

SHLAA-GB-LC-545 - London Colney

A 28 hectare site located next to the M25 between Borehamwood and St Albans with potential to provide 570 to 950 dwellings and contribute to meeting housing requirements within the first 5 years of the Local Plan period

This document summarises information provided within Tarmac's call for sites representation and assesses this against the 8 Evaluation Criteria being used by St Albans City and District Council Planning Policy Committee. The document is supplemented by a statement on remediation capability and a Draft Concept Masterplan.

Stage 1	Rating
<p>1. London Colney – –Green Belt review evaluation of the site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on unrestricted sprawl: Limited contribution to Green Belt as the site is located away from large built up areas • Prevent settlement merge: Limited contribution to Green Belt as the configuration of the site in relation to the urban edge of London Colney limits the influence of any development. Open land uses to the south of the M25 maintains separation of London Colney from surrounding settlements. Surrounding features, including the M25, form clearly defined permanent boundaries around the site. As such, release of the site would not significantly compromise the separation of any settlements or this Green Belt purpose • Safeguarding Countryside from encroachment: Partial Contribution as the site is largely free from development and is therefore open in the sense of Green Belt objectives. It does comprise land that has been restored following mineral extraction and landfilling, but the appearance of the site is broadly consistent with pasture. The prominence of the M25 and development at London Colney influence the perception of the site in relation to countryside characteristics. • Preserve setting/special character: Partial Contribution given the proximity to a Conservation Area, listed buildings and a registered park and garden. Potential effects on these as a result of development can be managed through masterplanning. • Maintain existing settlement pattern: As noted above, the configuration of the site in relation to the existing settlement pattern and other local elements, e.g. the M25, would limit the influence of new development in relation to this purpose. Overall the site is considered to make a limited/no contribution to this local Green Belt purpose. <p>The self-contained nature of the site with strong and permanent boundaries (M25, London Colney and adjacent Supermarket), mean release of the site from Green Belt would not result in future pressure for further release of land around the site.</p> <p>An important consideration is that Tarmac does not propose the removal of the whole site from Green Belt. Proposals for the site include provision of new public open space along the north of the site, adjacent to an existing nature reserve, and landscaped buffer to the M25 to the south. This provides an opportunity to enhance the retained green belt area through biodiversity enhancement and provision of improved public access, whilst maintaining separation and a clearly defined settlement edge in line with Green belt purposes.</p> <p>Crucially, the site lies within a strategic sub-area, identified in the St Albans Green Belt Review as one of eight areas considered to contribute least to Green Belt Purposes that were taken forward for a more detailed "Sites and Boundaries Study". It is understood that the site itself was not taken further as part of this study due to uncertainties in relation to ground conditions. Tarmac has provided further information on how ground conditions are being investigated.</p>	<p>Low</p>
Stage 2	
<p>2. Suitability</p> <p>Analysis of planning and environmental issues identified no major constraints to the development of this site. Where there are potential constraints, it is considered well tested solutions are available to address these. The site is therefore suitable and achievable for development in all material terms.</p>	<p>Positive</p>

