence of any adjustment, the 'Indicative Concept Plan for HGC Growth Areas' in Figure 8 does provide some high level guidance on what would be required on each part of the Hm01 allocation from a spatial arrangement and land use perspective.

However, it would be useful to understand what status the Local Plan affords the Indicative Concept Plan in future decision making. This Figure sits alongside rather than within policy so forms part of the supporting text of the plan rather than policy.

DBC's position is as set out in para 4.9 of the Statement of Common Ground between TCE and DBC [DBC/ED21], where in response to TCE's suggestion that the Concept Plan should be updated to remove the need for one of the two secondary schools previously required, the Council has stated that Figure 8 remains sound without any such change as it is "*marked as an indicative concept plan*".
- 1.10 This means that currently, the provisions of policy Hm01 and the indicative nature of the Concept Plan do not provide as much certainty over the spatial arrangement of land uses and supporting infrastructure for development coming forward under Hm01 as they could do.
- 1.11 This need for the Local Plan to provide further clarity is increased by the patchwork of land ownership within the allocation and the promoters' intention to seek consent for and deliver the development through a series of separate planning applications.
- 1.12 It remains our contention that modification –via the provision of additional clarity – is therefore required to ensure soundness.

Potential Adjustments to Hm01

1.13 There appear to be two ways in which policy Hm01 could be made effective:

- (i) **First** (and preferred), to set out additional wording in Policy Hm01 to define what is expected from each part of the site and how parts of the site will be co-ordinated and sequenced to ensure effective delivery of infrastructure alongside development; or
- (ii) **Second**, the addition of a policy requirement directing development management decisions to be made in line with the spatial arrangement of land uses and infrastructure set out in Indicative Concept Plan. However, before this could happen it would be necessary for the Concept Plan to be updated to accurately reflect policy Hm01 as drafted¹

This would provide clarity over which part of the site (or which promoters' land) is to accommodate key supporting infrastructure such as the secondary school and playing fields which have specific site requirements/catchments.

1.14 TCE would be prepared to support a Modification which set out a criteria-based approach to its land within Hm01 (aligned with the approach taken to SADC as set out in Site Allocations H1-H4), provided that the criteria required are clarified and aligned with an updated Concept Plan, and that policy also offers guidance on how any land ownership constraints are to be managed to ensure effective delivery of infrastructure.

Q3 *How do the sites at Marchmont Farm, Spencer's Park, land West of Hemel Hempstead and land adjacent to the Manor Estate relate to the growth proposed at HGC?*

1.15 We anticipate that the local authority will respond on this point.

Q4 *Having established the principle of growth at and around Hemel Hempstead, how was the scale of development determined?*

1.16 We anticipate that the local authority will respond on this point. However, we offer the following commentary to assist.

¹ The Concept Plan in Figure 8 is based on the DBC Regulation 18 Local Plan, which included a requirement for two secondary school sites to be provided within the allocation, each on 10ha. This requirement has been revised in the DBC Submission Version; Policy Hm01 now states that "one 8FE secondary school" is required to serve the proposed development. Interestingly there has not been a consequential uplift in the capacity of the site to accommodate additional development; the site allocation remains at 5,000 homes. If the Concept Plan is to have any status for development management purposes, then it should be updated to reflect the removal of the secondary school site and any consequential adjustments in site capacity.

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- 1.17 The scale of the development at HGC has been informed by many years of masterplanning. The capacity of the area to deliver the planned growth was rigorously tested through the Framework Plan exercise as evidenced in document HGC 04.03 Framework Plan Technical Evidence Report (the purpose of the Framework Plan exercise is set out at paragraph 1.11 of that report).
- 1.18 The Framework Plan was tested and refined over an extended period which provided opportunities for new evidence to inform the final outcome. For example, the findings of the North Hemel Hempstead Landscape Assessment (ref. HGC07.1) informed the proposed northern extent of built development, which is reflected in the allocation boundary for site Hm01.
- 1.19 The conclusions of the Framework Plan thus provide a high degree of confidence that the level of planned development can be accommodated within the Growth Areas.

Q5 *How did factors such as the Green Belt and proximity of the Chilterns National Landscape inform decisions around growth at Hemel Hempstead?*

- 1.20 The proximity of the Chilterns National Landscape (CNL) was an important consideration in refining the Framework Plan for the Growth Areas within DBC.
- 1.21 As mentioned in our response to Q4, the North Hemel Hempstead Landscape Assessment (ref. HGC07.1) provided clear insight into the potential visibility of development within North Hemel Hempstead, leading to Framework Plan refinements and recommendations that the northern development edge is characterised by lower density housing with limited heights, interspersed with generous landscape, with retained Green Belt providing a buffer to the CNL.

Issue 2 – Site Boundaries (including Green Belt alterations)**Q1 *Having established at a strategic level that alterations were necessary to the Green Belt boundary, how did the Councils determine the extent of alterations required?***

2.1 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority.

Q2 *How do the proposed boundary alterations relate to the supporting evidence through the Green Belt Assessments and site selection methodology?*

2.2 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority.

Q3 *Are the proposed boundary alterations consistent with paragraph 148 e) and f) of the Framework, which state that Plans should be able to demonstrate that boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the Plan period, and, define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?*

2.3 TCE made representations on this point at both Reg 18 and Reg 19 stages in respect of site allocation policies H2 and H4, requesting that the Council remove those parts of H2 and H4 which remain in the St Albans Green Belt in favour of drawing back the Green Belt to the M1 and B487 north and east boundaries of Site H2 and the M1/A4147 boundary in the south of H4.

2.4 Our case for a consistent approach to the selection of robust and permanent boundaries for Green Belt is made in detail in our representations to the SADC Local Plan at both Reg 18 Stage (2018) and Reg 19 Stage (November 2024).

2.5 There has been no change in the approach to the purpose, permanence and rationale for determining new Green Belt boundaries in national policy since 2019 which would change our case, thus our representations remain valid and so we do not repeat them here.

Efficacy of Policy LG5 and need to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances

2.6 In the intervening period since 2024, an Outline Planning Application with environmental impact assessment for EHH (the three SADC site allocations H2, H3, and H4) has been progressed and is now at a very advanced stage, due for submission in Q4 of 2025.

2.7 The masterplanning of the development proposals has reflected both the policy context (including the Framework Plan evidence) and site characteristics, topography and landscape context of the site, and has been shared and refined with officers, statutory consultees and

local stakeholders under an ongoing Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). The proposals have also been subject to two independent Design Reviews (add dates) and extensive public engagement.

