

# **EiP Statement**

## **Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document**

### **Taylor Wimpey UK Limited**

### **Representor ID 1255636**

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**Our ref** 41856/07/CM/NMi  
**Date** September 2021

#### **Subject Matter 2 – Planning for Growth**

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#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Lichfields is instructed by Taylor Wimpey UK Limited [TW] to make representations on its behalf to the emerging Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document [SADPD].
- 1.2 This Statement has been prepared in response to the Matters, Issues and Questions raised by the Inspector for the Matter 2 Examination in Public [EiP] hearing session.
- 1.3 These representations should be read in conjunction with previous submissions on the SADPD [Representator ID 1255636].
- 1.4 TW is seeking to bring forward a high quality, well designed and sustainable residential allocation at Grove Farm, Shavington. The Grove Farm site lies on the eastern side of Shavington, adjacent to Taylor Wimpey's East Shavington development (CELPs Site LPS10) known as Cherry Tree Park which is currently under construction. The development of the site would form a logical and modest extension to the existing settlement that would complement the Taylor Wimpey development on the neighbouring Cherry Tree Park Development and has the potential to accommodate approximately 180-200 dwellings. TW considers that the allocation and delivery of around 45-50 dwellings as a first phase in the SADPD would be appropriate and would align with the non-strategic allocations which this plan is seeking to identify.
- 1.5 The site would assist in delivering sustainable development by contributing towards meeting the needs of market and affordable housing, creating employment during the construction period and mitigating any impacts to the environment.
- 1.6 The Grove Farm site has not been allocated for residential development in the SADPD.
- 1.7 This statement expands upon TW's previous representations made throughout the Local Plan preparation process in light of the Inspector's specific issues and questions. Where relevant, the comments made are assessed against the tests of soundness established by the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Policy Practice Guidance [Practice Guidance].

## 2.0 Planning Issues

### Development at Local Service Centres (Policy PG8 and Site HCH1)

*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?*

- 2.1 The disaggregation of indicative levels of development for the LSCs is the only way to ensure that development is properly plan led and the needs of individual settlements are met and to provide certainty that both market and affordable housing is delivered in the areas which most need it. The Inspector for the CELPS<sup>1</sup> clearly anticipated the apportionment of growth to the LCSs through the SADPD.
- 2.2 CELPS Policy PG2 also states that in the LSCs, small scale development to meet needs and priorities will be supported where they contribute to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities. The explanatory text to Policy PG2<sup>2</sup> makes clear that development in the LSCs will be supported through the allocation of sites in the SADPD. It notes<sup>3</sup> that new development in LSCs is required to meet local needs and help retain services and facilities so that residents can continue to enjoy these benefits and reduce the need to travel elsewhere. This aim can only be properly achieved through the disaggregation of development to the LSCs, such as Shavington.
- 2.3 The CELPS sets out a clear strategy in order to ensure that development is steered to the right locations so that the delivery of sustainable development can be achieved. The approach proposed in Policy PG8 does not support this strategy and instead proposes an approach where there will be no control over the location of development with an over reliance on the delivery of windfalls. The SADPD needs to reflect the approach advocated in the CELPS and supported by the Inspector as it did at the Publication Draft stage by reintroducing disaggregation to the LSCs and allocating sites to meet the outstanding requirement for the Local Plan, to be found sound at examination.
- b) Should it set out indicative housing levels for designated neighbourhood areas, to provide an effective framework for neighbourhood plans?*
- 2.4 Taylor Wimpey has no comment on this matter.
- 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?*
- 2.5 The failure to disaggregate the housing target for LSCs and allocate sufficient land to meet this target fails to align with the policy approach taken in the CELPS which makes clear that development in the LSCs will be supported through the allocation of sites in the SADPD<sup>4</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Inspector’s Report: June 2017 §90

<sup>2</sup> Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy §8.34

<sup>3</sup> Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy §8.30

<sup>4</sup> Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy §8.34

proposed approach to rely on windfalls to meet the indicative level of housing development is neither positively prepared nor justified.

