

**Wycombe Local Plan Hearing Statement**  
**Matter 10 - Development Framework -**  
**Marlow, Bourne End & Wooburn**  
Land off Holtspur Avenue, Wooburn Green

Representor ID:1165  
IM Land  
August 2018

# Contents

---

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Matters to be examined	2
Appendix 1: Site Proforma - BE1 Slate Meadow		9
Appendix 2: Site Proforma - BE2 Hollands Farm		12

---

## Contact

Tim Burden / Hannah Bowler

[Tim.burden@turley.co.uk](mailto:Tim.burden@turley.co.uk) / [hannah.bowler@turley.co.uk](mailto:hannah.bowler@turley.co.uk)

August 2018



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of our Client, IM Land, in relation to Matter 10 of the Wycombe District Council ('WDC') Local Plan Examination.
- 1.2 Our Client has promoted 'Land at Holtspur Avenue, Wooburn Green' through the emerging Local Plan and we have attended the Hearing Sessions on Matters 1 -6 on the Inspector's published Matters and Issues. At these sessions, we further clarified the position set out within our Hearing Statements; in that we consider that the WDC Submission Local Plan is not legally compliant and fails the tests of soundness under paragraph 182 of the Framework.
- 1.3 We further note that the Inspector to the Milton Keynes Local Plan Examination, which is on-going, has issued some initial findings on the associated Sustainability Appraisal. A number of the matters raised by that Inspector are also pertinent to this Examination, given the lack of clarity contained with WDC's Sustainability Appraisal to justify the decision making process that has occurred to inform the Submission Local Plan. Given the comments made in previous submissions, and the substance of our concerns in this statement regarding the selected sites, we felt it pertinent to notify the Inspector of these parallels, and respectfully request that she draws similar conclusions to her colleague. As an overarching comment, it is apparent that WDC has not used its SA to appropriately inform its site selection choices.
- 1.4 We do not wish to repeat the detailed submission made at Regulation 19 nor the comments raised in relation to Matters 1 - 6 of the Examination albeit wish to demonstrate that WDC's evidence base to support a number of the proposed allocations is unsound. We therefore respond to the Inspector's specific questions regarding this topic.

## 2. Matters to be examined

- 2.1 Given the substantive nature of our concerns, in this Statement we have prepared a number of tables throughout this Statement in order to assist the Inspector. These refer explicitly to documents that form part of the Council's evidence base, or where there is a gap in that, note the absence of evidence to justify the proposed allocation. These then identify issues of soundness exemplified through the evidence base.
- 2.2 As will be noted from our previous submissions, our clients are concerned about the approach to site selection and Sustainability Assessment, notwithstanding the explicit issue relating to the individual sites and their ability to meet the identified objectively assessed needs of the District.
- 2.3 For each of the proposed allocations cited, we have not considered whether the allocations themselves meet the test of being 'positively prepared' in line with paragraph 182 of the Framework on the basis that WDC is failing to meet its Objectively Assessed Housing Needs within the Local Plan. As discussed at previous Hearing Sessions we consider that the quantum of unmet need to be accommodated by Aylesbury Vale District Council is unjustified on the basis that WDC has failed to consider all reasonable alternatives through its Sustainability Appraisal and there are suitable, available and deliverable sites at higher tier settlements that could make a contribution towards significantly boosting housing supply within the District over the plan period.

### **Green Belt Assessment Part 2: Critical Friend Summary**

- 2.4 A further matter relevant to sites proposed for Green Belt release, relates to GB1.3 (Green Belt Assessment Part 2: Critical Friend Summary). Whilst WDC was criticised by AVDC in HELS6 (dated August 2016) based on the Regulation 18 WDC Local Plan, to WDC responded in November 2016 based on available housing capacity within WDC give GL Hearn consider that further consideration should be *'given to additional potential sites identified in the Plan, which sit adjacent to existing urban areas, within Green Belt but with low performing parcels'*.
- 2.5 WDC did not interrogate this position further. In addition, WDC's response to AVDC was issued before the Arup Critique (GB1.3), which raised concerns which are considered fundamental to the findings of WDC Green Belt Assessment Part 2 (2017) - Document GB.1.
- 2.6 No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that Arup are happy with the revised Green Belt Assessment based on the Second Round Review. There is no reason why Arup have not, and cannot, offer further written commentary on the submitted 2017 GB Assessment and we consider that this should be put before the Examination in order that they confirm that their stated concerns have been addressed by the Council.
- 2.7 The following matters raised by Arup, which we consider have failed to be addressed and render the findings of the Green Belt Assessment unsound against the requirements of the Framework:

