

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

### Statement of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Property Development Services on behalf of HCC Services

#### Matter 10 – The housing allocations and the settlement boundaries: the Towns: Hitchin

**10.6 Are all of the proposed housing allocations deliverable? In particular, are they:**

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

1. The North Hertfordshire Local Plan allocates land in Hitchin for a total of 1009 dwellings across seven sites. Based on a one form of entry (FE) yield per 500 dwellings, this equates to a need for 2 FE of school places.
2. The County Council's strategy, as local authority for education, for the provision of these places is set out below.

#### Primary School Infrastructure

##### Policy SP17: Site HT1 – Land at Highover Farm

3. Policy SP17: Site HT1 allocates Highover Farm, Hitchin for approximately 700 homes. Part e of policy SP17 requires:

*Onsite provision of a new primary school.*

4. As stated in the representations made by HCC to the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation, the proposed 700 units at SP17 will result in a 1.4 FE demand for school places.
5. However, the total demand arising from all seven allocated sites across Hitchin is 2FE. A new 2FE primary school is therefore required within Site HT1 to meet that demand.
6. Part e of policy SP17 should therefore be amended to require:  
*a site for a new two forms of entry primary school.*
7. The County Council have been involved in discussions with the landowner of site HT1 around an appropriate education solution, and has had sight of the developer's indicative layout plan. This includes land for a new 2FE primary school within site HT1.
8. Should these proposals come forward this would support the County Council's requirement for 2FE of additional capacity to meet the primary pupil yield.
9. Without this new school there would be insufficient appropriate local infrastructure with regard to primary places to meet the demand arising from all of the proposed development. The site allocations in Hitchin would not therefore be deliverable.

10. Bearton Green is a reserve school site in the adopted Local Plan. Since September 2016 this site has been used as a detached playing field by William Ransom Primary which has been permanently expanded to 2FE. It would be appropriate for the reserve site allocation to be carried forward into the emerging Local Plan as it would provide the flexibility, if needed, for the land to be used to facilitate expansion of other existing schools by providing additional detached playing fields.

### **Secondary School Infrastructure**

11. Within the Hitchin Secondary Education Planning Area (which includes the East of Luton development as well as developments in Hitchin Town and the surrounding villages), the housing growth proposed by NHDC is anticipated to yield 8.2FE of pupils.
12. Hitchin Boys and Hitchin Girls Schools are being permanently expanded by a total of 3FE from September 2018 to meet rising demand from the existing community. This leaves limited remaining expansion capacity at The Priory School.
13. The Priory School is its own admitting authority and as such is outside of the local authority control. It has confirmed its willingness to consider expansion up to 8FE, thereby providing an additional 2FE of expansion potential in Hitchin.
14. The expansion capacity at The Priory School is assisted by the removal of part of the schools' site from the Green Belt, which is supported by the County Council.
15. The County Council is seeking 6FE of additional secondary school capacity within the proposed development to the East of Luton. Although it is acknowledged that provision of 4.2FE of secondary capacity would mitigate the impact of the East of Luton development in simple numeric or quantitative terms, establishing a larger school would not only support financial and long term viability but would also assist in meeting the long term secondary need across the wider Hitchin area.
16. A 6FE new school at East of Luton would also meet some of the demand from families living in the villages that would traditionally look to Hitchin. Without this additional capacity in the East of Luton development, the pupil yield arising from new housing in the Hitchin secondary planning area as a whole cannot be sufficiently met.

### ***10.7 Are all of the proposed housing allocations justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development?***

17. As stated in the paragraphs 3 to 9 above, proposed housing allocation HT1 would only be appropriate if the policy wording is amended to include the provision of a 2FE primary school site at Highover Farm. In addition, the proposed housing allocation at East of Luton would only be appropriate if sufficient provision is made for a 6FE secondary school site. Please refer to the East of Luton and Cockernhoe matters statement for further details.