



Gladman Developments Ltd

Examination of North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011- 2031

Matter 15: Countryside and Green Belt: the policy approach to the Green Belt, Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt and Urban Open Land (Policies SP5, CGB1, CGB2, CGB3, CGB4 and CGB5)

15.2 Policy SP5 says that “We will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt”.

a) What policy is this referring to?

b) What does this mean? Is this strand of Policy SP5 sufficiently clear so as to be effective?

15.3 Is Policy CGB1 justified and consistent with national policy?

15.2.1 Although not specified, it is assumed that Policy SP5 d) refers to the cumulative impact of Policies CGB1 to 4 of the Local Plan. Gladman considers this approach unsound because it is inconsistent with national policy as set out in the NPPF, it does not represent positive planning and because it is inconsistent with other policies of the Plan which promote a substantial amount of housing development to rural settlements.

15.2.2 The NPPF makes it clear, in Paragraph 55, that in order “to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.”

- 15.2.3 Policy SP5 is not consistent with Policy SP8 which provides for approximately for 4,860 homes to be delivered on non-strategic sites including “land identified following a review of other relevant boundaries or designations”. Paragraph 4.88 of the Plan notes that “Having considered a wide range of evidence, this Plan concludes that sensible, planned expansion of towns and villages is the best way of delivering the growth needed whilst protecting the largely rural character of the remainder of the District”. Paragraph 4.99 further explains that a review of settlement boundaries in the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt allows for approximately 400 homes”.
- 15.2.4 Policy SP5 together with Policy CCGB1 effectively provides a policy approach to ‘Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt’ which is similar to the very restrictive policies for the Green Belt itself. This makes the Local Plan extremely inflexible, and if the allocated sites fail to come forward as expected, or the windfall contribution is less than anticipated, the proposed policy approach to rural areas would not allow for additional housing sites in sustainable locations in rural settlements to come forward. Accordingly the Plan cannot be said to be effective as it does not provide the mechanisms to respond to a change in circumstances.