Arup Critique - Second Round Comments	Turley Comment
<p>3.1 - While the additional clarity on process goes some way to addressing our comments, helpfully and logically defining the factors that may constitute exceptional circumstances, we have raised the point (through our Second Round review) that a greater degree of flexibility could be adopted in weighing up the different factors pertaining to exceptional circumstances (given evidence from other Local Plan examinations that wider exceptional circumstances may, for example, 'trump' the NPPF purposes).</p>	<p><i>This reinforces Turley's concerns that sites have been discounted prior to the SA process (as identified within the 'SA Clarification Note') when there remain outstanding concerns from Arup on the Green Belt Part 2 Methodology which have not been addressed. Nor is there any evidence before the Examination to provide certainty on this matter. This is particularly relevant given our comments in relation to previous Hearing Sessions where we challenged the Council's approach to allocating sites in line with its stated spatial strategy, and its failure to accord with its own vision and objectives for the Local Plan 2033.</i></p>
<p>3.3 - We would suggest that, in the Conclusions and Recommendations (or a separate section), a concise summary of all of the key factors pertaining to exceptional circumstances is produced. This should clearly cross-reference relevant evidence base documents, recognising that the case for exceptional circumstances cannot be justified based on the factors described in this Report alone. Additionally, we would suggest that further detailed consideration is given to the aforementioned 'micro' factors. Our recommendation is that each site proceeding to Stage 4 is afforded a more detailed conclusion setting out the key local considerations justifying why there may be exceptional circumstances to release that site. This could be in the main body of the report, or included as an appendix (and cross-referenced in Conclusions and Recommendations).</p>	<p><i>This reinforces our objections to a number of Green Belt sites on the basis that 'exceptional circumstances' have not been demonstrated, especially at a 'micro level' as recommended by Arup. It is also pertinent that sites have been omitted purely based on Officer opinion (without evidence), or contrived arguments regarding site appropriateness (such as at the Air Park and elsewhere) remain untested and conclusions have been amended between the 2016 and 2017 versions of the GB Assessment.</i></p>
<p>Comment A9 - Extensions to non-Green Belt Land</p> <p>- Explaining the logic for this test, as</p>	<p><i>The Council has not taken this comment on board, which has resulted in the inseting of areas of Green Belt</i></p>

Arup Critique - Second Round Comments	Turley Comment
<p>discussed at our previous meeting (e.g. supporting development in sustainable locations, linked to other areas of the assessment; preventing the inseting of small areas of Green Belt isolated from existing settlements etc.).</p>	<p><i>(Allocation HW11, HW16, HW17)</i></p>
<p>Comment A25 -</p> <p>Further to our previous comment A22, we remain concerned that the language used in relation to exceptional circumstances is rather definitive when, ultimately, other high level, strategic factors may come into play. While it is helpful and logical to define the factors that may constitute exceptional circumstances (para 3.3), there is a risk that by making all requirements (i-iv) pre-requisites for consideration some more sustainable sites could be ruled out. Inversely, by stating that “exceptional circumstances will exist where all four of the following requirements are satisfied” this implies that there will be exceptional circumstances to release every site which meets these requirements, whereas we do not believe this is what is intended – indeed, by having a separate Stage 4, the implication that other factors could outweigh these considerations (e.g. suitability/deliverability etc.).</p> <p>The firmness of this process would also seem to strip out the element of planning judgement referred to in paragraph 3.2. While we believe the proposed methodology is broadly on the right lines, we would encourage further consideration with regard to the aforementioned challenges. WDC could consider whether the four ‘requirements’ should in fact be factors or considerations which should be</p>	<p><i>WDC has not robustly considered the nature of macro or micro exceptional circumstances against the sites proposed for Green Belt release. The lack of clarification provided by Arup raised significant concerns as to how WDC has determined what sites do meet the ‘exceptional circumstances’; sites and the justification for them doing so.</i></p> <p><i>If the exceptional circumstances for green belt release are to seek to meet full OAN, as stated regarding many proposed allocations, then other sites should also be included which have otherwise been dismissed.</i></p>

Arup Critique - Second Round Comments	Turley Comment
weighed up against each other, and against other broader considerations.	
<p>Comment E12 -</p> <p>Please clarify how this is defined (i.e. immediately abutting, or close to the edge etc? Is there a defined distance beyond which a site would not be considered to “adjoin”?).</p>	<p><i>This term remains included in GB1 and fails to provide the clarity required to demonstrate that the release of the sites accords with the requirements of the Framework.</i></p>

## Issue 1 - Are the following allocations soundly based and is there evidence that the development of the sites is viable and deliverable?

