



LAND TO THE WEST OF HATFIELD

Environmental Statement – Chapter 5: Planning Policy

Arlington Business Parks GP Ltd

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| 5 | Planning Policy | 5-1 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 5-1 |
| 5.2 | National Planning Policy Framework | 5-1 |
| 5.3 | Planning practice guidance | 5-2 |
| 5.4 | Local plan policy | 5-2 |
| 5.4.1 | Adopted local plan | 5-3 |
| 5.4.2 | Emerging policy | 5-3 |

5 PLANNING POLICY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter of the ES seeks to outline the applicable overarching planning policy position associated with the site and the proposed development. Policies applicable to the various technical assessments included within this ES are contained within the relevant chapters. A complete Planning Statement (Maddox) forms part of this application but given the applicable Regulations are Town and Country Planning ones, it is appropriate that the policy context is understood within this ES.

To the extent that Development Plan policies are material to an application for planning permission the decisions for applications must be taken in accordance with the development plan, unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

5.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') was published on 24 July 2018 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Framework stresses the importance of having a planning system that is genuinely plan-led. Where a proposal accords with an up-to-date development plan it should be approved without delay, as required by the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 11 of the Framework.

The NPPF recognises at its heart that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, contributing to a strong, responsive and competitive economy; social, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and an environmental role, contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built, and historic environment (paragraph 8).

Where the development is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date, paragraph 11 of the Framework requires the application to be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development unless otherwise specified.

Chapter 4 of the Framework concerns the promotion of sustainable transport. Paragraph 108 encourages the exploitation of the use of sustainable transport modes, "developments should be located and designed to, where practical, accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies, give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities, create safe and secure layouts which minimalise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones, incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles, and consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport".

Paragraph 124 sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 136 outlines how Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their

intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.

Paragraph 138 expands on the above, stating that when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policymaking authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.

Paragraph 143 sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

In relation to the very special circumstances, paragraph 144 outlines how when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

5.3 PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Guidance contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance (2018) is a material consideration in the determination of this application. It highlights that good design is an integral part of sustainable development. New proposals should reflect this requirement for good design (as set out in national, regional and local policy) while local authorities are advised to give great weight to outstanding or innovative designs that help to raise the standard or design more generally in the area (paragraph 004). Moreover, it states that achieving good design is about creating places, buildings, or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well, and will adapt to the needs of future generations (paragraph 001).

The guidance also confirms that the role of the NPPF in decision making is:

"... up-to-date Government planning policy and must be taking into account where it is relevant to a planning application or appeal. If decision takers choose not to follow the National Planning Policy Framework, clear and convincing reasons for doing so are needed. A development that is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework does not remove the requirement to determine the application in accordance with the development plan unless there are other material considerations that indicate otherwise."

5.4 LOCAL PLAN POLICY

There is a single relevant development plan document for the site, which is the the saved policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan adopted 2005.

5.4.1 Adopted local plan

The District Plan was adopted by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in 2005 and sets out the strategic and detailed planning policy for the District. However, in line with paragraph 11 (point d) of the Framework, the housing policies of the Plan are now out of date as the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

It is considered that the most relevant policies from Welwyn Hatfield District Plan are:

- RA1 Development in the Green Belt;
- RA13 Mixed Uses in Villages;
- RA21 Leisure and Tourism in the Countryside;
- SD1 Sustainable Development;
- R11 Biodiversity and Development;
- R15 Wildlife Sites;
- R17 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows;
- R18 Air Quality;
- R28 Historic Parks and Gardens;
- M1 Integrating Transport and Land Use;
- M2 Transport Assessments;
- M9 Bus and Taxi Facilities;
- M14 Parking Standards for New Development;
- D1 Quality of Design;
- D2 Character and Context;
- H7 Affordable Housing;
- H9 Special Needs Housing;
- OS2 Playing Pitch Provision;
- OS3 Play Space and Open Space Provision in New Residential Development;
- CLT2 New and Expanded Leisure Facilities;
- CLT7 Community Use of Education Facilities;
- CLT8 New and Extended Education Facilities;
- EMP5 Mix of Unit Sizes; and
- EMP6 Small Business Units.

5.4.2 Emerging policy

The emerging Local Plan was submitted for examination on 15 May 2017. The examination is still ongoing, with Stage 5 of the hearing sessions scheduled to take place at the start of November. These hearing sessions are to examine the Green Belt Study Stage 3.

The Local Plan is not expected to be adopted until mid-late 2019. Once adopted, the Local Plan will include allocated sites for strategic housing, in line with government policy and to address an urgent housing need. As per the adopted Local Plan, no weight can be given to the emerging housing policies as the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. However, significant

weight is afforded to the remaining development management policies within the emerging Local Plan. It is considered that the most relevant policies from the Local Plan Proposed Submission are:

- SP1 Delivering sustainable development;
- SP4 Transport and travel;
- SADM2 Highway network and safety;
- SADM3 Sustainable travel for all;
- SP6 Community services and facilities;
- SP7 Type and mix of housing;
- SP8 The local economy;
- SP9 Place making and high-quality design;
- SADM11 Amenity and layout;
- SADM12 Parking, servicing and refuse;
- SP14 New schools;
- SADM26 New dwellings in Hatfield; and
- SADM34 Development within the green belt.

It is not considered that there are other material considerations in the consideration and determination of this planning application.