

## APPENDIX 7A

### Minutes of first meeting of the SHLAA Shortlisting Panel held on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August St Albans Council Offices, 10am – 5pm

#### Those present:

Paul Bloomfield	Shire Consulting
George Edkins	Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association
Paul Cronk	Home Builders Federation
David Irving	CPRE
Robin Booth	Former St Albans District Council (Development Control)
Alison Williams	Consultant on behalf of the Council
Chris Briggs	St Albans District Council (Planning Policy)
Jayne West	St Albans District Council (Conservation & Design)
Liz Johnson	St Albans District Council (Landscape)
Debbi White	St Albans District Council (Estates)
Manpreet Kanda	St Albans District Council (Planning Policy)

#### Apologies:

Gavin Cooper	St Albans District Council (Development Control)
David Reavill	St Albans District Council (Housing)

	<b>Actions</b>
The meeting began with a brief introduction to the SHLAA and an explanation of why the Panel had been convened.	
Panel members were reminded that the Council had to ensure that provision was made for a 15 year housing supply from the date of adoption of its Local Development Documents, in line with PPS3.  It was also clarified that the District's housing requirement (as set out in RSS14) of 7,200 dwellings between 2001 and 2021 was a minimum, not a maximum and that RSS14 was already subject to review, so the District's housing requirement may well increase.	
AW explained that the SHLAA differed from the old style Urban Capacity Studies in that it now included greenfield and Green Belt sites, as well as urban sites. Consequently, a site's Green Belt status did not necessarily mean that it should be rejected as a potential housing site.	
Before looking at individual sites on the shortlist in more detail, AW confirmed that it was not the role of the SHLAA to actually allocate sites for residential development nor to rank sites in order of preference for development. The SHLAA would simply determine whether a site was suitable, available, achievable and deliverable for housing.	
To be as comprehensive as possible, Officers had carried out an initial assessment of suitability for all sites with a projected net dwelling gain – sites had been identified by various means (including identification by landowners/developers, through previous planning history or pre-application discussions etc). At this meeting, the Panel considered approximately 250 privately owned sites.	

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<p>PC commented on the large number of sites that Officers had recommended for rejection and warned that the Panel should not be excluding any sites from further consideration at this stage, unless there were very clear reasons why the site would not be suitable for residential development. PC also reiterated the importance of providing a schedule of rejected sites as an appendix to the final SHLAA document, which clearly states the reasons why sites were rejected.</p>	<p>Schedule to be produced by AW</p>
<p>PB questioned why Officers had recommended that several sites should be rejected on the grounds of existing Council policy. He reminded the Panel that the purpose of shortlisting was to simply assess 'suitability' for residential development and that the Panel's decisions should not be made on the basis of existing policy designed to constrain development. (e.g. the fact that a site currently lies within a Green Belt Settlements), unless that constraint actually rendered the site unsuitable in principle for housing.</p>	<p>Panel decisions now reflect this approach.</p>
<p>DI asked whether Officers had overlooked the issue of sustainability in their Stage 1 site assessments. AW confirmed that sustainability and accessibility were issues that would be considered for shortlisted sites at Stage 2.</p>	<p>Officers to progress Stage 2 assessments</p>
<p>PB suggested that it might be useful to discuss whether a site actually contributes anything to the Green Belt rather than focusing on matters such as whether a more robust Green Belt boundary could be achieved.</p>	<p>Panel decisions now reflect this approach.</p>
<p>Given the number of sites on the long list, most of the Panel felt that they had had insufficient time to consider the schedule in detail. They also found the maps and schedule difficult to use, particularly as the quality of the JPEG files was poor and the individual reference numbers for sites were not sequential. It was agreed that page numbering would have helped to navigate through the schedule.</p>	<p>Future schedule to have page numbers. (Unfortunately we cannot alter the site references)</p>
<p>PB was concerned that the Council hadn't come along to the meeting with an agreed view on specific sites and that some officers were unfamiliar with the DCLG Good Practice Guidance on SHLAA. He suggested that it would be a better use of resources if the Council came to any future meetings with a corporate view, having gone through its own process of internal consultation earlier. This, he felt, would allow external stakeholders to make a more meaningful input to the process within the limited time available.</p>	<p>Second long list to be discussed internally, before circulation to external members of the Panel.</p>
<p>The Panel initially began by discussing only those sites where members had specific comments to raise or where they disagreed with the Officer's recommendation to shortlist or reject the site from further consideration. However, as the meeting progressed the discussions were based on more of a 'page by page' assessment of the long list.</p>	
<p>AW noted all the comments raised by the Panel on specific sites during the discussions, together with any decisions that changed the Officers' initial recommendations. [Since the meeting, AW has produced two updated schedules containing (1) Shortlisted Sites and (2) Rejected Sites. These schedules reflect what was agreed at the Panel meeting.]</p>	<p>AW to circulate the new schedules to the Panel.</p>
<p>PB emailed some further comments regarding several of the sites that were discussed by the Panel after he had left the meeting. Some of PB's comments have already been addressed in the amended schedules (as referred to above). However, Officers did not agree with a few of the comments made and will be responding to PB (our response can be made available for other members of the Panel to see).</p>	<p>Email response to Paul Bloomfield r.e. his comments on specific sites.</p>

