

# **Wycombe District Local Plan Examination**

## **Matter 1 – Legal Compliance and the Duty to Cooperate**

### **Examination Statement by Nexus Planning on behalf of Inland Homes**

1. This Examination Statement has been prepared by Nexus Planning on behalf of Inland Homes in support of draft site allocation HW8.

**Question 7) - Is the sustainability Appraisal (WDLP2) adequate in terms of its assessment of the likely effects of the Plan's policies and allocations and its consideration of reasonable alternatives and have the requirements for Strategic Environmental assessment been made?**

1. The Sustainability Appraisal (September 2017) (document ref. WDLP 2) ("SA") considers the Plan's allocations against a wide-range of objectives across the three dimensions of sustainable development. Notwithstanding Inland Homes' separate objections to the exclusion of particular sites, the SA is consistent with Paragraph 8 of the NPPF in its methodology of assessing the sustainability of the allocations.
2. Inland Homes agrees with Wycombe District Council's general assessment of Land at Amersham Road incl. Tralee Farm, Hazlemere within the SA (Table III C) (site ref. SHZ0035 (5)), and we have the following comments on each of the SA objectives:
  - 1) Biodiversity - The Ecology Technical Update appended to our Regulation 19 representations relating to draft Policy HW8 demonstrates that any harm to ecology is capable of being adequately mitigated. Furthermore, the site is not a locally designated wildlife site. As part of the emerging proposals being prepared for a planning application for the development of the northern half of the site, any ecological habitats have been taken into account, and enhancements to these are proposed where possible. In light of this, the site should be given a neutral score, rather than -, as set out in our Regulation 19 representations.
  - 2) Landscape - As part of the emerging proposals being prepared with respect to a planning application for the development of the northern half of site, it is proposed to retain and enhance the existing boundaries of the site. Moreover, the landscape strategy includes enhancement of the site's green infrastructure network, and the creation of attractive new areas of public open space. As such, any landscape harm can be suitably mitigated and the site should be given a neutral score.
  - 3) Heritage - There are no heritage assets located on the site, and its development will not impact upon the setting of any asset. As such, the development will have a neutral heritage impact.
  - 4) Flood Risk - The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, so is not considered at risk of flooding. The emerging proposals being produced for the northern half of the site have taken surface water into account, and SUDS are proposed to ensure that greenfield run-off rates are achieved.
  - 5) Energy Efficiency - All sites given a neutral score.

- 6) Best use of land including soil - The site comprises greenfield land, and is not best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 7) Transport - Bus stops are accessible on Sawpit Hill, circa 130m from the site entrance, which provide frequent services to High Wycombe and Chesham. The site therefore has 'fair' availability of public transport in accordance with Wycombe District Council's assessment criteria.
- 8) Housing - The draft allocation has capacity for 350 dwellings, which constitutes a 'major site' in accordance with Wycombe District Council's assessment criteria.
- 9) Accessibility to services and facilities - The site is located circa 600m from Holmer Green village centre, which has a range of services and facilities. Dragon Cottage GP surgery is approximately 200m east of the site entrance. It is noted that the allocation only fails to achieve the highest score with respect to accessibility by being 172m further from a school than the 800m distance criteria. However, 972m is clearly still within a reasonable walking distance.
- 10) Place-making - The site is located on the edge of Holmer Green, and is enclosed by development.
- 11) Health - The site is located within 400m of green space open countryside, green infrastructure.
- 12) Strong and sustainable economy - The site is allocated for residential development.
- 13) Employment - The site is not located within the threshold distances set out within Wycombe District Council's criteria. However, a frequent bus service will enable future residents of the site to access nearby employment opportunities via sustainable transport modes.
- 14) Education, skills and training - All sites given a neutral score.
- 15) Business and economic development - The site is not in employment use.

#### **Question 14) - Will the plan be supported by Supplementary Planning Documents?**

1. Our Regulation 19 representations in respect of Policy HW8 outline our concerns with the Council's proposed approach to requirement for a development brief to be prepared for this allocation. It is expected that this will be dealt with during Matter 7 (Stage 2 of the examination Hearing sessions) where this policy is due to be discussed in detail. However, should such matters be discussed in response to this question at Matter 1, Inland Homes would like to reserve the opportunity to respond, if required.