- 2.6 The approach does not positively plan as it does not address the diverse housing needs of the borough where affordability is an issue. It will not provide any certainty that affordable housing is delivered in the areas which most need it. It is considered that this undermines the delivery of sustainable development and ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.
- 2.7 A clear need for additional residential development still exists to meet the requirement in LSCs. Net completions and commitments at 31 March 2020 total 3,210 dwellings against a CELPS Policy PG7 target of 3,500 dwellings, resulting in a shortfall of 290 dwellings. The proposed approach in Policy PG8 will fail to ensure that this shortfall will be distributed to the LSCs as the Council will have no control over the location and amount of development. This undermines the delivery of sustainable development and ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes, including affordable housing can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.
- 2.8 The evidence also suggests that the future provision of windfall development is uncertain. The evidence provided in the Council Responses to the Inspector's Initial Questions suggests that windfall completions (all sizes) in the LSCs have dropped considerably since the CELPS was adopted in 2017. On sites granted permission on or before 26th July 2017, it identifies net completions of 1,767 (an annual average of 252 dwelling assuming this figure dates from the beginning of the plan period in 2010). However, Table 2 of the Council's Response identifies that completions post 2017 are significantly lower than this. Over the last two monitoring periods, 238 dwellings have been completed on sites granted permission after the LPS was adopted (an annual average of 119 dwellings over two years). If the figure for the partial period (27 July 2017 – 31 March 2018) is also factored in (2 dwellings) this drops to an average of 80 dwellings per annum. Given the recent drop in windfall completions it is uncertain what contribution windfall sites will be capable of making in LSCs over the remainder of the plan period.
- 2.9 Research within the development industry<sup>5</sup> which has considered the impact of the economic downturn on the supply of homes concludes that Coronavirus has had and will continue to have an impact on the national economy and the practicalities of building new homes. The implications of Covid-19 on the housebuilding industry remains uncertain and there is no guarantee that existing commitments on windfall sites will deliver as anticipated or that sufficient windfall sites will come forward over the remaining Plan period.
- 2.10 For the above reasons, it is vital that sufficient land is allocated in the LSCs to ensure that the needs of individual settlements are met, and to provide certainty that both market and affordable housing is delivered. The findings of the Council's own evidence in the SA supports this approach as it indicates that it would have less impact than the option being pursued.

*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?*

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<sup>5</sup> Impact of Covid-19 on social housing supply and residential construction - Residential Research Report for Shelter, Savills (June 2020)

- 2.11 TW considers that the other policies in the CELPS and SADPD cannot be relied on to deliver housing needs within the LSCs in isolation as they do not provide a mechanism to steer development towards the LSCs.
- 2.12 In addition, TW is not aware of any significant opportunities for windfall development within the proposed settlement boundary in Shavington. The proposed settlement boundary is tightly drawn around existing development and land which is currently under development. The Council's evidence indicates that only 10 dwellings have been provided on small sites (9 or less) in Shavington for the period 2010 to 2020 (an average of 1 dwelling per annum). This suggests that the availability of sites for windfall development within the settlement is limited.
- 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?*
- 2.13 TW considers that further site allocations for housing need 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. As part of this process, additional land should be identified around Shavington.
- 2.14 The SADPD should identify a first phase of the Grove Farm Site as an allocation with the remainder identified as a potential location for development in the next Local Plan Review. The delivery of around 45-50 dwellings as a first phase would not contradict the non-strategic allocations which this plan is seeking to identify. The remainder of the site would be capable of coming forward during the current plan period if required, or as an allocation in any future review of the Local Plan.
- 2.15 The southern part of the site was assessed in the 2012 SHLAA [Site Ref: 2903] and was considered 'developable' at that time. Whilst some environmental and technical constraints were identified on this site, none were considered insurmountable and that would impact on the deliverability of the site. Environment Agency Flood Zone Maps indicate that the northern part of the site is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 where residential development would not normally be acceptable. However, there is scope to use this area as public open space as part of any development proposed on the remainder of the site and improve biodiversity in this area. It is considered that the area of the site located outside of these Flood Zones has the potential to accommodate approximately 180-200 dwellings, applying a density of around 30 dwellings per hectare. Given the size of the site, there is the potential to part allocate the site now to meet current needs and allocate the remainder of the site through a future review of the Local Plan.
- 2.16 Given the proximity of Shavington to Crewe, the development of the site provides the opportunity to support the Councils economic growth and regeneration aspirations for the Crewe, maximise the benefits of the proposed HS2 station and help support the Government's Northern Powerhouse agenda.
- 2.17 The development of the site is economically viable and residential development can be achieved within the first five years of the plan period. The viability of the proposals in terms of the land value, attractiveness of the locality, level of potential market demand and projected rate of sales; as well as the cost factors associated with the site, including site preparation costs and site constraints, has been assessed.
- 2.18 In order to avoid any doubt on the delivery of the Local Plan requirement over the plan period, and to ensure a positively prepared plan, we consider that a 20% flexibility allowance is essential

to account for any lapses and shortfalls in anticipated delivery on sites. This should include a flexibility allowance of 20% for each of the LSCs. We deal with this matter in further detail in our representation to the SADPD Revised Publication Draft.

