



North Warwickshire  
Borough Council

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Mr T Bristow

c/o Programme Officer

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This matter is being dealt with by

: Dorothy Barratt

Direct Dial : (01827) 719250

Your ref : INSP18

Our ref :

Date : 10 September 2019

Dear Mr Bristow

**North Warwickshire Local plan**

Thank you for your letter INSP18.

I have attached as Appendix A an updated set of the Draft Main Modifications which supercedes NWBC20C. It is now in policy order with updated numbering. This will be put on to the website as NWBC20D as well as Appendix A. This will be referred to in this reply.

Please find below the Council's formal response to the issues you have raised. All documents referred to in this letter will be added to the examination library as well as be attachments to this letter unless otherwise stated. For ease of cross-referencing I have included the paragraph numbers from your letter, INSP18:

**Infrastructure provision** (paras 2 to 7)

In this section you provided us with 3 possible options on the way forward. The Borough Council wrote saying it wanted to await the outcome of the HIF bid in relation to Phases 1 and 2 of improvements to A5 before making a decision on the future of the Local Plan. I have been advised that the decision will now be "autumn". At the time of writing the decision is still awaited but the Borough Council wishes to wait until a decision has been made on this matter before discussing with you the next steps.

Housing delivery is dependent on highways improvement and, in particular, the delivery of the A5 improvements. The STA explains how much development can be accommodated. In addition, there is the updated information on highways which refers to around 800 units being permissible on the current state of the A5 (document PS.M9.22a Church Commissioners for England). It states on page 2 that 800 dwellings can be accommodated in the A5 corridor. This with the 800 dwellings that can be delivered in the Hartshill area as stated in the STA delivery of housing with and without the road infrastructure is as follows:

**Table 1: Summary of Housing vs Road Infrastructure delivery**

<i>With no major improvements to A5</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 800 dwellings in the A5 corridor; and,</li> <li>• 800 dwellings for Hartshill</li> </ul>
<i>With funding for improvements to A5</i>	Phases 1 and 2	3458 dwellings
	Phases 3 and 4	Over 3000 dwellings

It is important to reiterate that wherever the Council proposed housing development it would be faced by major road infrastructure barriers. However, by allocating the land in the A5 corridor there are positive moves to deal with the issue supported by the local MP's, WCC, Highways England and Homes England.

The submitted HIF bid has assumed completion of the Phases 1 and 2 improvements along the A5 by 2024. With the delay this may need to be extended to 2025 but we will not know until the details of any bid have been announced. The stepped trajectory referred to later in this reply continues to assume delivery by 2024.

The remainder of the housing will be unlocked through additional phases to the improvements of the A5. Sources of funding for these future phases have not yet been secured but the following will all be explored:

- Regional Investment Strategy (RIS Programme) – Highways England
- New Roads Fund – Highways England / DoT
- Midlands Connect
- West Midlands Combined Authority possibly through the Growth Deal
- Future HIF rounds

**Development requirements**

**LP6 – the use of minimum (para 8)**

The Borough Council is still concerned that the requirements of LP6 are expressed as a minimum. In the context of national policy I can understand that this is the normal way for development requirements to be expressed. However, in the case of North Warwickshire's housing requirement it has very proactively worked with adjoining areas to positively plan for additional housing. There are sufficient allocations to more than cater for the overall number of units and if all brought forward will exceed the target. Along with a windfall allowance this provides the flexibility to ensure that delivery will take place. However, the planning system does not seem to recognise the fact that where a Council is being so positive and it still wants to ensure that even more can be accommodated. This is understandable where the Council has not proactively ensured that there is flexibility in its housing allocations however North Warwickshire has this inbuilt flexibility. As pointed out during the hearings in the GL Hearn Woods report (CD8/23) at 9.67 states

*“9.67 The analysis in Table 63 shows that there are particular constraints to introducing further residential land supply in North Warwickshire, which is already planning in its emerging Local Plan to deliver housing growth of 1.8% pa. Given moderate house prices in the District and the very strong rate of housing delivery proposed, our analysis indicates no effective potential for additional supply to be brought forward in North Warwickshire. “*  
 (CD8/23 Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study)

The concerns over infrastructure provision and the above, in my opinion, provide the evidence to support a straight forward housing requirement. However, if you are still not persuaded by the above or the discussions at the hearings the Borough Council will reluctantly accept a minimum housing requirement. This change has not been put into the Draft set of Main Modifications which accompany this letter.

### **Affordable Housing (para 9)**

A report has been prepared by Icen, setting out the affordable housing figure for the Borough which includes consideration of the housing being delivered for neighbouring local authorities. The report is attached as Appendix B. As can be seen on page 30 (paragraph 4.5) this indicates that the annual affordable housing figure should be 267 per annum which is 47% of the housing requirement.

### **Justification for allocations (paras 10 to 13)**

In the Main Modifications (Appendix A and NWBC20D) MM72 shows an updated housing allocations table. This takes out all of the sites now with planning permission and puts them into the pipeline as suggested.

I have attached as Appendix C a paper which lists all of the remaining housing allocations and provides the extracts from the various documents including SHLAA, SA and Heritage documents (both the December 2017 and the September 2018). I can confirm that all of the remaining housing allocations have been part of the sustainability appraisal process as shown in Appendix C.

### **Site Suitability**

#### **Heritage (para 14)**

As mentioned above I have attached as Appendix C a paper which provides the information on how sites have been selected for allocation with regards to potential effects on heritage assets.