- 2.8 Due to the site's topography, landscape and as part of mitigating visual impact, the general extent of built development is not proposed to extend into the north east (H2) and south east (H4) of the sites. However, it is intended that some elements of built development will be required within those parts of the site which currently are to remain within the Green Belt, namely:
- (i) For **EHH South (H4)**, the area retained in Green Belt is to accommodate sports pitches including a built sports pavilion and potentially some ancillary parking/servicing; and
 - (ii) For **EHH North (H2)**, within the area currently proposed to be retained as Green Belt between the line of the overhead pylons and the site's eastern boundary at the M1, built elements include secondary school buildings and playing fields, a sports hub building, courts and pitches and built facilities associated with a new Country Park.
- 2.9 For any change of use or built development proposed within those parts of the site remaining within the Green Belt, national policy requires a case for Very Special Circumstances (**VSC**) would need to be made. The VSC test is a higher test than the "*exceptional circumstances*" test which applies to the release of land from the Green Belt through a Plan process: see **R. (Luton BC) v Central Bedfordshire Council** [2015] 2 P. & C.R. 19 at [56]. If a VSC case was not supported or was challenged, and all built development was required to be located outside the Green Belt, the amount and mix of residential development set out in policy will not be able to be accommodated on site.
- 2.10 Policy LG5 of the SADC Submission Version is intended to provide a supportive policy context against which development management decisions can be considered for certain built development and land uses to be acceptable within the Green Belt within the Local Plan area.
- 2.11 We have reservations about the efficacy of this policy in overcoming the policy constraint afforded by the allocation sites' partial retention in the Green Belt:
- (i) **First**, the provisions of this policy do not align with national policy, thus risking its soundness²;
 - (ii) **Second**, if Policy LG5 were to be found sound and retained in this plan, this would not remove the need to make a VSC case for the Outline Application and for any subsequent Reserved Matters Applications in order for sites H2 and H4 to deliver the supporting infrastructure that the development is required to provide. There is a risk that a future development plan - or indeed, any future change of national Green Belt policy - during

² We are content that drainage works proposed on land east of the M1 associated with the EHH OPA do meet the provisions of para 154 criterion (h) (ii) of the NPPF and therefore no local policy provision is needed.

the lifetime of the delivery of EHH could render this policy out of date or in conflict with national policy, thus risking the ability for applicants (whether that be TCE, the local education authority or sports providers) to secure permission for these uses on land within the Green Belt.

- 2.12 There is a further point to make as regards the proposed Green Belt boundary. The NPPF states (see para. 145) that policies should revised boundaries, *"having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period"*. Factors relevant to the definition of Green Belt boundaries include the use of physical features, the need for long term safeguarded land between the Green Belt and the urban area and the need for long term permanence (see para. 149 NPPF). Physical features that are readily recognisable, permanent, and defensible form an appropriate and permanent Green Belt boundary. Defining boundaries with these features ensures the long-term protection and stability of the Green Belt. Examples would be major infrastructure such as roads, railway lines etc. This is because these provide clearly defined and durable edges. The use of pylons as a boundary to the Green Belt is not appropriate for the reasons set out in our representations to the SADC Local Plan at both Reg 18 Stage (2018) and Reg 19 Stage (November 2024). There are two key points:
- 2.13 Pylons are relatively impermanent. Pylons and their overhead lines can be moved, removed, or placed underground to meet changing needs for electricity transmission. Conservation groups like the CPRE have even campaigned for the removal of pylons from sensitive landscapes. In short pylons and lines are operational infrastructure managed by a utility company, not a feature of the permanent landscape. The location of electrical assets can be changed or rerouted in the future, which would compromise the stability of the Green Belt boundary.
- 2.14 Pylons are not a continuous barrier: a Green Belt boundary should use a continuous and clearly defined feature. A line of pylons, with cables suspended in the air, does not create a physical and continuous barrier in the way that a road does. The space between the pylons remains visually open and can be crossed without obstruction, undermining the principle of preventing urban encroachment.

Impact of the redrawing of the GB boundary for H2 and H4

- 2.15 TCE's objective in seeking removal of the entirety of site allocations H2 and H4 from the Green Belt is **not** to secure additional housing development land but to remove the potential difficulty in securing planning consent for built development elements required to be located within this part of the site.
- 2.16 For both H2 and H4, the areas of land – if removed from the Green Belt - would remain allocated under Policy NEB4 for proposed Significant Publicly Accessible Green Areas as shown

on the Policies Map, affording this land protection from built development not associated with preserving and enhancing this use. The policies could be further added to in order to reiterate this point.

- 2.17 Taking all the above into account, we consider that there is a robust case for the creation of a new permanent Green Belt boundary to the east of Hemel Hempstead which aligns with the B487, M1 and A4147 physical features.
- 2.18 In doing so, we are of the view that this would not impact the effectiveness of the Green Belt in this location in terms of its function and purpose as set out in the NPPF, particularly in respect of ensuring the separation of built development in the Growth Areas from existing settlements such as Redbourn east of the M1.

Issue 3 – Highways and Transport**Q1 *Is the strategic modelling an appropriate tool for assessing likely impacts of growth at HGC on the strategic road network, and, for determining necessary mitigation?***

- 3.1 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority. However, we offer the following commentary to help clarify the position.
- 3.2 TCE's transport consultants SLR (formerly Vectos) have been closely involved in engagement with the County Council on the transport modelling work in respect of HGC and relevant Local Plan modelling considerations, including being part of discussions with National Highways in respect of the SRN including J8 of the M1. SLR have also been members of the HGC Transport Sub-Group (a sub-group of the HGC Stakeholder Steering Group) which has been integral to the development of the HGC Transport Vision and Strategy.
- 3.3 The County Council has used the County wide COMET model to assess the effects of the HGC proposals on the strategic and local highway network. Using such a strategic model for assessment at the Local Plan stage is common practice. The model has been accepted as fit for purpose by National Highways. We are advised that a SOCG has been agreed between SADC and NH covering the effects of the SADC Local Plan.
- 3.4 Being a strategic model, COMET is not as precise at examining the effects of growth at an individual junction level as are other modelling tools. Hence SADC and HCC requested that SLR use the Hemel Hempstead Paramics (microsimulation) Model (HHPM) to examine the effects of the combined SADC and DBC local plans at M1 Junction 8. National Highways as well as the County Council have accepted this as an appropriate tool and are content with the approach to modelling undertaken by SLR and the results produced.

Q2 *What are the implications of the growth proposed at HGC on the strategic road network, having particular regard to Junction 8 of the M1?*

- 3.5 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority. However, we offer the following comment to help clarify the position.
- 3.6 In answering this question it is necessary to understand the two elements of improvement at and around M1 Junction 8:
- (1) The first is the major improvement to the A414/Green Lane junction (Breakspear Roundabout) i.e. conversion to a signalised junction and dualling of Green Lane north of A414. This is referred to as **Breakspear Junction Improvement**.
 - (2) The second is an upgrade to M1 Junction 8 which includes a new bridge over the M1

which creates a link into and from the EHH Central (site H3) from/to the M1 southbound without the need to pass through Breakspear Junction. This is referred to as **M1 Junction 8 Improvement**.