### BE1 - Slate Meadow

2.8 The Site Assessment Table is enclosed at **Appendix 1**. A summary of the table is as follows:

- We raise concerns over the capacity of the site arising from a large proportion of the site falling within Flood Zones 2 and 3 with outstanding objections from the Environment Agency on the live planning application.

2.9 In light of the above and Appendix 1, we do not consider that the proposed allocation is sound in line with paragraph 182 of the Framework (2012) on account of the following:

Not effective	Whilst it is accepted that WDC has accepted the principle of development on the site through its release as a reserve site in 2014, our concerns relate to the capacity of the site for 150 dwellings as identified through the Draft Development Brief and the proposed allocation. This principally relates to the site partly within Flood Zone 2 and 3 where the Environment Agency has objected to the live planning application. As such, at this stage there is uncertainty over whether the site is capable of delivering the capacity identified within the Local Plan.
---------------	--

### BE2 - Hollands Farm

2.10 The Site Assessment Table is enclosed at **Appendix 2**. A summary of the table is as follows:

- The site is proposed for Green Belt release and we do not consider sufficient weight has been given to Purpose 4 of the Green Belt tests under para. 80 of the Framework;
- There is a lack of evidence to demonstrate the site can deliver the quantum of development proposed within the allocation based on the Council's own evidence base and given the landscape sensitivities of the site, this should not be density led;

- An inconsistent approach is being applied between how Wooburn and Bourn End are considered in Green Belt terms within allocations BE1 and BE2; and
- It is considered further evidence is required to demonstrate the deliverability of the site based on heritage consideration, traffic implications on Cookham Bridge and the specific land ownership arrangement on-site.

2.11 In light of the above and Appendix 2, we do not consider that the proposed allocation is sound in line with paragraph 182 of the Framework (2012) on account of the following:

Not positively prepared	<p>The plan as drafted fails to meet the Council’s OAN despite the suitability, availability and deliverability of sites at higher tier settlements which have not been considered within the Council’s Sustainability Appraisal. In addition, as set out below, questions are raised over the development capacity for the site based on the Council’s own evidence.</p>
Not justified	<p>We do not consider that the assessment of the site within the Council’s evidence base is justified given no weight has been attached to the proximity of the site to the Hedsor Conservation Area (Purpose 4), with the SA identifying a major negative against heritage.</p> <p>In addition, given the proposed allocation and Development Brief for Slate Meadow identifies the requirement for a ‘gap’ to be incorporated into development proposals to ensure the site does not result in the coalescence of Bourne End and Wooburn. No such reference is included for Hollands Farm and the allocation would result in Bourne End and Wooburn becoming a single urban area. We understand that previous Local Plans have considered the urban areas of Wooburn and Bourne End as separate entities. A reference is made in the supporting text to the policy to ‘a degree of separation’ between the site and Harvest Hill - there is no acknowledgement of this consideration within the Council’s Green Belt Assessment.</p> <p>We further note that SLS1 when assessing against the settlement hierarchy criteria would be a lower tier settlement than proposed within the Local Plan. Therefore, we question whether the delivery of over 600 dwellings across BE1 and BE2 is appropriate within this location. Document HELS4 identifies that the allocation could accommodate 394 dwellings whilst the proposed allocation identifies capacity for 467 dwellings. This highlights inconsistencies with the application of the</p>

	<p>Council's evidence base. We consider that the site capacity should be reduced to reflect the Council's capacity assessments.</p>
<p>Not effective</p>	<p>There is a lack of clarification within the Council's evidence base as to the nature of land ownership across the site and whether the entire parcel is deliverable alongside whether a deliverable access solution is available from Hedsor Road and the implications on traffic congestion at Cookham Bridge. Both these matters are considered integral to the deliverability of the site.</p>
<p>Not consistent with National Policy</p>	<p>We do not consider that the site has been robustly assessed within the Council's Green Belt Assessment Part 2, and the conclusions are not reflective on the site specific requirements with a lack of consideration given to protecting and enhancing the historic environment around the site as required under para. 7 of the Framework. We consider that in the absence of additional technical work being undertaken to demonstrate the suitability and deliverability of the site, there may be delays to development coming forward similar to the position of the reserved sites released in 2014 - of which none have yet to deliver.</p>

# Appendix 1: Site Proforma - BE1 Slate Meadow

Site Area

10.26



**Ownership Position (Source: Slate Meadow Development Brief)**

Site in multiple ownership - Avant Homes and Croudace control residential element. WDC owned the Village Green.