The changes shown in the MM's which are a direct result of the information on heritage assets are also listed in Appendix C.

#### **Environment Agency (EA) (para15)**

A Sequential Test Report can be found at Appendix D. This document was sent to the Environment Agency who has responded and this is attached as Appendix E.

Although the EA does not provide a formal response as to whether this report satisfies their concerns they have not indicated otherwise. I therefore believe that that the report shows that due consideration has been given to the issues of flooding in accordance with the NPPF 2012. Additionally policy changes have been made and I would draw your attention to the following main modifications which deal with issues raised by the EA:

The changes shown in the Main Modifications (NWBC20D / Appendix A) which deal with the concerns of the EA or are recommendations of the consultants advising the Council are:

**Table 2: List changes made as a result of EA representations**

MM9	MM62	MM76
MM13	MM65	MM77
MM14	MM66	MM79
MM16	MM67	MM91
MM48		

**Safeguarding (para 16 and 17)**

Having considered paragraphs 16 and 17 of your letter I would like to suggest that Policy LP4 is deleted from the Local Plan. This change is shown in the NWBC20D as MM24. The main reasons are:

- 1 HS2 Phase 2b Design Refinements were published recently and were out for consultation until 6 September (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hs2-phase-2b-design-refinement-consultation>). There is a change which affects the site to the north of Kingsbury as the line is being moved 20 metres closer to the northern part of the settlement in order to straighten the line to ensure a straight entry to the proposed new tunnels at Junction 10 / A5. This change reduces the area potentially available for future development; and,
- 2 As the site is unlikely to contribute a significant number of dwellings to the overall housing requirement it is proposed that full consideration of this and any other sites is left to the review of the Local Plan.

**Housing trajectory and five year land supply (para 18)**

I have attached as Appendix F the trajectory which relates to housing monitoring as of March 2019. This updates document NWBC10C.

Appendix G is the graph of housing delivery over the plan period which would replace the current graph in Appendix B of the Draft Local Plan and is an update of NWBC10D.

I have also attached as Appendix H the latest five year housing supply report as at March 2019. This is an update from the 2018 report which was published in October 2018. As can be seen the five year housing land supply uses the target of 9598 and a stepped trajectory to mirror the evidence from the Strategic Transport Assessment and the A5 HIF bid. This means that there are 6.39 years of supply.

**Lead in and delivery rates (para 19)**

Attached as Appendix I is a spreadsheet on lead in and build out / delivery rates. The spreadsheet sets out information on new applications of over 10 units since 2011 and the monitoring years that they cover. In the final column where sites have been completed we have indicated the number of monitoring years the site has been on the monitoring sheet. As can be seen the average time of getting permission is less than 12 months with between 2 / 3 monitoring years between start on site and completion. Often this is much sooner. The Council reassess the progress of sites and re-evaluates whether they confirm to the definition of deliverable in the PPG each time it prepares the five year housing supply.

## **Development management policies**

### **LP5 (para 20)**

The Borough Council accepts the suggested word change to LP5 criterion 3 and this is reflected in MM25 in NWBC20D / Appendix A.

### **Strategic and Non-strategic policies (para 21)**

The Borough Council has attached as Appendix J a list setting out the changes in identifying the strategic and non-strategic policies of the Local Plan.

### **Green Spaces (para 22)**

In terms of policy LP20 the Borough Council has looked at the information gained through the Green Space Strategy work which was carried out by consultants over the last few years. Unfortunately this work does not really fit with the criteria of NPPF2012 in a satisfactory way. As a result each of the Green Spaces has been listed and assessed against the NPPF criteria. This worked is attached as Appendix K. As can be seen it is proposed to:

1. Keep 62 sites as these conform with the NPPF criteria;
2. Delete 5 sites which have other designations, such as Local Wildlife Site; and,
3. Delete 8 sites as these do not conform to the NPPF criteria.

The maps to show all of the Green Spaces are Appendix L.

In addition, I have added additional changes to the reasoned justification for LP20 at para 10.34 (MM56), a change to the reasoned justification at para 11.6 (MM58) and LP24 (and MM59). The changes to LP20 update the current situation with the Green Space Strategy review whilst LP24 reasoned justification has been expanded and the remit of the policy has been broadened to include open spaces as well as recreational provision.

It is the Borough Council's intention to bring forward as quickly as possible a Green Space SPD which would provide the information on the sites covered by the above policy

## **Additional information**

### **Site H20**

In addition, to the questions you posed I would like to suggest a change for site H20 in that it needs to be made clearer that the areas currently shown as a light salmon on the policies map are to be kept as allotments and sports ground. The changes proposed are shown as MM95.

### **HS2**

In relation to the review of HS2 this does not directly impact on the emerging Local Plan. The review may be completed before the end of the year but then a decision will need to be made on what happens next. This could potentially be months and as the

Inspector is aware the Borough Council is extremely keen to keep the Local Plan moving forward. I would not want to delay the Local Plan any more than absolutely necessary. Given that the Local Plan focusses development outside of the Green Belt and so away from Phase 1 any rethinking of HS2 should not be a factor that should delay progression of the Local Plan.

I hope that the additional information I have provided answers your questions. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

I will be back in touch once we hear about the HIF bid so that the Local Plan can progress to Main Modifications.

Yours sincerely

*D M Barratt*

Dorothy Barratt  
Forward Planning & Economic Development Manager