

Ref: LR/05216/L0004

10th January 2018

Sent by Email & Post

Mrs L St John Howe
Programme Officer
North Hertfordshire Local Plan EIP
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Dear Louise

**Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-31
Respondent ID 4264 – Manor Oak Homes**

We act on behalf of Manor Oak Homes (Respondent ID: 4264) in relation to their site at the Junction of Grays Lane and Crow Furlong, Hitchin (Housing Allocation HT6), which is due to be considered during Week 5 of the North Herts Local Plan Examination.

By email dated 19th October 2017 we wrote to you to confirm that we wished to attend the Examination to take part in the Hearing Session on Matter 10: Housing Allocations & Settlement Boundaries (Hitchin). Since this time our clients and the landowners of Site HT6 have been liaising with the landowners and prospective developers (Hill Residential) of Site HT5 with a view to agreeing a joint access arrangement for both sites. Agreement has now been reached between the parties on a joint solution, and in the context of this and the detailed work undertaken by the Council and forming part of its local plan evidence base, the decision has been taken by our clients to rely on their previous representations as supplemented by this letter and not to attend the Examination.

Before turning to explain the proposed joint access arrangements for Sites HT5 and HT6 in greater detail, we would like to draw to your attention an inaccuracy in the way that our client's representations have been reported on the Council's online summary of Regulation 19 consultation responses a link to which is provided here - <https://north-herts.jdi-consult.net/localplan/viewreplefull.php?repid=4264>. This summary reports our

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client's representations as having raised objection to the emerging plan, which we must stress is simply not the case.

Our client's representations to the Regulation 19 plan made it clear that they are extremely supportive of the proposed allocation of their site as a natural extension to Hitchin and are keen to realise its development at the earliest opportunity believing it to be an appropriate location for the release of land from the Green Belt for housing. In this regard, the representations drew on the technical work undertaken by our client's development team to confirm that the site is capable of accommodating at least the 53 dwellings for which it is allocated and confirmed Manor Oak Homes' view that the draft plan is legally compliant and sound and their intention to submit a planning application at the earliest opportunity. The representations did though suggest some minor amendments to the wording of the access criterion, an amendment to the site boundary to include the adjoining woodland for community use and the addition of a new criterion relating to this. Other than in relation to access, our client's previous representations remain unchanged and wholly support the proposed allocation of Site HT6.

The first bullet point of HT6 expects the provision of *'Improvements to Grays Lane to provide access to Sites HT5 and HT6 whilst maintaining appropriate access to Bridleway Hitchin 004 and Byway Open to All Traffic Hitchin 007'* (BOAT). Site HT5 is subject to the same requirement. Our client's representations to the Regulation 19 plan were supported by an access strategy produced by highway consultants, JPP. This proposed an extension of Grays Lane into Site HT6 via the existing field access in the north east corner of the site at which point the road curved to the south to serve Site HT6 and provided a spur to the north into Site HT5 with cross overs for the byway, private road and BOAT. The representations submitted by the promoters of Site HT5 were also accompanied by an access strategy but one that provided only for their site.

Although the criterion does not specifically require a comprehensive approach to access it is considered by Manor Oak Homes and the landowners and promoters of Site HT5 to be preferable in ensuring the deliverability of both sites. Accordingly, over recent months Manor Oak Homes and the landowner of Site HT6 have been working with the landowner (Bridges Family) and house builder (Hills Residential) promoting Site HT5 to achieve a joint access solution for both sites. As the enclosed letters from Manor Oak Homes (**Enclosure 1**) and Hill (**Enclosure 2** - also submitted under separate cover) confirm, agreement has now been reached between the parties on an arrangement that provides an access serving both sites. The agreed access arrangement, which is shown on JPP Consulting Drawing No.s T7549PM-TA40A and T7549PM-TA42 contained at **Enclosure 1**, proposes the continuation of Grays Lane into Site HT5 and then a "T" junction providing access into our Site HT6. This arrangement will also provide access to the 2 properties on Crow Furlong, the BOAT (Lucas Lane) and access to the Bridlepath to the north.

With particular reference to 10.6a) of the Inspectors Questions, it is considered that this joint arrangement will ensure that Sites HT5 and HT6 are capable of safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians and are deliverable and sound housing allocations.

We trust that this letter and enclosures are helpful and that due regard will be had to their content and that of our client's previous representations. Should you have any queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my colleague, Geoff Armstrong.

Yours sincerely

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Director

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