

North Warwickshire Local Plan Examination

Position Statement to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions (Phase 1 – Strategic Matters)

Matter 4 – Strategic Approach, Distribution and Justification (including Sustainability Appraisal)

This Position Statement is made by Savills UK Ltd on behalf of our clients Cathedral Agricultural Partnership and the White Family. Our clients are major landowners within the draft H7 allocation: Land to the east of Polesworth and Dordon. This Position Statement is made in advance of verbal representations at the Examination in Public hearings.

Q4.6: Policy LP2 sets out the settlement hierarchy for the Borough, which seeks to broadly define where development should be located relative to the scale and role of settlements. It appears that the primary changes to the settlement hierarchy since the CS are the inclusion of Coleshill within the Green Belt as a market town, and allowing the expansion of towns abutting the boundary of NWBC's administrative areas. Is the settlement hierarchy justified and consistent with national policy?

We consider the categorisation of settlements in the hierarchy, as informed by the Council's Settlement Sustainability Assessment (January 2010) [CD6/3B], to be correct and justified, with particular regard to Polesworth and Dordon as a Category 1 settlement (see our response to question 4.7), and support guiding the distribution of development towards Market Towns in the first instance. When the Local Plan is read as a whole, allocation H7 would become the new settlement boundary for Polesworth and Dordon.

Q4.7: LP paragraph 1.7 explains that the settlement hierarchy is based on 'an assessment of the services, facilities and sustainability of the various assessments'.

- (a) Where is that assessment set out specifically?**
- (b) Is each settlement correctly categorised?**
- (c) Should Polesworth and Dordon be identified as separate settlements?**
- (d) Should Lea Marston be within category 4?**

We consider the settlement hierarchy correctly categorises Polesworth and Dordon as a Category 1 settlement. The settlement has a number of services and facilities, which distinguish it as a Market Town rather than a Local Service Centre. We consider Polesworth and Dordon should be considered as a single settlement, not only due to the geographical proximity and indistinguishable connection between the two, but also due to allocation H7 which would act a single extension to both areas. The allocation, which would include the provision of further services and facilities, would strengthen Polesworth and Dordon's status a Category 1 settlement and therefore its position within the hierarchy is considered to be appropriate.

Q4.8: Is policy LP2 sufficiently clear to guide decision-taking as to the quantity of development that each settlement is apportioned?

It is considered that further detail should be inserted into Policy LP2 to provide sufficient steer on the amount of development expected in each settlement category or settlement. The supporting text to

the policy is clear that housing growth is generally distributed to the Market Towns and then Local Service Centres, whilst small scale housing is to be delivered in smaller settlements. However, whilst this is a broad guide it is not clear how this translates numerically, which would be of benefit in guiding decision takers. We consider cross reference with allocations in Policy LP39 would provide the clarity required over quantity of development for this policy.

Q4.9: Is the approach to site allocations overly reliant on the allocation of larger sites to the detriment of supporting thriving rural communities?

We do not consider the allocation of sites, as set out in Policy LP39, is to the detriment of supporting rural communities. Of the 27 allocated sites in the Local Plan, 13 are allocated in Category 3 and Category 4 settlements, comprising a range of sites sizes from 7 units (H16) to 450 units (H20). This is considered to provide a healthy range of sites across rural communities. A similar number of sites are allocated in Category 1 and Category 2 settlements (14), which also comprise a healthy range from 7 units (H12) to two urban extensions at H2 and H7. In terms of number of units, 1,385 are to be provided across rural settlements and local service centres, representing 20% of housing supply. The healthy range of mix of site sizes provides opportunities and attractive options for small through to major housebuilders. We therefore consider the Local Plan provides a balanced mix of sites, that is consistent with the settlement hierarchy and is not overly reliant on larger sites.