- 3.7 Drawing ref: EHUK-VEC-ZZZ-XXX-DR-CR-00086 P2 at Appendix 1 of this Statement shows the split of the works described above.
- 3.8 The County Council and National Highways have confirmed that only element (1) is required during the SADC/DBC Local Plan period to 2041.
- 3.9 The second element (M1 Junction 8 Improvement) is required at some stage beyond 2041 in order to deliver the full HGC growth beyond the plan period (i.e. up to 11,000 homes and 10,000 jobs).

Q3 *Can any significant highways impacts (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree, consistent with paragraph 114 of the Framework? How have the need for highways improvements been costed, and will the sites proposed for allocation at HGC remain viable?*

- 3.10 It is assumed that this question relates to the SRN (see answer to Q6 below for the local network).
- 3.11 There is a fully developed scheme for the Breakspear Junction Improvement that has been developed to an advanced level of design and has been costed.
- 3.12 The costs for the Breakspear Junction Improvement are included in the TCE cost planning for the EHH Outline Planning Application and can be delivered as part of the EHH development without adversely impacting scheme viability.
- 3.13 There is also a fully developed scheme for M1 Junction 8 Improvement which has been agreed in principle by National Highways. Land for this improvement is being safeguarded by TCE. In addition, the design of the Sustainable Transport Corridor within the commercial area of EHH has incorporated within its layout, arrangements that facilitate the future bridge connection across the M1. Hence, the future M1 Junction 8 Improvement will be both safeguarded and facilitated by the EHH development. See also answer to Issue 9, Question 3 below.

Q4 *Where mitigation is required, is it sufficiently clear to users of the Plan what is required, and where and when it will be delivered as required by policy?*

- 3.14 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority. See our commentary on Issue 4 Q1-Q3 below in respect of the IDP.

Q5 *What is the justification for the sensitivity testing which looks at a reduced number of jobs at East Hemel Hempstead (Central)? How does this correlate to the allocation in the St Albans Local Plan and the mix of uses proposed?*

3.15 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority.

Q6 *What are the implications of the growth proposed at HGC on the local road network, having particular regard to the consequences of additional congestion and delays on the M1?*

3.16 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority. However, we offer the following comment to assist.

3.17 The analysis of the local road network, using both the COMET and Paramics models has shown some increases in congestion due to the proposed development (notwithstanding the sustainable approach taken and the adoption of the Garden Communities target of 60% of trips originating within the Growth Areas being undertaken by sustainable modes).

3.18 Highway capacity improvements have been focussed on the A414 and Redbourn Road and a modest number of enhancements have been developed (note: these will be subject to further refinement through the consideration of planning applications).

3.19 However, it is not predicted that there will be significant increases in congestion and delay on the M1 and hence this is not predicted to have a negative effect on the local network.

Q7 *In assessing the impacts of cumulative growth at HGC, how does the evidence take into account the likelihood of modal shift away from private car use? Has this been applied consistently and is it justified?*

3.20 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority. However, we offer the following comment to assist:

3.21 Assessments of the HGC growth area (both within and beyond the 2041 Local Plans) assume achievement of the Garden Communities target of 60% of trips originating in the Growth Areas undertaken by sustainable modes. This has been applied consistently.

3.22 We consider this a justified position on the basis that:

- (i) The approach is consistent with the Vision-led approach to transport planning required in the NPPF; *“using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well designed, sustainable and popular places”* (para 109)

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- (ii) The land uses and scale of facilities included within site allocations have been selected to achieve a significant proportion of trips retained within the Growth Areas – circa 60% of trips (accessing schools, jobs and local facilities);
 - (iii) Design requirements set out in policy will ensure short distances are possible between homes and facilities accessible via good walking and cycling connections (including, for example, the walking and cycling bridge over the A414 required in policy H3/H4);
 - (iv) For trips outside the sites, policies include requirements for improvements to the walking and cycling facilities along main radials into Hemel Hempstead as well as towards St Albans. For example a segregated walking and cycling route will be provided along the A414 linking the EHH sites to the town centre. A comprehensive, funded, bus strategy will also be implemented.
- 3.23 We therefore consider that this policy framework and proposed measures will lead to a shift in mode away from the private car as sought.

Issue 4 – Infrastructure Provision

St Albans Local Plan Policy LG2 states that all development in the HGC Programme Area must follow a planned and coordinated approach to growth and infrastructure and is expected to be in accordance with Infrastructure Delivery Plans ('IDPs'). A similar requirement is set out in Dacorum Local Plan Policy HGC1.

Q1 Is there sufficient certainty regarding the total quantum, timing and cost of infrastructure necessary to facilitate the HGC in line with the Councils' expectations?

- 4.1 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority. However, we offer the following commentary
- 4.2 Our representations submitted to previous versions of both plans reserved TCE's position in respect of the IDPs published at that time (the separate IDPs for DBC and SADC Local Plans covering the period to 2041).
- 4.3 We understand HGC are currently preparing an IDP which sets out the anticipated infrastructure needs for the HGC Programme Area to 2050 (i.e. beyond the plan period) but as at the date of submission of these Hearing Statements has not been published as part of the Councils' evidence base.
- 4.4 Thus, the roles and alignment of each of the three IDPs in testing and reviewing the infrastructure requirements for individual site allocations are not yet clear.
- 4.5 We note the considerable degree of overlap in the various policies relating to proposed development at HGC (for all development within the Programme Area, and at the Growth Areas). This is particularly relevant for the provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities.
- 4.6 For example (with emphasis on the variations in **bold**):
- (i) As noted by the Inspectors, DBC Strategic Policy HGC1 states:
*"All major development in the HGC Programme Area must follow a planned and coordinated approach to growth and infrastructure **in accordance with the Local Plan and HGC Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs)...."***
 - (ii) HGC1 also states that:
*"The methodology for infrastructure apportionment and cost sharing is set out in the **Local Plans Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs)**".*
 - (iii) SADC Policy LG2 has similar but not identical wording, stating:
*"All development in the HGC Programme Area must follow a planned and coordinated approach to growth and infrastructure and **is expected to be in accordance with Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs)**",*