2.19 The Council has not identified any allocations in Shavington in the SADPD and given that some additional flexibility needs to be provided, TW considers that it should seek to identify the first phase of the Grove Farm Site as an allocation.

2.20 In conclusion, in order to ensure that the SADPD is sound, TW considers that additional land should be identified around Shavington.

*14. Is Site HCH 1 at Holmes Chapel justified as an appropriate location to meet the remaining indicative need for employment land at the LSCs identified in Policy PG 7 of the LPS, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on the evidence available?*

2.21 TW has no comment on this matter.

## **Safeguarded Land at LSCs (Policy PG12)**

2.22 TW has no comment on this matter.

## **Development at Key Service Centres (Sites CNG 1, MID 2 & 3 and PYT 1, 3 & 4)**

2.23 TW has no comment on this matter.

## **Settlement Boundaries (Policy PG 9)**

*26. Is the principle of defining Settlement Boundaries consistent with the strategic policies in the LPS and with national policy in enabling the delivery of sustainable development?*

2.24 For the reasons set out in the statement, we consider that the principle of defining Settlement Boundaries is not consistent with the strategic policies in the CELPS as it fails to accommodate any additional land for development around Shavington

*27. With particular reference to the Settlement and Infill Boundaries Review (SIBR) and the individual Settlement Reports:*

*a) Is the methodology for the review and definition of detailed Settlement Boundaries robust?*

2.25 TW has no comment on this matter.

*b) Have the criteria and judgements used to inform the choice of Settlement Boundaries been consistently applied?*

2.26 TW has no comment on this matter.

*c) Are the proposed Settlement Boundaries justified on the basis of proportionate evidence?*

2.27 TW considers that the evidence supports the alteration of Settlement Boundaries around Shavington for the reasons we have identified in this matter paper.

*28. Will the Settlement Boundaries defined on the Draft Policies Map be effective in enabling further windfall sites to come forward, to meet the remaining unallocated element of the indicative level of housing development at the LSCs, and elsewhere in the borough?*

- 2.28 The proposed settlement boundary around Shavington is tightly drawn around existing development and land which is currently under development. This limits opportunities for significant levels of development which could deliver much needed market and affordable housing. This approach does not support the CELPS aims of steering development towards the LSCs to ensure sustainable development as it limits opportunities for development in these settlements.
- 2.29 The settlement boundary around Shavington should be amended to accommodate a first phase of development at the Grove Farm site of around 45-50 dwellings. This will ensure that development is properly plan led and the needs of individual settlements are met and to provide certainty that both market and affordable housing is delivered in the areas which most need it.
- 29. Is there any substantive evidence to demonstrate that any of the proposed Settlement Boundaries are not justified in defining the boundary between the built-up area of the settlements and the open countryside?*
- 2.30 Based on the evidence provided in this matter paper and our previous representations we consider that the settlement boundaries around Shavington are not justified and should be amended to accommodate the allocation of Grove Farm, Shavington as a first phase of residential development on this site.
- 30. Policy PG 9 allows for neighbourhood plans (NPs) to define settlement boundaries for settlements in the OSRA tier and Policy PG 10 defines a number of settlements in the OSRAs as Infill Villages with Village Infill Boundaries. To avoid inconsistencies between settlement boundaries defined in NPs and village infill boundaries defined by the Local Plan, and to ensure the SADPD is effective, clear and unambiguous in guiding the locations for development in the OSRA, is there a need for Policy PG 9 to be modified to ensure any settlement boundary defined in a NP is consistent with Village Infill boundaries defined in the SADPD?*
- 2.31 TW has no comment on this matter.
- Infill Villages and Village Infill Boundaries (Policy PG 10)**
- 2.32 TW has no comment on this matter.
- Strategic Green Gap Boundaries (Policy PG 13)**
- 2.33 TW has no comment on this matter.
- Local Green Gaps (Policy PG 14)**
- 2.34 TW has no comment on this matter.