3. Availability <p>This site is entirely within the ownership of Tarmac and could be delivered immediately, or safeguarded for future requirements.</p>	Positive
Stage 3	
4. Unique contribution to improve public services and facilities <p>The site could accommodate a range of end uses and make a valuable contribution to public services and facilities. The site benefits from potential to support existing public transport links with several bus stops within walking distance (800m). A variety of local facilities are currently within walking distance of the site including two schools, a hospital, retail park and supermarket, a library, pharmacy, nursery provision, public houses and filling station. There is an opportunity for development of the site to provide further support to these facilities and amenities in the area. Also, the site is already used for informal access by local residents. Currently these routes are remote from any surveillance and are not managed. The masterplan for the proposed development will incorporate existing access routes in a more managed and safer manner through planned footpaths/bridleways that will benefit both new residents and those currently using the site. The provision of high quality open space can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of local communities in line with Paragraph 17 of the NPPF</p>	Positive
5. Unique contribution to enhancing local high quality job opportunities <p>The site offers good potential for sustainably located, high quality employment development given the existing connections to public transport described above.</p> <p>In terms of road access, the site benefits from excellent connectivity to the strategic road network being in close proximity to junction 22 of the M25 (in turn the M1 and A1(M)) and connection to the North Orbital Road via the A1081.</p> <p>There is potential for commercial development, possibly comprising retail provision, on the east of the site next to the existing supermarket and retail park. There is also potential for employment opportunities linked to the hospital to the south west of the site and M25, or to the University College site also to the south of the M25.</p> <p>The adjacent nearby London Colney Riverside Industrial Estate site provides nearby B8 and B1/B2 floor space that sets a clear precedent for employment use elsewhere in the area.</p> <p>Tarmac has highlighted there is potential to provide areas of public open space along the north of the site, adjacent to an existing nature reserve, and landscaped buffer to the M25 to the south. This provides opportunities to deliver an attractive setting whereby employment development in the form of innovation/enterprise centre or science park type development could be set in picturesque surroundings. Such employment development would be in line with St Albans key policy objectives for knowledge based industries, financial and business services, green technology and the creative industries as well as the Hertfordshire LEP priority 1 to maintain excellence in science and technology.</p> <p>As noted previously, Tarmac is promoting this site for primarily residential use. The information above is provided to demonstrate the site also has potential to provide sustainably located high quality employment opportunities, in line with the evaluation criteria. Tarmac has reviewed the development potential for both employment and residential purposes and, given the pressing need to provide additional residential capacity in the St Albans area, the site remains one promoted primarily for residential and open space use. It is considered that the site's locational attributes make it most appropriate for residential use. The delivery of high quality housing would, however, support high quality employment elsewhere by providing housing which meets the requirements of new employees. The increase in people living within the area will also support local retail and other businesses through increased local expenditure.</p>	Positive
6. Unique contribution to other infrastructure provision or community benefits <p>Tarmac's proposals include the provision of landscaping to the north and south of the site to contribute to public open space provision and enclose the site. The proposal incorporates positive design and management to maintain and enhance the habitat potential, recognising the need to offset habitat loss</p>	Positive

in the potential development areas.

The site is used informally by local people and it is proposed to retain, enhance and formalise existing public access routes where possible, with potential to develop this further as part of a masterplan for the site. This will seek to manage access, improve safety, and deter potential antisocial activities. The redevelopment of the site offers the opportunity to revive a previously used site to deliver areas of enhanced public open space alongside much needed housing development. The proposals for residential use would allow for increased expenditure on community infrastructure through increased council tax payment, CIL payment or S.106 measures.

7. Deliverable/ achievable

The overall 'package' proposed for the site, is viable and deliverable. The Development Principles Plan, provided in February, has been further developed into a Draft Concept Masterplan and is provided with this representation as evidence of the deliverability of this site and the benefits it can bring to the district. In addition, a capability statement and site investigation strategy are provided to demonstrate that similar sites have been economically developed in other comparable scenarios. This also summarises the further work Tarmac is undertaking to fully investigate site conditions.

Tarmac wishes to highlight that the concept masterplans are intended to show how development could be delivered. The areas for potential development should be taken to be indicative and greater or lesser development footprint could be achieved on the site. Tarmac has no set objectives and would be pleased to work together with St Albans District City and District Council to achieve the best possible developments and mix of uses for this site. If taken forward through the local plan process, Tarmac would welcome further dialogue to agree options for the site such as the type, density, footprint and objectives for development.

Positive

8. Overall Judgement

Although the site makes a partial contribution to Green Belt purposes, the site represents a sustainable location which benefits from provision of good public transport links via existing bus services that would be supported and potentially enhanced by development of the site.

No major constraints to the development of this site are identified and it is available for immediate delivery. Although the site would perform well for high quality employment use, Tarmac's is promotion is primarily for residential use. Overall, the site offers the opportunity to provide land for much needed development to meet the housing needs of St Albans City and District.

Positive