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- (iv) For SADC Growth Areas, the delivery section of Policy LG3 states that (our emphasis in **bold**):
- "Within the HGC Growth Areas, in addition to meeting LPA validation requirements, major planning applications will be required to provide material to demonstrate:*
- (c) *"Details of the on-site infrastructure to be provided and / or contributions to be made to off-site infrastructure and facilities **in line with the Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs)**";*
- (v) Further, each of the HGC Growth Area criteria-based site allocation policies (H1-H4 and Hm01) includes specific infrastructure items which are required to serve development (either through direct delivery on site or through contributions to wider provision).
- (vi) Within the wording of these policies, we note that only in respect of the Key and Local Transport Network, reference is made to *"...interventions to be delivered **in accordance with the Local Plan and HGC Infrastructure Delivery Plans**" (Hm01)* and for H1 – H4 sites in SADC.... *"interventions (**as set out in the IDPs**)"*
- 4.7 Without prejudice to any commentary about what is included in each and all IDPs, we consider that the above policy drafting presents a confused picture. Policies for each site should clearly set out first, what supporting infrastructure and facilities are required to meet the needs of that development, and second, how the IDPs form part of the evidence base against which local authorities will seek or assess the need for contributions to wider infrastructure provision for the purposes of development management under Reg 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010.
- Q2 *Is there appropriate evidence as to how different forms of infrastructure (including schools and open space) have been apportioned to different HGC allocations?***
- 4.8 It is anticipated that this question will be addressed by the Planning Authority. However, we offer the following commentary.
- 4.9 The Framework Plan evidence base [**HGC04.03** and **HGC 04.04**] provides a clear evidence base setting out the broad level spatial arrangements of land uses across the HGC Growth Areas, and to varying degrees of specificity (see our response in Issue 1 Q2 above) this has been translated into the site-specific allocations.
- 4.10 The Framework Plan evidence base has been translated into the Indicative Concept Plan for the Growth Areas, but we remain concerned about the status of this as currently set out in the Local Plans and therefore how much reliance can be placed on the Concept Plan to act as an effective policy tool to guide subsequent applications, thereby ensuring that the disposition and quantum of land uses – particularly those with a large land take such as schools, playing fields/open space - can be co-ordinated across the piece.

- 4.11 We also wish to reiterate our concern raised at Regulation 19 stage (SADC) to the last paragraph of Policy LG2 which requires that:

*"Developers and promoters in the HGC Growth Areas must work together and closely with the Councils to secure **a collaboration agreement** which ensures an integrated and seamless approach across site boundaries; and*

*"Critical infrastructure necessary to support development **must be delivered ahead of occupation**".*

- 4.12 TCE is working positively with the local planning authorities, and is prepared to enter into commercial agreements with adjacent willing landowners (for example in respect of design and delivery matters pertaining to the interface of H1/H2 along the B487 Road corridor). However, there is no guarantee that a single collaboration agreement can be secured between the large number of different landowners within the Growth Areas in a reasonable time period.

- 4.13 Similarly, the provision, timing and phasing of infrastructure will be determined first through assessment and mitigation measures (e.g. EIA) accompanying planning applications, and will be fixed through legal agreements (e.g. s106) to ensure optimum timing of provision taking into capacity and (where needed) cost apportionment across development. To have a blanket requirement for all critical infrastructure to be delivered ahead of occupation is not justified.

Q3 What is the justification for requiring accordance with the IDP, which is a non-statutory document intended to be updated regularly by each Council?

- 4.14 We do not consider that there is any justification requiring accordance with the IDP for the reasons the inspectors allude to above.
- 4.15 Site specific policies should set the specific infrastructure items required to be provide as part of the development (indeed, the criteria-based policies of H2-H4 provide good examples of an appropriate level of policy framework to ensure that infrastructure to serve the needs of the development is set out clearly and is a sound basis upon which to determine the 'policy compliance' of a development proposal). These policies have been drafted and the consultation through Reg 18 and reg 19 stages with statutory consultees, infrastructure and service providers, have refined the policy requirements to ensure they are proportionate and appropriate for the scale and nature of development proposed.
- 4.16 Guidance to support the delivery of infrastructure set out in plan policies might come through the preparation of SPDs (district wide or site specific); these are also subject to stakeholder and public consultation prior to adoption.
- 4.17 In contrast, IDPs are one part of the background evidence base for a local plan to test the overall level of infrastructure to be required to support the overall levels of growth sought

within the plan period, and to set out the prioritisation, anticipated funding and delivery mechanisms by which they will come forward. They are a 'snapshot in time', are 'live documents' which will be updated and change regularly, and represent authorities' current estimates of the level and proportion of funding sources for each element of infrastructure, signposting where any uncertainty over what is needed or 'gap' in funding provision might exist, and how this is to be managed going forward. Indeed, the function of the IDP is recognised in supporting text paras 7.2 and 7.3 of the SADC Local Plan Submission Version.

- 4.18 As such, it is not appropriate or justified for policies to require development to be "*in accordance with*" or "*in line with*" an IPD (SADC Policy LG2 and Policy LG3/para 14.3 respectively). We therefore suggest an amendment to the wording of SADC Policies LG2 and LG3, DBC Policy HGC1 and supporting text throughout the two plans, to require development proposals to "***have regard to***" the latest iteration of the IDP in place at the time that they are being considered for determination.
- 4.19 The language which we propose is aligned with the way IDPs tend to be treated in other Development Plans.

Q4 What is the purpose, role and function of the Transformation Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD') and the HGC Framework Plan? How do they relate to policies within each Plan?

- 4.20 Having been involved for a number of years in engagement with HGC and the local plans teams, we offer the following commentary for clarity. Taking each document in turn :

The Purpose, Role and Function of the HGC Framework Plan:

- 4.21 Paragraph 1.11 of **HGC 04.03** Framework Plan Technical Evidence Report set out its role and function. In brief, the Framework Plan was undertaken to test the emerging site allocation policies for the Growth Areas through a single, comprehensive plan across two LPA boundaries and multiple ownerships and was supported by the principal landowners.
- 4.22 The Framework Plan is underpinned by sound masterplanning for strategic sites and provides a robust and credible response to the contextual and site constraints and opportunities. It establishes a clear spatial framework which demonstrates the capacity of the site to accommodate the level of planned development and corresponding open green space including SANG, community infrastructure and employment uses. The evidence base report includes a schedule of infrastructure as anticipated at the time of preparation, which was informed by the planning authorities and the County Council and was used for viability purposes.
- 4.23 As noted earlier in this Statement, the role of the Framework Plan going forward is not clear in the SADC and DBC Local plans. It has the potential to guide development including the location of green infrastructure and community uses, albeit to serve this purpose it would need

to be updated to reflect the DBC LP Hm01 allocation policy. As currently presented only a high level version of the framework plan has been included as an 'indicative Concept Plan' but as part of supporting text not within policy, and so risks being an under-utilised tool in enabling the co-ordination of growth planning, particularly in Dacorum where there is a single allocation made up of multiple landownerships.

- 4.24 We have suggested in our response to Issue 4 Q2 above how this could be addressed for soundness.

