

St Albans Local Plan Examination

Matter 7: The Broad Locations for Development – Specific Matters - Policy S6 (viii) – North West Harpenden

Session Date Tuesday 11 February 2020

Participant Lichfields for Legal & General (L&G)

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- 1.0 Is the site suitable for housing and are there any specific constraints or requirements associated with it, or the need for mitigation measures?**
- 1.1 Yes, the North West Harpenden site is suitable for housing and there are no abnormal constraints or requirements. The site has been identified by SADC since 2014 as a suitable location for residential-led development. Given its scale and location the site can contribute to meeting housing needs early in the plan period. The site presents an opportunity for a sustainable integrated and well-connected extension to the Harpenden urban area. It will deliver a range of benefits and opportunities as outlined in L&G's earlier representations and the associated supporting material.
- 2.0 2 What evidence is there to demonstrate that the proposed broad location is capable of delivering 580 dwellings?**
- 2.1 It is understood that the Council's initial capacity calculation was informed by an average net density figure. The capacity figure within the policy has subsequently been tested through a number of masterplanning exercises, initially to inform the NW Harpenden Vision Document (February 2018) which included an illustrative masterplan for the site, and more recently through the Council-led masterplanning process.
- 2.2 L&G, SADC and the County Council have been progressing the masterplanning process for the design and delivery of development at North West Harpenden in parallel with the emerging Local Plan process.
- 2.3 The initial masterplanning stages have recently been through an independent design review process. The illustrative masterplan which was presented as part of the material at the recent review is attached to this statement. The outcome of the review broadly endorsed the approach adopted and made some specific suggestions for future design development.
- 2.4 The more in depth analysis undertaken as part of the latest detailed design process suggests that, given site specific considerations, characteristics and constraints, 580 units should be regarded as a maximum capacity figure.

3.0 What further infrastructure work needs to be undertaken, and is this appropriate to be left to the masterplanning stage?

- 3.1 Local Plan Policy S6 viii identifies the infrastructure required to be delivered as part of the proposed development of the site. The drafting of this policy has been informed by SADC's submitted "Local Plan Technical Report: 2018/2019 Infrastructure Delivery Plan" (**INFR001 to INFR008**) (which is supported by the St Albans Community Infrastructure Levy and Emerging Local Plan Viability Study, Final Draft, November 2017(**INFR009**)).
- 3.2 Survey work, modelling and analysis to date by SADC, the County Council and L&G has not identified any infrastructure work which cannot be appropriately considered at the masterplanning (or planning application) stages. These findings are consistent with the proposal, which as a medium size extension to an existing urban area will benefit from a range of existing infrastructure provision, if necessary with suitable upgrades.
- 3.3 Further technical work relating to matters such as highway design and capacity and flood risk mitigation is being undertaken in conjunction with HCC and SADC. The outcome of this work will inform the detailed design development.
- 3.4 The work undertaken to date confirms that further detailed technical assessment can be appropriately considered at the masterplanning and detailed design phase.

4.0 Should specific provision be made for a new neighbouring centre?

- 4.1 No, there is range of existing facilities within walking distance of the site, including a public house and Tesco Express convenience store on Luton Road and a community café within The Oval off Ambrose Lane. The new dwellings will support these local facilities and encouraging new residents to use existing facilities rather than providing a new neighbourhood centre on site will help to integrate the new neighbourhood into the existing urban area and develop the social fabric of Harpenden.

5.0 Should the policy refer specifically to the provision of sports facilities?

- 5.1 No. Any planning application for North West Harpenden will be assessed against the full range of Local Plan policies as well as national policy and guidance. This includes draft Policy L28 which establishes green space standards. It is suggested that maintaining flexibility within the policy framework as to the type and form of any sports facilities will ensure the development is able to respond to local needs at the planning application stage.
- 5.2 The emerging masterplan for North West Harpenden includes a range of informal recreation facilities. The Broad Location also includes a site for a primary school, and it is often the case that sports facilities provided within school sites can offer a dual use/community function with mutual benefits.
- 5.3 In the event that additional facilities are identified as being required at the application stage these can be accommodated within L&G's wider landholding if the relevant legal and policy tests are met.

6.0 How have heritage assets been considered and is a Heritage Impact Assessment required?

- 6.1 The number of heritage assets in and around the North West Harpenden Broad Location are limited, with the only notable listed buildings being Cooters End Farm and The Old Bell Public House, both Grade II Listed.
- 6.2 The requirement to consider these assets has been incorporated into the masterplanning process and they have been appropriately identified as providing both opportunities and constraints.
- 6.3 Given the number, nature and status of the heritage assets at North West Harpenden, these can be appropriately considered within the design and statutory development management processes.

7.0 Is the site suitable for development in relation to flood risk?

- 7.1 Yes. There are no constraints which cannot be managed and there is sufficient area within the Broad Location site to accommodate appropriate mitigation.
- 7.2 The South West Hertfordshire Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Final Report, Oct 2018, **ENV001**) prepared as part of the evidence base illustrates in Appendix A (Flood Risk Mapping) (**ENV002**) that the site is not at risk from flooding. Overall fluvial flood risk within the Upper Colne and Ellen Brook Catchment is confined to a narrow floodplain, due to the steeper topography. The SFRA also considers the implications of climate change on the North West Harpenden site and concluded that none of the site is situated within Flood Zone 3 + 70% CC and only small sections of the site are classified as at Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (1 in 100 years + 40% CC).
- 7.3 As part of the masterplanning process, L&G (supported by PBA Stantec) is in discussions with the County Council to understand surrounding flooding issues. L&G is prepared to consider on site measure to help alleviate existing flooding issues on the Luton Road and this matter will be considered further as part of the masterplanning, detailed design and planning application stages in due course.



Illustrative Masterplan



Plot Density



Key Views



Character Areas



Land Use