Figure 1.1 Site context and ownership plan  
Slate Meadow covers an area of approximately 10 hectares and is located six miles south-east of High Wycombe, in the parish of Bourne End.

KEY  
 Croudace Strategic  
 Wycombe District Council  
 Avant Homes  
 Third party

**Promotion Position**

Development Brief adopted which was informed by the WDC Local Plan Issues and Options document, which sought response on how the separation of Bourne End and Wooburn would be achieved.

Application submitted under 18/05597/OUT for 150 dwellings.

Current Holding Objection from EA to ensure that all development is within Flood Zone 1

**WDC Local Plan (2033) -Site Capacity**

150 dwellings

**References within WDC Local Plan (2033)**

Policy does not reference specific housing requirements. Reference is made to the need to minimise recreational impacts on

---

the Burnham Beeches SAC - ref back to HRA Regs

The policy states *'retain and undeveloped area between developed areas of Bourne End and Wooburn'*

The Development Brief supports the Local Plan. Para 2.7.6 (Open Space), states *'although Slate Meadow is identified for development, the land currently functions as an undeveloped gap between the built-up areas of Bourne End and Wooburn Green'*. A key aim is to maintain *'the separation between Bourne End and Wooburn Green'*.

---

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA1)**

The site scores a minor negative against Water & Flooding despite in the main within Flood Zone 2 and a major negative given it is the best and most versatile agricultural land.

---

**Flood Risk (EA Map)**

Over 70% of the site is within Flood Zone 2. With small part in Flood Zone 1.



**GB/AONB Designations**

Reserved site released in 2014 as identified within the WDC Core Strategy 2008

---

**Other known constraints**

Part of the site has village green status. Part site falls within Flood Zone 2.

---

**Settlement Tier - Settlement Hierarchy Study (SLS1)**

Tier 2

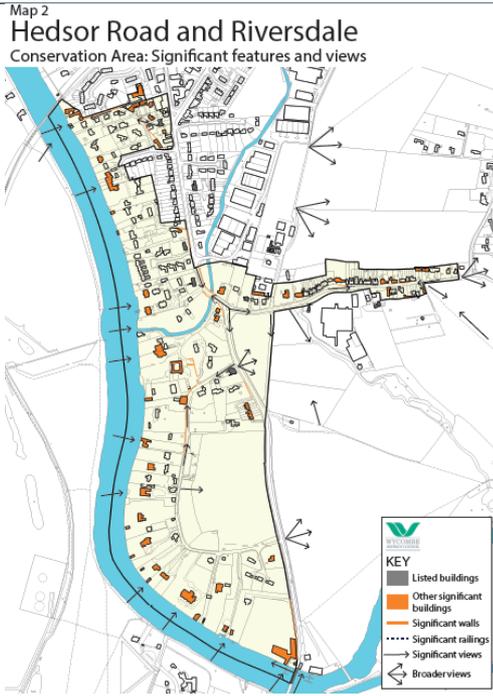
Bourne End/Wooburn is a large settlement which, whilst on a strict reading of the criteria, would fall below this category (as being without an indoor sports centre it does not contain all of the higher-order services). However, it is distinctly larger and has a more extensive offer of services

---

	<p>and facilities than any other of the villages in the District. It is considered that, by virtue of its size, extensive range of other services and proximity to other large centres (especially High Wycombe and Marlow), it is appropriate to include this settlement in Tier 2.</p> <p>The combined capacity of the settlement is 6,890 dwellings.</p>
<b>HEELA (2017) Review (HELS1)</b>	<p>SBE0033- The HEELA which states that '<i>A flood model has been developed by HR Wallingford and agreed with the EA. Agent responded design solution will inform and ensure dwellings are built solely on Flood Zone 1 land and included support of the preparation of a detailed flood risk assessment and mitigation strategy for the entire site.</i>'</p>
<b>GB Assessment Part 2 - 2016</b>	Reserve site released in 2014
<b>GB Assessment Part 2 - 2017 (GB1)</b>	Reserve site released in 2014
<b>AONB Study (AONB1)</b>	N/A
<b>Urban Design Assessment Development Capacity AONB &amp; Green Belt Sites (HELS4)</b>	Not included
<b>AVDC Response WDC Regulation 18 Local Plan</b>	Para 4.21 - 'GL Hearn consider that Bourne End and Woburn could yield some additional potential through increasing development densities'
<b>WDC Response to AVDC Review of Housing Capacity (HELS5)</b>	No additional capacity identified on-site