The Purpose, Role and Function of HGC SPDs

- 4.25 As noted above, the purpose of SPDs is to provide additional guidance to support effective plan making and development management, but this guidance has to be within the scope of the Policy (no new policy requirements can be introduced).
- 4.26 We note that both authorities already have recently prepared design guidance (2023) which is forms SPD for DBC and technical guidance for SADC ([Strategic Sites Design Guidance - Design Principles - 2023.pdf](#) [Dacorum Strategic Design Guide SPD Executive Summary](#)) and which is referenced in policy SADC LG1 and DBC Strategic Policy D1. This provides comprehensive design guidance governing all new development within each area.
- 4.27 The development plan policy framework is already very detailed in respect of the HGC Growth Areas: policies set out 'place principles' (LG2, LG3 and HGC1) and site specific policies for each site allocation within the Growth Areas which include criteria governing approach to design and provision of infrastructure.
- 4.28 Further both plans include district wide requirements to which all Broad Locations must adhere. These policies also reference the need for masterplans and design codes.
- 4.29 We note that the two SPDs named in the plans (The HGC Framework and Transformation SPD and the HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD) are being prepared by HGC rather than the planning authorities (as is the Strategic Design Code which we understand may form part of one of these SPDs). As HGC are not themselves a planning authority, once drafted by HGC, each SPDs would then need to be consulted upon and adopted as SPD for its constituent parts (or in duplicate) by each authority. At present, the policy framework for parts of the Growth Areas within each plan area are not 100% aligned, and this may cause a challenge for the SPD in relating across the policies of both plans.
- 4.30 Whilst no drafts of the SPD are yet available formally, TCE are also concerned that the level of detail being sought by HGC to include in each SPD for the whole HGC area - and the time it will take to adopt the SPDs by each authority post-adoption of the plans³ - may act counter to the effective delivery of the development, either by seeking additional requirements which risk

³ The full suite of additional policy guidance envisaged to be put in place for HGC developments is set out in Fig 18 (pp 42/43) of **HGC02.01 HGC Delivery Statement**

impacting viability, or through delaying determination of applications within the timescales currently envisaged to ensure the Local Plan trajectory can be met.

- 4.31 In terms of the role of SPDs for development management purposes, we would welcome clarification over the terminology variously set out in current policy drafting throughout the plans. There are a number of instances where policies variously refer to **"compliance with"** SPDs and certain strategies not yet in place but to come forward as SPDs and **"in accordance"** with future SPDs (such as SADC Policy LG1 criterion (d), Policy LG2 para 3, and Policy LG3 Pillar 2 criterion (a) and criteria (b) and (f) under the delivery section).
- 4.32 We suggest that policies making reference to named SPDs – and indeed referring to 'future guidance' – should be reviewed and wording adjusted to be consistent throughout the plans and reflect the requirement for development proposals to **"have regard to"** SPDs.
- 4.33 On the basis of the above commentary, we contend that the HGC policies themselves – and the detailed requirements they already place on developers bringing forward development – coupled with the up to date local design guidance already in place, may not justify a requirement for these SPDs to be prepared in order to secure effective delivery.
- 4.34 However, if the principle of requiring further SPDs to supplement the suite of HGC Policies and district wide Plan policy is accepted, we suggest that additional clarification is set out in LG2/LG3/HGC1 or supporting text to set out a list of matters the planning authorities envisage each SPD providing guidance on, alongside the HGC policies. This would signal the focus for these SPDs and could be consulted upon through any Proposed Modifications to the plan.

Issue 5 – Growth Area Principles

St Albans Local Plan Policy LG3 and Dacorum Local Plan Policy HGC2 set out various elements of the '4 pillars' upon which the HGC concept is built, comprising 32 criteria, along with provisions in respect of delivery.

Q1 *Are those policies clearly written and unambiguous so it is evident how a decision-maker should react to development proposals? Are all elements directive in terms of decision-taking, and clear and effective?*

5.1 It is clear there is significant overlap, duplication and potential for inconsistency between LG3 and the H2-H4 site allocations (and potentially also overlap with other district-wide Local Plan policy requirements which would apply to these sites). As set out earlier, this risks inconsistency in how policy is applied across the Growth Areas within the two plans.

5.2 Our comments in relation to earlier matters address the need to review and align key policy requirements, not least to enable effective SPD and delivery frameworks to be put in place.

Q2 *Are Policies LG3 and HGC2 suitably flexible so as to apply only to relevant types of development?*

5.3 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q3 *What is the justification for requiring compliance with 'future HGC guidance' in Policy LG3/HGC2? Is this clear, justified and effective?*

5.4 We refer to our earlier comments to Issue 4 Q4 above and we would resist the inclusion of non-specific "future guidance" on the grounds that this is neither appropriate or justified to secure an effective policy framework for HGC site allocations. We note that there is an extensive suite of HGC guidance being prepared as evidenced in **HGC02.01**. In addition to the SPDs already named in policy, it is unclear which of this guidance is to be adopted by one or both planning authorities as SPD and in what timeframe.

Issue 6 – Viability and Deliverability

Q1 *Which of the sources of housing and employment land will contribute, and to what extent, towards anticipated delivery at HGC during the plan period and beyond?*

To facilitate discussions around viability and deliverability, it would assist the examination if the Council could produce an updated trajectory for each individual site allocated at HGC.

6.1 We can confirm the trajectories for TCE land interests in Hm01, H2, H3 and H4 are set out in our Statements of Common Ground [**SADC/ED12** and **DBC/ED21**]. These align with the Councils' assumptions.

Q2 *The Delivery Statement supporting the St Albans Local Plan is dated November 2024 (Core Document HGC 02.01), whereas that supporting the Dacorum Local Plan is dated March 2025 (HGC01.02). What are the differences between the two documents (if any) and which is correct?*

6.2 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q3 *Table 3.2 of the St Albans Local Plan envisages 100 houses completed at HGC in 2029/30, with development increasing thereafter up to 500 units per year. What are the lead-in times and build-out rates based on, and are they reasonable and realistic assumptions around deliverability?*

6.3 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question. See our response to Issue 10 Q6.

Q4 *How do the lead-in times and build-out rates take into account the need for necessary strategic infrastructure requirements, especially strategic highway improvements?*

6.4 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q5 *What are the implications for both Plans if HGC does not deliver at the rates expected? Should the Plans be modified to include additional flexibility, or a fallback position if HGC proposals are delayed?*

6.5 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q6 *Has adequate viability testing been carried out to assess the cumulative costs associated with bringing forward the proposals at HGC? Are the component parts of the HGC viable, taking into account all likely costs, including strategic highways and infrastructure costs?*

6.6 In relation to TCE's landholdings, we are in agreement with the schemes that are directly related to EHH and NWH and, with regard to EHH we have been working with Herts County Council on the appropriate mitigation in relation to the proposed development and this has fed into TCE's cost planning for EHH.

6.7 Any contributions to be made to wider infrastructure required for the regeneration and transformation of the town will be considered as part of the determination of planning applications and would need to be tested against CIL Reg.122 compliance.

6.8 We understand that the Councils' viability position may need to be confirmed/updated following the publication of the HGC IDP and associated commentary around any differences from the IDPs of the two location plans previously published. TCE may wish to respond further at the Examination Hearing Sessions in the event that any further published evidence on the Councils' viability position is provided as part of the Council's Hearing Statements.