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<p>At the end of the meeting, the Panel were asked how they would like to be involved in the assessment of the remaining 80 privately owned sites, plus the Council owned garage courts. Everyone felt that the shortlisting session had been worthwhile and that they would be happy to attend a second session.</p>	<p>Second session booked for 2pm on Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> October in Committee Room 1 of the Council Offices.</p>
<p>Officers will now begin Stage 2 of the SHLAA for all the shortlisted sites. This stage includes collecting information on each site's sustainability, accessibility, dwelling capacity, viability and likely delivery for residential development. Whilst it is not considered necessary for the Panel to be formally involved in Stage 2, individuals may be asked for their advice on specific matters (for example: Officers will be consulting the Home Builders Federation and its members on its suggested approach to calculating site viability).</p>	<p>Officers may consult the Panel on an informal basis during Stage 2.</p>

## APPENDIX 7B

### Minutes of second meeting of the SHLAA Shortlisting Panel held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October St Albans Council Offices, 2pm – 5pm

#### Those present:

George Edkins	Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association
Michael Fearn	Shire Consulting
Robin Booth	Former St Albans District Council (Development Control)
Jayne West	St Albans District Council (Conservation & Design)
Gillian Donald	St Albans District Council (Development Control)
Debbi White	St Albans District Council (Estates)
David Reavill	St Albans District Council (Housing)
Alison Williams	Consultant on behalf of the Council
Chris Briggs	St Albans District Council (Planning Policy)

#### Apologies:

Paul Bloomfield	Shire Consulting
David Irving	CPRE
Liz Johnson	St Albans District Council (Landscape)
Manpreet Kanda	St Albans District Council (Planning Policy)

	<b>Actions</b>
The meeting began with a brief explanation of why the Panel had been convened, for those who had not attended the first meeting.	
AW explained that the long lists of sites for consideration comprised:  a) Council owned garage sites b) Non-council owned sites that had not been considered at the first Panel meeting c) Sites that had been classified as 'average' employment sites in the interim Central Hertfordshire Employment Land Review	
DI and LJ provided comments on various sites on the long lists before the meeting, as they were unable to attend. AW confirmed that the finalised schedules would include reference to their comments as well as any comments raised during the meeting.	
The meeting began with a broad discussion regarding the Council owned garage court sites, and then members raised comments on specific sites on a page by page basis.	
GE explained that Hightown Praetorian had been implementing a programme of garage court redevelopment for affordable housing in Hemel Hempstead for several years (90 units since 1998, with 50 delivered in a batch last year). He commented that many of the sites on our long list were much smaller than the Hemel sites and that average site capacity would therefore be low, with limited developer interest.	
The Panel discussed the main constraints to garage court redevelopment, namely: access, rights of way, adjacent uses and risk of overlooking. DW said that annual leases could usually be terminated by the Council and that most are let on weekly tenancies, so possession would be quick. In St	

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<p>Albans District, the percentage of garage voids is relatively low, but not all garages are used for parking vehicles. DR confirmed that the Council's housing department had already identified several sites that they wanted to take forward for affordable housing schemes.</p>	
<p>GE asked whether Bowers Way Car Park and the adjoining telephone exchange in Harpenden should be considered in the SHLAA, perhaps with a decked car park arrangement to retain parking provision on the site. JW had serious concerns regarding the site's suitability for housing (i.e. due to its Conservation Area location, slope of the site, proximity of trees, compatibility of a multi-level scheme in the existing streetscene). The Panel did not agree to add the site to the 'long list' for assessment.</p>	
<p>AW noted all the comments raised by the Panel on specific sites during the discussions, together with any decisions that changed the Officers' initial recommendations. AW will produce two schedules of 'Shortlisted Sites' and 'Rejected Sites', which will reflect what was agreed at the Panel meeting. An amended garage courts list will also be produced.</p>	<p>AW to circulate the amended schedules to the Panel.</p>
<p>There were a number of sites, which were recommended for shortlisting but where deliverability was still in question (e.g. any comprehensive redevelopment scheme to the west of St Peter's Street would most likely include an element of residential development, but the extent of such development and indeed its likelihood, is far from certain). In such cases, the Panel suggested that sites should be represented by symbols rather than plotted as specifically defined areas.</p>	<p>Officers to amend GIS plotting as appropriate.</p>
<p>Some very serious concerns were raised by DI, LJ (in their emailed comments) and other Panel members in relation to sites within the possible Areas of Search identified in the Core Strategy Issues &amp; Options consultation document. AW explained that, whilst these concerns will be clearly stated in the summary schedules, the Council could not rule out any of the Areas of Search at this stage. This is because decisions on whether to identify any of these areas for housing development in the Core Strategy DPD cannot be taken in advance of the SHLAA's conclusions regarding estimated capacity on sites within the urban area (both previously developed land and greenfield) and the resultant need to identify Green Belt sites to meet any identified shortfalls in housing land.</p>	<p>Further work required in relation to the Areas of Search</p>
<p>The Panel were told that Officers had already begun Stage 2 of the SHLAA for all the sites shortlisted following the first Panel session. This stage includes collecting information on each site's sustainability, accessibility, dwelling capacity, viability and likely delivery for residential development. Whilst it is not considered necessary for the Panel to be formally involved in Stage 2, individuals may be asked for their advice on specific matters.</p>	<p>Officers may consult the Panel on an informal basis during Stage 2.</p>