## Appendix 2: Site Proforma - BE2 Hollands Farm

<b>Site Area</b>	23.74
<b>Ownership Position</b>	Part of the site is under control of Catesby Estates and other parties. HEELA fails to state all ownership parties.
<b>Promotion Position</b>	467 dwellings
<b>WDC Local Plan (2033) -Site Capacity</b>	<p>Policy does not reference specific housing requirements.</p> <p>The northern part of the site is considered suitable for a primary school</p>
<b>References within WDC Local Plan (2033)</b>	<p>No specific reference to capacity within the policy but provision of 1 form entry capacity. The supporting text states that the Hedsor Road and Riversdale Conservation Area needs to be considered.</p> <p>A buffer should be provided between the development and the Harvest Hill area to minimise the impact on the area and maintain a degree of separation.</p>
<b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA1)</b>	The site scores a minor negative against Landscape & Countryside, alongside Heritage & Townscape. Site consists of best and most versatile agricultural land.
<b>Flood Risk (EA Map)</b>	The majority of the site is within Flood Zone 1 although the southwest of the site falls within Flood Zone 2 and 3.
	
<b>GB/AONB Designations</b>	Green Belt
<b>Other known constraints</b>	The Hedsor Road And Riversdale Conservation Area and how a buffer is created.



There are PROW's running north to south across the site.

Industrial area to the west which as well as being visually unattractive could create noise impacts for the new residential areas

**Settlement Tier Settlement Hierarchy Study (SLS1)**

**Tier 2**

Bourne End/Wooburn is a large settlement which, whilst on a strict reading of the criteria, would fall below this category (as being without an indoor sports centre it does not contain all of the higher-order services). However, it is distinctly larger and has a more extensive offer of services and facilities than any other of the villages in the District. It is considered that, by virtue of its size, extensive range of other services and proximity to other large centres (especially High Wycombe and Marlow), it is appropriate to include this settlement in Tier 2.

The combined capacity of the settlement is 6,890 dwellings.

**HEELA (2017) Review (HELS1)**

SBE0033 - Mixed Use

**GB Assessment Part 2 - 2016**

The site is not located on the edge of the identified large built-up area. It is not considered to provide a gap between the settlements and makes no discernible contribution to separation with the site considered to be semi-urban character. In addition, the site is not considered to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

<b>GB Assessment Part 2 - 2017 (GB1)</b>	<p>The Council consider that the site <i>'does not provide a gap between settlements and makes no discernible contribution to separation'</i>.</p> <p>The Council considers that <i>'the site does not abut identified historic settlement core'</i>.</p> <p>The site is bounded on three sides by built-up areas of non-green belt land at Bourne End and Hawks Hill. It would form a rational built-up area appropriate to the general extent of the Green Belt.</p> <p>Site access for this site is critical and should be taken from Hedsor Road and NOT Hawks Hill or Heaven's Lea, in consideration of their geometry. (Parts of the site may also have some potential for access from Bridgestone Drive – to be investigated.)</p>
<b>AONB Study (AONB1)</b>	N/A
<b>Urban Design Assessment Development Capacity AONB &amp; Green Belt Sites (HELS4)</b>	<p>Overall site area 23.6 ha, residential area 14.6 ha. At a density of 27 dph, the site has approximate capacity for 394 dwellings. Assuming a density of 27 dph this site could accommodate 394 dwellings (range 22-32dph: 321 -467) with about 62% of the site area developed (14.60 Ha).</p> <p>4.65ha of strategic and open local space</p>
<b>AVDC Consultation Response to WDC Regulation 18 Consultation</b>	<p>Para 4.21 <i>'GL Hearn consider that Bourne End and Woburn could yield some additional potential through increasing development densities'</i></p>
<b>WDC Response to AVDC Review of Housing Capacity (HELS5)</b>	<p>No further consideration given to the site.</p>
<b>Turley Landscape Evidence</b>	<p>In the Policy BE2 the guidance states that the site is located within a gap between Bourne End and Hawks Hill and that separation should be provided between Hawks Hill and the development.</p> <p>As these settlement areas are both within the Green Belt it suggests that the site should score higher than 0 against the purpose of preventing towns from merging.</p>

**Turley Office**  
The Pinnacle  
20 Tudor Road  
Reading  
RG1 1NH

T 0118 902 2830

**Turley**