

Broadgrove

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT LTD

RESPONSE TO MATTERS,
ISSUES AND QUESTIONS FOR
THE EXAMINATION OF THE
CHESHIRE EAST LOCAL PLAN
SITE ALLOCATIONS AND
DEVELOPMENT POLICIES
DOUCMENT

Tabley Homes

084/003 CW
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Broadgrove Planning and Development Limited ('Broadgrove') is instructed by our client, Tabley Homes, to submit a response to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) Part 1 for the Examination into the submitted Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD).
- 1.2. Once adopted, the SADPD will form Part 2 of Cheshire East's Local Plan, complimenting the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 (LPS) (Part 1) document that was adopted by the Council in July 2017.
- 1.3. Tabley Homes have an interest in an area of land (comprising roughly one hectare) at land south of Bird's Nest, Audlem. Representations to the revised Publication Draft SADPD were most recently made by Broadgrove, on behalf of Tabley Homes, in December 2020.
- 1.4. Representation document 1255526 – Tabley Homes RPD Reps (hereafter referred to as 'our representations') should be read together and cross-referenced with this Statement.
- 1.5. This Statement relates specifically to Matter 2 (Planning for Growth) of the Inspector's MIQs Part 1 (INS/08 – 27 August 2021). The following questions will be answered in this Hearing Statement:
 - Matter 2 – Question 11.
 - Matter 2 – Question 12.
 - Matter 2 – Question 13.
- 1.6. Tabley Homes will be represented by Richard Walters of Broadgrove during the course of the Examination Hearings. Hearing sessions relating to development at the Local Service Centres on 12 and 13 October 2021 will be attended.

2. Updated Local Evidence Since Revised Publication SADPD

- 2.1. Cheshire East Council (CEC) conducted public consultation on the revised Publication SADPD document between 26 October and 23 December 2020, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State on 29 April 2021.
- 2.2. The consultation into the revised SADPD focussed mainly on the removal of housing allocations across Local Service Centres (LSCs) in Cheshire East.
- 2.3. Evidence as of 31 March 2020 indicated that housing supply across the LSCs totalled 3,210 dwellings. This formed CEC's justification for removing any additional housing allocations in the SADPD, as this figure was already in order of 3,500 dwellings as targeted by the Local Plan Strategy.
- 2.4. CEC have published their Housing Monitoring Update 2020/21 since the completion of the revised SADPD consultation. Housing supply across the LSCs, as of 31 March 2021, has now reduced to 3,193 dwellings.
- 2.5. This reduction compared to the previous monitoring year highlights the fragility of housing supply. It also reemphasizes the importance of delivering a plan-led system, in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021).
- 2.6. To reiterate, NPPF Paragraph 15 states *"the planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings"*.
- 2.7. At this point, it is reminded that Tabley Homes' land interest at land south of Bird's Nest, Audlem, was included in previous iterations of the SADPD as a draft housing allocation for around 20 new homes, under policy reference AUD 1.

3. Response to Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions

- 3.1. This section of the Statement provides comments on the matters and questions raised by the Inspector in document INS/08 (27 August 2021). It discusses each of the MIQs that are relevant chronologically.
- 3.2. Our comments in response to the MIQs specifically relate to Land south of Bird's Nest, Audlem, which was former allocation reference AUD1, and supplement our earlier submissions for the site. This has been promoted through stages of the SADPD as being capable of accommodating new residential development.

MATTER 2 – PLANNING FOR GROWTH

Development at Local Service Centres (Policy PG 8 and site HCH 1)

11. Is Policy PG 8 consistent with the strategy in the LPS for growth and the spatial distribution of development at the LSCs, and with the relevant provisions of national policy? In particular:

- a) Should it include a disaggregation of the indicative levels of development for the LSCs, of 3,500 dwellings and 7ha of employment land, to individual settlements, in order to ensure decisions are plan-led and that the needs of individual settlements are met?*
- 3.3. Since our representations were made in December 2020, the NPPF has been updated. Revised NPPF paragraph 66 sets out that strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.
 - 3.4. As stated in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of our representations, the indicative levels of development for the LSCs were not disaggregated by settlement in the LPS, as this was left to be addressed by the SADPD and neighbourhood plans.
 - 3.5. The LPS Inspector only accepted the exemption of settlement-specific targets in the LPS on the basis that the disaggregation would be subsequently completed through the SADPD process. Indeed, the supporting text to LPS Policy PG7 confirms that the development figure for LSCs “will be further disaggregated in the SADPD and / or neighbourhood plans”.
 - 3.6. Policy PG 8 does not include a disaggregation of levels of development for the LSCs. It is therefore not consistent with the strategy in the LPS for growth and the spatial distribution at the LSCs, nor with the relevant provisions of national policy.
 - 3.7. The importance of delivering a plan-led system is set out in paragraphs 3.16 – 3.38 of our representations. Without identifying growth targets and allocations, when possible, through the formulation of local plans, areas become susceptible to unplanned, ‘speculative’ development.
 - 3.8. Substantial speculative development has already taken place in Audlem since the start of the local plan period. A disaggregation of LSC settlement figures, as identified in the initial

Publication Draft SADPD, should be reinstated to the SADPD document to encourage a planned approach to development in Cheshire East.

- 3.9. Audlem was formerly expected to accommodate in the region of 245 new homes. We encourage the reinstatement of this figure as a minimum target for growth over the plan period.

b) Should it set out indicative housing levels for designated neighbourhood areas, to provide an effective framework for neighbourhood plans?

- 3.10. NPPF paragraph 66 sets out that strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.

- 3.11. NPPF Paragraph 15 states, inter alia, “succinct and up-to-date plans should provide... a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings”.

