

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031)
Examination hearing sessions
Statement of North Hertfordshire District Council

**Matter 25 – new land proposed for allocation through the main modifications
MM386 – Site BA2 – Land south-west of Clothall Road, Baldock (Clothall Parish)**

Question 25.1 For each of the new areas of land proposed through the main modifications:

a) Is the inclusion of the new area of land for allocation necessary for soundness

1. Yes, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Council’s November 2019 Paper “E” on additional land ([ED175](#)). This additional land extends the proposed land allocation further to the south east to the western edge of the Baldock by-pass.
2. The proposed amendment to the allocation boundary was put forward in the Regulation 19 representation by the site promoter¹ and included as a suggested modification to the Local Plan in the Council’s [Matter 10 Statement](#) (Baldock).
3. The inclusion of the additional land in the proposed site allocation will also provide a permanent defensible green belt boundary.

b) Is the new area of land proposed deliverable? In particular, is it

i) confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the use proposed?

4. Yes, the land allocated as site BA2 is owned by Hertfordshire County Council. The County Council have confirmed that the land is “suitable, available and achievable” for development in the Statement of Common Ground between North Hertfordshire District Council and Hertfordshire County Council Property, [ED91](#).

ii) supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?

5. Yes, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 4 to 9 of the Council’s Matter 10 Statement (Baldock).

iii) deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

¹ HCC Representation Ref : 5167

6. Yes, for the reasons set out in Paragraphs 10 to 14 of the Council's Matter 10 Statement (Baldock). The additional land does not alter the dwelling estimates or any of the infrastructure requirements. The additional land does not result in the identification of any additional constraints beyond those already considered.

c) Is the inclusion of the new area of land justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development

7. Yes, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 33 to 40 of the Council's Matter 10 Statement (Baldock).

Question 25.2 If / where the new area of land proposed for allocation is currently in the Green Belt:

8. The proposed additional land lies within the current Green Belt.

a) Do exceptional circumstances exist to warrant its allocation? If so, what are they?

9. Yes, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 59 to 64 of the Council's Matter 10 Statement (Baldock).

b) What is the nature and extent of the harm to the Green Belt of removing the site from it?

10. The Green Belt Review Update ([ED161](#)) identifies that this site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. It would therefore result in moderate harm to the Green Belt if removed.

c) To what extent would the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent?

11. Measures are identified in paragraphs 75 and 76 of the Council's Matter 10 Statement (Baldock) to reduce the impact on the purposes of the Green Belt to the lowest practicable extent.

If / where relevant

d) If this site were to be developed as proposed, would the adjacent Green Belt continue to serve at least one of the five purposes of Green Belts, or would the Green Belt function be undermined by the site's allocation?

12. Yes - the land adjacent to the south east of the allocated site would continue to serve the purposes of the Green Belt, as set out in the Council's Matter 10 Statement (Baldock), paragraphs 78 to 80.

e) Will the Green Belt boundary proposed need to be altered at the end of the plan period, or is it capable of enduring beyond then?

13.No. As set out in paragraphs 81 to 85 of the Council's Matter 10 Statement (Baldock), the extent to which existing settlements can be further expanded in the future is finite. The review and proposed release of Green Belt in this location would extend Baldock to its logical maximum.

f) Are the proposed Green Belt boundaries consistent with the Plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development?

14. Yes, the Green Belt boundaries have been determined with a view to achieving the most sustainable pattern of development, as set out in the Council's Matter 10 Statement (Baldock), paragraphs 86 and 87.

g) Has the Green Belt boundary around the site been defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent? Does it avoid including land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?

15.As set out in the Council's November 2019 Paper "E" on additional land (ED175), paragraphs 20 and 21, it is proposed that the Green Belt boundary should be moved from the middle of an agricultural field and extended to the A505 to the east and a Public Right of Way to the south. As set out in paragraph 94 of the Council's Matter 10 Statement (Baldock) this would create a readily recognisable and more defensible and permanent boundary.