
FREETHS

**STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATION FOR THE EXAMINATION IN
PUBLIC HEARINGS : NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MATTER 4: STRATEGIC APPROACH, DISTRIBUTION OF
DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTIFICATION**

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF HALLAM LAND MANAGEMENT LTD

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Statement is prepared by Freeths LLP on behalf of our client Hallam Land Management Ltd (“HLM”) and is submitted as evidence as part of the examination into the North Warwickshire Local Plan. HLM has made detailed representations on a number of policies throughout the Plan preparation and is promoting site H13 at Land to the west of Robey’s Lane, adjacent to Tamworth.
- 1.2. This Statement relates to Matter 4 of the ‘Phase 1 Matters, Issues and Questions’ note prepared by the Inspector and forming the basis of the Examination Hearings. No comment is made in relation to Questions 4.2-4-5 and 4.7.

2. QUESTION 4.1 – IS SPATIAL VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES EFFECTIVE AND JUSTIFIED

- 2.1. The spatial vision and strategic objectives of the Local Plan is supported at a broad level. The strategic objectives reflect the requirements of the NPPF which include securing sustainable development and providing the housing needs of the borough. We suggest that given the ‘aspiration’ to provide a significant amount of housing to cater for needs outside of the borough, this should also be reflected in Strategic Objective 2.
- 2.2. The Sustainability Appraisal (‘SA’) deals with the strategic growth options in Chapter 4, and assesses options for growth generated by need inside of the Borough and growth requirements generated from outside of the Borough on a separate basis, albeit there are strong similarities between most of the options within the two assessments. The conclusions of this exercise is that options IN1 and IN2, which are development in accordance with the Core Strategy (IN1) and the development in and around the main settlements (IN2) are the most sustainable options.
- 2.3. In respect of meeting needs outside of the borough (ie: unmet need from the GBHMA and CWHMA), the SA identifies that a combination of options is justified. This comprises OUT1 (development adjacent to neighbouring authorities’ boundaries) OUT2 (developing in and around the closest settlements) and OUT3 (combining the requirement to NWBC’s housing need and distributing as per the preferred option for growth for NWBC).

- 2.4. Overall, this strategy utilises the existing settlement hierarchy which directs development to the most sustainable settlements. However it builds in an additional category, comprising land adjacent to built up areas of adjoining settlements, thus expanding housing delivery potential through placement of development adjacent to existing settlements that already accessible and sustainable. We agree that this strategy is justified and effective, and the most appropriate strategy when compared to the discounted options of the SA (IN3-IN5 and OUT4 and 5), all of which would require significant proportion of development within the Green Belt.

3. QUESTION 4.6 - SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

- 3.1. The settlement hierarchy is largely reflective of that established in the adopted Core Strategy with the exception of Coleshill being brought into Category 1 as a Market Town and the creation of a new category 2, which comprises settlements adjoining the outer boundary of the Borough.
- 3.2. Given the significant step change in housing delivery that the Borough is seeking to accommodate, it is unrealistic to anticipate that of all this growth could be brought into Category 1 settlements, which are despite the creation of a new category for 'settlements adjoining the borough', still subject to significant housing allocations. The SA evidences that the creation of Category 2 is justified and this represents an opportunity to allocate and grant permission for sites adjacent to neighbouring authorities where NWBC are seeking to assist with unmet housing requirement, such as Tamworth. Such locations have access to a range of existing facilities and services, as well as being convenient for public transport, given their proximity to existing built up areas.

4. QUESTION 4.8 – QUANTITY OF DEVELOPMENT UNDER POLICY LP2

- 4.1. Policy LP2 sets out the settlement hierarchy, which explains the parameters of development that will be accepted under each category. However, the policy provides no detail of numbers for each category. Policy LP39 – Housing Allocations (p83) lists the proposed allocations within each category and although no totals per category are shown, this provides some information on the distribution of development.

- 4.2. However, LP39 only limits the numbers to proposed allocations and understandably does not deal with completions or commitments. Given that Policy LP2 is a strategic policy that sets the tone for the Plan, it is considered that some information on the proportion of development to be directed to each category should be provided. This does not need to be expressed as a dwelling number but an approximate percentage would suffice.

5. QUESTION 4.9 – RELIANCE ON THE ALLOCATION OF LARGER SITES VS SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES

- 5.1. The proposed distribution of development provides four significant allocations across Categories 1 and 2 of the hierarchy, comprising H1 (531 dwellings) and H2 (1282 dwellings) at Atherstone, H7 (2000 dwellings) at Polesworth and Dordon and H13 (1270 dwellings) adjacent to Tamworth. These larger sites comprise 5083 of a total of 6821 dwellings proposed for allocation (74%)¹ However, the Category 3 settlements – Local Service Centres also provide a significant level of development, with allocations totalling 1132 (16.5%), with 7 sites across three settlements providing a range between 7 and 450 dwellings.
- 5.2. Further, the Category 4 settlements '*Other Settlements with a Development Boundary*' propose a total of 253 dwellings for allocation (approx 4%), with sites ranging from 12 to 88 dwellings across five different settlements.
- 5.3. Strategic Objective 1 seeks to secure sustainable patterns of development whilst protecting the Borough's rural character. The above distribution is in line with such a strategy. Paragraph 52 of the NPPF (2012) states that the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development and the proposed Plan accords to this principle, whilst providing proportionate development opportunities for categories 3 and 4 of the hierarchy to help sustain more rural communities.
- 5.4. In addition to the proposed allocations in these categories, Policy LP2 advises that development within the Local Service Centres boundaries will be permissible for

¹ This figure does not include other smaller sites in Category 1 and 2 which would increase proportion to approx 79.5%

category 3 settlements. Category 4 also appears to allow windfall sites of up to 10 units. The wording for this is however somewhat ambiguous as the first sentence states that development will be limited to that identified in the Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan. The next sentence then appears to allow windfall sites of up to 10 dwellings. The wording here could be amended to combine the two sentences to make it clear that development will be restricted to allocations and windfall sites of up to 10 dwellings. As an added layer of flexibility the policy makes clear that Neighbourhood Plans can allocate larger sites.

- 5.5. We conclude that the Plan is not over reliant on larger sites and that rural communities have an appropriate level and proportion of development and opportunity for windfall sites.