- 3.12. To reiterate, the supporting text to LPS Policy PG7 states that the development figure for LSCs “will be further disaggregated in the SADPD and / or neighbourhood plans”.

- 3.13. Policy PG 8, in its current form, is not consistent with these provisions of the NPPF or the LPS. It should be amended to include indicative housing levels for designated neighbourhood areas.

c) Is it positively prepared and justified in relying on existing commitments and windfall development to meet the indicative level of housing development for LSCs, set in Policy PG 7, rather than allocating additional sites at the LSCs?

- 3.14. As noted in Section 2 of this Statement, the supply figure for the LSCs has reduced from 3,210 to 3,193 dwellings since the revised SADPD consultation was undertaken.

- 3.15. This shows the risk of relying on existing commitments, that may lapse and not be delivered, and windfalls, that may fluctuate and decrease over time. Conversely, allocating additional sites shows a positive approach to meeting development needs, and creates greater certainty for future delivery.

- 3.16. Section 5 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that a sufficient supply of homes is delivered, to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting housing stock in England.

- 3.17. Relying on windfalls and existing commitments does not contribute to this overarching national objective. Additional sites should be allocated in the LSCs to ensure the level of housing development, as set in Policy PG 7, is met in full.

- 3.18. Adopting an unplanned approach to meeting development needs constraints the ability of local communities to input on the way that their area will grow in the future. The importance of community input in shaping policies is outlined at paragraphs 3.21 – 3.26 of our representations.

- 3.19. Policy PG 8 in its current form is therefore not positively prepared or justified when considering the aims of national policy. Additional sites, identified with community input, should be allocated in the LSCs within the SADPD document.

12. Are the other policies in the LPS and SADPD sufficiently flexible to enable the remaining part of the indicative level of housing development for LSCs, set in Policy PG 7, to be met from further windfall sites? Is there any substantive evidence of opportunities for further windfall development on sites within the proposed Settlement and Village Infill Boundaries?

- 3.20. Windfall development can provide valuable contributions to housing supply, however, should not purely be relied on to meet any outstanding needs for housing.
- 3.21. Audlem's proposed settlement boundary is tightly constrained, providing limited opportunities for further development to take place within.
- 3.22. Referring to page 17 of the Audlem Settlement Report [ref. ED23], an edge of settlement and urban potential study was conducted in 2015. This identified 3 sites within the settlement boundary of Audlem.
- 3.23. No subsequent, substantive evidence has been provided since to suggest that there are further opportunities for windfall development on sites within Audlem's boundary. This reemphasizes the need to allocate sites adjacent and well related to the existing confines of the settlement.

13. Is there a need for further site allocations for housing at the LSCs to be included in the SADPD to ensure the indicative level of housing development set in Policy PG 7 of the LPS will be met in full and the need for affordable housing addressed, in particular at settlements within the North Cheshire Green Belt?

- 3.24. Section 5 of the NPPF aims to not only significantly boost the national supply of homes, but to meet needs arising from a variety of different groups within communities. This includes the need for affordable housing products outside of the main housing market.
- 3.25. Our representations (paragraphs 4.15 – 4.19) outlined the need for affordable housing in Audlem. Based on the latest need data for affordable dwellings in Cheshire East (September 2021), we understand that this need has remained constant.
- 3.26. Audlem, as an LSC, was not allocated any new housing through the LPS. With Cheshire East relying on windfalls and existing commitments to meet the remaining development needs in LSCs, this raises doubts as to whether the identified need for affordable dwellings will be met in Audlem before the end of the plan period.
- 3.27. LPS Policy SC 5 – Affordable Homes states, in developments of 11 or more dwellings in Local Service Centres... at least 30% of all units are to be affordable. Other opportunities for securing affordable housing through local plan policies, especially on smaller sites, are limited.

- 3.28. Delivering a windfall site of 11 or more dwellings within the proposed settlement boundary of Audlem will not be possible. If no site allocations for housing are identified in the SADPD, it is highly unlikely that any further affordable dwellings will be delivered in the settlement.
- 3.29. Re-allocating Land south of Bird's Nest for housing will create certainty that some of the identified affordable need can be addressed as part of delivering the wider site.
- 3.30. Including further site allocations in the LSCs will also promote a positive approach to meeting the overall level of development set in Policy PG 7. Both matters considered, there is clearly a need for including further site allocations in the LSCs.
- 3.31. Our representations (paragraph 4.9) noted Cheshire East's commentary regarding Land south of Bird's Nest at the time when the revised SADPD document was published. The Council acknowledged that no exceptional circumstances test applies in relation to the site and its consideration for being allocated for housing, as it is situated in the Open Countryside.
- 3.32. The revised SADPD document disproportionately focusses on the issue of site allocations at LSCs within the North Cheshire Green Belt. If a sustainable and deliverable housing site outside of the Green Belt is available, this should be allocated first, before judging where exceptional circumstances may apply in other LSCs.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1. Tabley Homes do not support the current development approach advocated by Cheshire East Council in the submitted version of the SADPD, particularly regarding future growth in the Local Service Centres.
- 4.2. Despite reaching a position where housing supply across the LSCs is approaching the indicative level of development as set by LPS Policy PG 7, relying on existing commitments and windfall development to achieve the overall target undermines the aims of national policy. It is also contrary to the approach set out in the Local Plan Strategy.
- 4.3. Housing allocations in the LSCs should be reinstated to the SADPD, based on a disaggregation of development needs per settlement. Land south of Bird's Nest, Audlem, should be reinstated to the plan to ensure both market and affordable housing needs can be addressed in the settlement.