Issue 7 – North Hemel Hempstead (H1)

7.1 We anticipate Issue 7 to be addressed by the planning authorities and site promoters of H1.

Issue 8 – East Hemel Hempstead (North) – H2

Q1 *What is the site boundary based on and is it justified and effective?*

Q2 *What is the justification for the proposed alteration to the Green Belt boundary? Is the proposed boundary alteration consistent with paragraph 148 e) and f) of the Framework, which state that Plans should be able to demonstrate that boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the Plan period, and, define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?*

8.1 We refer to our answer under Issue 2 Q3 earlier in this Statement suggesting that for soundness and to meet the objectives of the NPPF, the entirety of the H2 allocation should be removed from the Green Belt.

Q3 *Do the exceptional circumstances exist to justify amending the Green Belt boundary in this location?*

8.2 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q4 *How have the landscape impacts of the allocation been considered, having particular regard to the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape?*

8.3 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q5 *How have the mix of uses been established and how will development proposals come forward in a coordinated and coherent manner that achieves the aims and objectives of the wider HGC proposals?*

8.4 We consider that the criteria-based site allocation policy framework for the SADC Broad Locations H1-H4 include a requirement for development proposals within each allocation (or part thereof) to demonstrate a co-ordinated and coherent approach to the design and delivery of development.

8.5 We refer to our answer at Issue 1 Q2 in respect of the co-ordination of cross-boundary development within the wider (DBC) Growth Area.

Q6 Can the allocation deliver the necessary mix of uses and supporting infrastructure? Is it developable within (and beyond) the plan period?

- 8.6 An Outline Planning Application for the full allocation at EHH (H2, H3, H4, totalling the full site capacity of 4,000 dwellings and 53 ha of employment land) is currently being finalised. The application includes c.1,600 units and the full suite of supporting infrastructure at EHH North as set out in Policy H2.
- 8.7 The programme for submission, determination and a start on site is as set out in the SOCG. This will allow the development to come forward and deliver that proportion of the units assumed within the plan period to 2041 as set out in H2.

Q7 What effect will development have on the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation ('SAC') and how will any adverse impacts on the integrity of the site be avoided and/or mitigated?

- 8.8 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.
- 8.9 The OPA for EHH includes policy-compliant levels of SANG provision to meet the requirements of H2 and H4, delivered within a new Country Park to serve existing and new residents and is specifically designed to mitigate recreational impacts on the Chilterns SAC.

Q8 Is Policy H2 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? If not, what modifications are required to make the Plan sound?

- 8.10 TCE has engaged positively with SADC over the course of the plan preparation to ensure that the policy drafting represents a sound policy against which to determine planning applications.
- 8.11 We are generally supportive of the policy as currently drafted and only have two minor suggested amendments which we consider would help to clarify:

- (i) **H2 Criterion 16** states "*Development and design that connects the site to the neighbourhoods to the north and south and Spencer's Park to the west. Neighbourhood Masterplanning will respect the landscape and neighbourhood setting including the adjacent Spencer's Park and adjacent existing development, and new neighbourhood design coding, as set out in the Strategic Design Code.*" (our emphasis).

As the HGC Strategic Design Code does not yet exist, we suggest the wording of the policy would be more effective if amended to read:

Neighbourhood Masterplanning will respect the landscape and neighbourhood setting including the adjacent Spencer's Park and adjacent existing development, and new

*neighbourhood design coding, **and will have regard to design guidance within relevant Supplementary Planning Documents in force at the time** as set out in the Strategic Design Code.*

- (ii) **H2 Criterion 22** states "*Recreation space and other community facilities, including a medical centre, sports hub and sports facilities and contributions to health and sports provision within the wider HGC Growth Areas*".

Discussions with service providers have confirmed that the requirement to provide a Medical Centre and Sports Hub within site H2 is designed to serve not only the health and sports needs of the resident population within H2 but is also to serve the wider needs of residents on adjacent sites H1 and H4 (the policies for which do not include such built facilities). As such, we question whether it is justified to also require off site contributions and suggest that the policy is reworded to read: "*Recreation space and other community facilities, including a medical centre, sports hub and sports facilities. ~~and contributions to health and sports provision within the wider HGC Growth Areas~~*".

- 8.12 We will continue to engage with SADC on any Modifications which the Council may subsequently offer up to and following the Examination.

Issue 9 – East Hemel Hempstead (Central) – H3

Site H3 is allocated as an 'employment led mixed use (Enterprise Zone)'. Unlike allocations H1, H2 and H4, allocation H3 does not specify a quantum or capacity of employment land, nor what proportion of the site is anticipated to be developed within the plan period.

Q1 *What is the scale of development proposed, how has it been established and is the Plan clear and effective around the types of development permitted?*

9.1 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q2 *How will development proposals come forward in a coordinated and coherent manner that achieves the aims and objectives of the HGC?*

9.2 We consider that the criterion-based site allocation policy framework for the SADC Broad Locations H1-H4 includes a requirement for development proposals within each allocation (or part thereof) to demonstrate a co-ordinated and coherent approach to the design and delivery of development.

9.3 In respect of EHH Central, whilst the policy sets out a number of locational criteria, it retains a degree of flexibility to allow for development to respond to changing economic/occupier requirements over the life of the plan.

Q3 *What is the justification for criterion 16 under Policy H3 which safeguards land to the east of Junction 8 of the M1? Does this form part of the allocated site, and if so, what are development proposals expected to do in order to achieve compliance with the policy?*

9.4 We refer to our commentary under Matter 6 Issue 3 Q3 above in respect of each element of the M1 Junction 8 upgrades.

9.5 This land is owned by TCE as part of its wider landholding at the Gorhambury Estate. Land east of Junction 8 of the M1 does not form part of the allocated site for development and is proposed to remain in the Green Belt. However, the area is defined on the Policies Map as land to which Policy TRA2 (Major Transport Schemes) refers, and where para 154 of the NPPF makes provision for transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.

9.6 The Junction 8 improvement works straddle the M1. Land for M1 Bridge Crossing western approach sits within the H3 site and this land will be safeguarded in the OPA (via Parameter Plans/S106) and will come out of the GB by virtue of its allocation in an adopted plan.

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- 9.7 Works to land east of the M1 (eastern approach to bridge crossing and junction improvement works) lie within TCE's wider land ownership. TCE proposes to safeguard this land through a s106 clause and plan defining the area required with a commitment to make the land available for implementation of these works post-2041.

Q4 *What is the justification for the proposed alteration to the Green Belt boundary? Is the proposed boundary alteration consistent with paragraph 148 e) and f) of the Framework, which state that Plans should be able to demonstrate that boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the Plan period, and, define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?*

- 9.8 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q5 *Do the exceptional circumstances exist to justify amending the Green Belt boundary in this location?*

- 9.9 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q6 *How have the landscape impacts of the allocation been considered, having particular regard to the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape?*

- 9.10 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q7 *What is the justification for criterion 29 and the requirements for contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring and the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace?*

- 9.11 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q8 *What is the justification for the provision of accommodation to help meet the needs of gypsies and travellers on H3, and not all other sites within the HGC Programme Area?*

- 9.12 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

- 9.13 TCE can however, confirm that the EHH Outline Planning Application makes provision (defined on Parameter Plans) for a zone within which the required policy level of G&T provision can be accommodated within the northern part of site H3.

