



## **Gladman Developments Ltd**

### **Examination of North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011- 2031**

#### **Matter 5 The Housing Strategy: The spatial distribution of new housing policies (Policies SP2 and SP8)**

**5.1 Policy SP2 aims to focus the majority of the District's development within or adjoining the Towns, and also allows 'general development' within the Category A Villages and infilling development in Category B villages. However, neither Policy SP2 nor Policy SP8 quantifies the spatial distribution of new housing.**

**a) What is the overall distribution of new housing proposed through the Plan? Should it be clearer in this regard? Would the inclusion of a Key Diagram or some kind of illustration assist?**

**b) What level of new housing is directed towards each of the Towns and the Category A and B Villages?**

**c) How has this distribution been arrived at and what is the justification for it?**

**d) Is the distribution consistent with the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP2?**

**e) Is the distribution of housing supported by the Sustainability Appraisal and will it lead to the most sustainable pattern of housing growth?**

**f) Has the Green Belt, and any other constraints, influenced the distribution of housing and, if so, how?**

**5.2 No housing allocations are proposed in the Category B Villages or Category C Settlements. What is the reason for this, and is the approach justified?**

**5.3 Overall is the spatial distribution of housing justified?**

**5.3.1 As indicated in its hearing statement in respect of Matter 2, Gladman considers that the combined effect of Policies SP2 and SP8 is to direct the majority of development to large**

sites within or adjoining the largest settlements. Whilst Gladman considers that the allocation of large strategic urban extensions can be an appropriate way of delivering sustainable housing development, the heavy reliance on such sites is fraught with risk and is unlikely to deliver significant amounts of housing in the early years of the plan following adoption due to the long lead in times associated with such sites. In order to secure housing delivery in the short term, that is within the first 5 years of the Plan post adoption, the Plan should allocate additional smaller readily available sites, particularly in those villages outside the Green Belt.

- 5.3.2 The Plan already accepts that the growth of villages is important to support local services. For example in paragraph 4.12 of the Plan it notes that *“although some communities may lack a full range of facilities themselves, they should not be barred from further development”*. Policy SP2 provides for *“general development.....within the defined settlement boundaries of the Category A villages”* however the reality is that in villages such as Pirton and Offley, no housing allocations are proposed and the settlement boundaries are so tightly drawn that there are virtually no opportunities to accommodate new development. Clearly this is not a sustainable approach and to rectify the situation, the Plan should allocate land for housing at all Category A villages including Pirton and Offley. This would serve to assist in meeting the district wide need for housing whilst also supporting local services including schools, shops and community facilities.
- 5.3.3 On this basis, it is considered that the current spatial distribution of housing is not justified.