Q9 Is Policy H3 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? If not, what modifications are required to make the Plan sound?

9.14 TCE has engaged positively with SADC over the course of the plan preparation to ensure that the policy drafting represents a sound policy against which to determine planning applications.

9.15 We are generally supportive of the policy as currently drafted and only have two minor suggested amendments which we consider would help to clarify:

9.16 Through our Reg 19 representations, TCE sought greater flexibility around the disposition of land uses in the northern and southern parts of the site. However, through the advancement of the planning application preparation for EHH, masterplanning work has taken into account topography, site constraints and current occupier demands, and concluded that the disposition of proposed uses within the OPA would generally align with what is set out in Criterion 11 and 12.

9.17 TCE remain keen to secure additional flexibility in H3 Criterion 11 around the timing of the innovation hub, and have sought clarification from officers around what is meant by “*exploring opportunities for education*”. We consider that the following amendments to the policy would help satisfy our concerns and reflect officer’s intentions on the education point:

(i) “The southern approximately 17 Hectares of the site will promote high density, higher skilled employment uses to deliver a Business, Research and Development Park and explore opportunities **related to support for higher and further education initiatives**. **Early** ~~The first phases~~ of employment development will **include** ~~provide~~ an innovation hub prioritising space for start-up units in high quality buildings and units that provide grow on space for small businesses and support the growth of life science and agri-tech businesses”.

(ii) As the HGC Strategic Design Code does not yet exist, we suggest the wording of the first part of criterion 14 would be more effective if amended to read:

“Development will be designed in accordance with the Strategic Sites Employment Uses Design Toolkit, ~~and~~ take appropriate account of the Maylands Masterplan Plus document **and will have regard to design guidance within relevant Supplementary Planning Documents in force at the time** ~~HGC Strategic Design Code~~”.

Issue 10 – East Hemel Hempstead (South) – H4

Q1 *What is the site boundary based on and is it justified and effective?*

Q2 *What is the justification for the proposed alteration to the Green Belt boundary? Is the proposed boundary alteration consistent with paragraph 148 e) and f) of the Framework, which state that Plans should be able to demonstrate that boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the Plan period, and, define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?*

10.1 We refer to our answer under Issue 2 Q3 earlier in this Statement suggesting that for soundness and to meet the objectives of the NPPF, the entirety of the H4 allocation should be removed from the Green Belt.

Q3 *Do the exceptional circumstances exist to justify amending the Green Belt boundary in this location?*

10.2 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

Q4 *How have the mix of uses been established and how will development proposals come forward in a coordinated and coherent manner that achieves the aims and objectives of the wider HGC proposals?*

10.3 We consider that the criterion-based site allocation policy framework for the SADC Broad Locations H1-H4 include a requirement for development proposals within each allocation (or part thereof) to demonstrate a co-ordinated and coherent approach to the design and delivery of development.

10.4 We refer to our answer at Issue 1 Q2 in respect of the co-ordination of cross-boundary development within the wider (DBC) Growth Area.

Q5 *Can the allocation deliver the necessary mix of uses and supporting infrastructure? Is it developable within (and beyond) the plan period?*

10.5 An Outline Planning Application for the full allocation at EHH (H2, H3, H4, totalling the full site capacity of 4,000 dwellings and 53 ha of employment land) is currently being finalised. The application includes c.2,400 units and the full suite of supporting infrastructure at EHH South as set out in the criteria within Policy H4.

10.6 The programme for submission, determination and a start on site is as set out in the SOCG. This will allow the development to come forward and deliver that proportion of the units assumed within the plan period to 2041 as set out in H4.

Q6 *What is the justification for the proposed delivery rates and density assumptions on site H4, when compared to other parts of the HGC area?*

- 10.7 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question. However, we offer the following for clarity.

Delivery Rates

- 10.8 The Council's Housing Delivery Paper Addendum [**HOU 01.01**] sets out anticipated delivery rates for each of the Broad Locations H1 H2 and H4 as the site areas, housing capacity (and assumed proportion of housing numbers for each site) are provided under these separate policies.
- 10.9 TCE is supportive of the overall trajectory and housing delivery rates assumed for H2 and H4 as shown on page 2 of HOU 01.01. However, as it is intended to bring forward this development through a single planning application, we anticipate that the quantum of housing delivered within EHH North (H2) and EHH South (H4) may be balanced more evenly across the two sites than that indicated in the Council's table.
- 10.10 There will be a number of development fronts coming forward across the entirety of the East Hemel area at any one time in order to ensure sustained delivery and offer a broad range of typologies to meet future residents' requirements. As such this will not impact the overall annual delivery rates within the East Hemel sites (a range of 100 and 375).

Density Assumptions

- 10.11 We understand from this question that the Inspectors may be seeking clarity over the differences in gross residential density across sites H1, H2 and H4 when considering the overall sites areas and site capacities set out at the top of each of the Broad Locations Site Allocation Sheet in Part B of the Plan.
- 10.12 The gross densities for H1 and H2 are broadly equitable, at a gross figure of 9.75 dwellings per hectare and 9.45 dwellings per hectare respectively. In contrast, H4 indicates a higher gross density of c.17 dwellings per hectare.
- 10.13 It should be stated that these gross densities do not correspond to the net densities to be achieved on site (which will meet policy requirements of an overall minimum of 40 dph). The principal difference in the gross density figures relates to the proportions of H1 and H2 sites remaining as open land. This is due in part to the retention of land within the Green Belt within each of these allocations, but is also due to site specific policy requirements to provide a significant amount of SANG and Significant Publicly Accessible Green Areas (which for H2 is to be provided as a Country Park) to provide for new and existing communities and secure a permanent green buffer to the settlement of Redbourn east of the M1.

10.14 H4 in contrast, has the following characteristics;

- first, that part of the site proposed to be retained in Green Belt (open land) forms a much smaller proportion of the overall area; and
- second, whilst the landscape and neighbourhood setting of Leverstock Green is to be respected (criterion 18 refers), there is a focus on connecting the site to the neighbourhoods to the north and west and there is no policy requirement within H4 to create or maintain a green buffer for separation of settlements. An element of SANG is to be provided within H4 as part of the creation of a wider accessible SANG network (criterion 25) but has been jointly designed as part of the green infrastructure provision for the overall East Hemel area (H2, H3 and H4).

10.15 This results in the differences gross densities calculated from the site area and overall residential capacity figures at the head of each policy.

Q7 *What effect will development have on the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation ('SAC') and how will any adverse impacts on the integrity of the site be avoided and/or mitigated?*

10.16 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

10.17 The OPA for EHH includes policy-compliant levels of SANG provision to meet the requirements of H2 and H4, delivered within a new Country Park to serve existing and new residents and is specifically designed to mitigate recreational impacts on the Chilterns SAC.

Q8 *What is the justification for the provision of accommodation to help meet the needs of gypsies and travellers on H4, and not all other sites within the HGC Programme Area?*

10.18 We anticipate the planning authorities will address this question.

10.19 TCE can however, confirm that the EHH Outline Planning Application makes provision (defined on Parameter Plans) for the required policy level of G&T provision to be accommodated within the residential areas in H4. The precise location will be confirmed through Design Codes/RMAs taking into account the layout of residential areas and the proximity and accessibility to schools and services on site.

Q9 *Is Policy H4 justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy? If not, what modifications are required to make the Plan sound?*

10.20 TCE has engaged positively with SADC over the course of the plan preparation to ensure that the policy drafting represents a sound policy against which to determine planning applications.

10.21 We are generally supportive of the policy as currently drafted and only have two minor suggested amendments which we consider would help to clarify:

- (i) Amend the wording of **H4 Criterion 5** to more accurately reflect the policy intention as we understand it, and read:

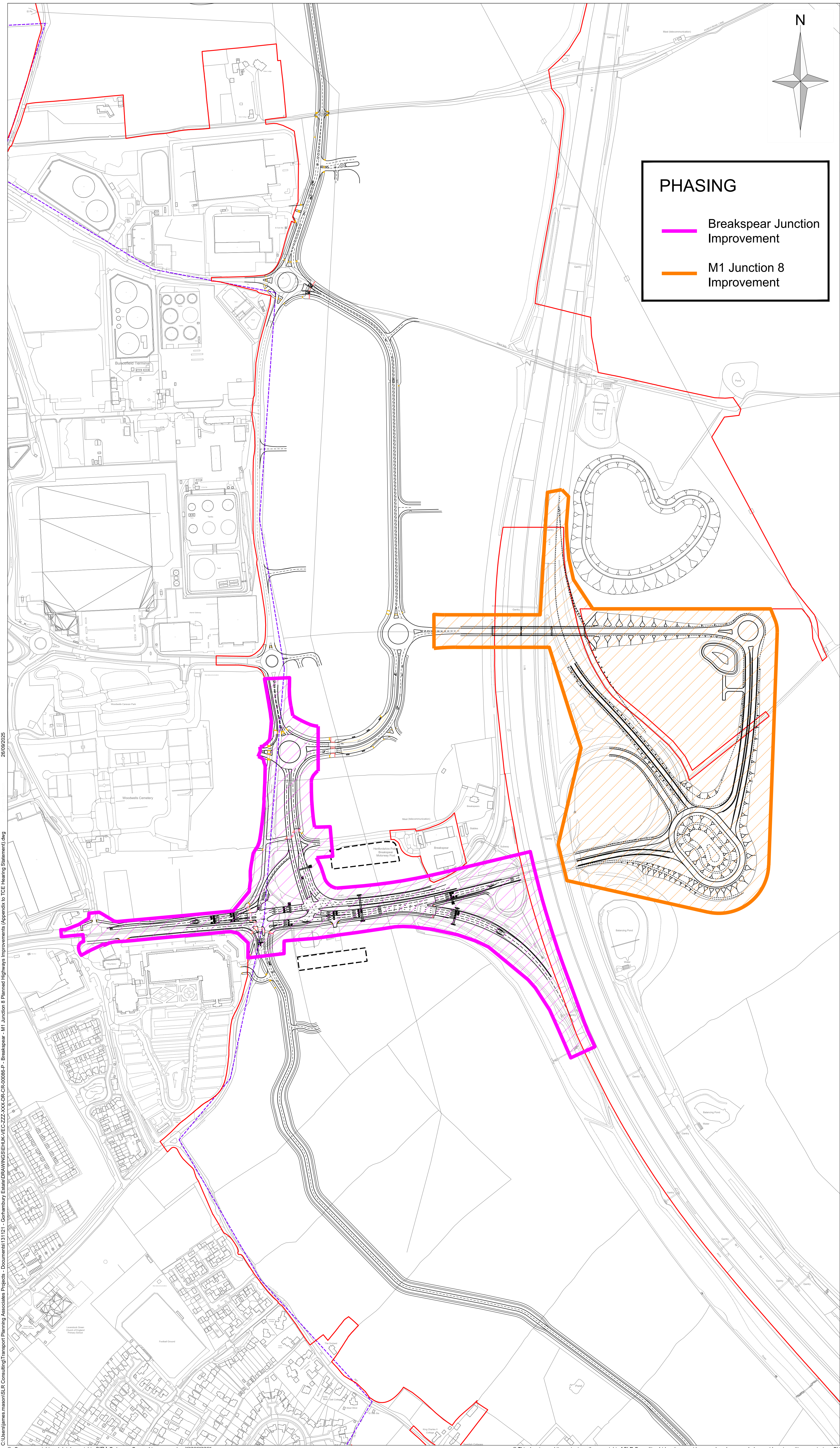
*"**Contributions to** the HGC Green Loop including Buncefield Lane, Westwick Row, Blackwater Lane, to Bunkers Park and adjacent to the site Bunkers Lane and connections to the Green Loop".*

- (ii) **H4 Criterion 18** states *"Development and design that connects the site to the neighbourhoods to the north and west. Neighbourhood Masterplanning will respect the landscape and neighbourhood setting including the adjacent Leverstock Green neighbourhood, and new neighbourhood design coding, as set out in the Strategic Design Code.* (our emphasis).

As the HGC Strategic Design Code does not yet exist, we suggest the wording of the policy would be more effective if amended to read:

*"Neighbourhood Masterplanning will respect the landscape and neighbourhood setting including the adjacent Spencer's Park and adjacent existing development, and new neighbourhood design coding, **and will have regard to design guidance within relevant Supplementary Planning Documents in force at the time**" ~~as set out in the Strategic Design Code.~~*

APPENDIX 1: BREAKSPEAR / M1 JCT.8 PLANNED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS



Notes:

1. This is not a construction drawing and is intended for illustrative purposes only.
2. White lining is indicative only.

Legend:

East Hemel Planning Application Red Line

DBC Boundary

PHASING

Breakspear Junction Improvement

M1 Junction 8 Improvement

P2	M1 Junction 8 Improvement hatch updated	26.09.25	JM	MDC	MDC
P1	Original issue	26.09.25	JM	DB	DB
Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Chk	Auth

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Drawing Status & Suitability Code

Client

The Crown Estate

Project

Hemel Garden Communities

Drawing Title

BREAKSPEAR / M1 JUNCTION 8 PLANNED HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS (APPENDIX TO TCE HEARING STATEMENT)

Scale

1:3000 @ A1

SLR Project No.

131121

Designed	Drawn	Checked	Authorised
.	JM	DB	.
Date	Date	Date	Date
.	26.09.2025	26.09.2025	.

Drawing Number

EHUK-VEC-ZZZ-XXX-DR-CR-00086

Rev

P2

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26/09/2025

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