



NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

MATTER 13 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (B CLASS USES)

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (PROPERTY SERVICES) IN RELATION TO LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT USES IN BALDOCK, BA10.

INTRODUCTION

We are submitting this additional Statement by way of an update, following the representations made on the Local Plan Submission Version by HCC (ref 014046), and as a response by the landowner to the Inspector's Matter 13, specifically paragraph 13.12 which is concerned with delivery.

The proposed new employment allocation BA 10 at Royston Road, Baldock (19.6 ha) is to be developed for B class uses. Previously HCC has commented that the site has the potential to be used for the range of B class uses, and that, specifically; the Policy should refer to the inclusion within the site of a Household Waste Recycling Centre, a North Herts. Council depot and a possible WDA transfer station.

This Statement deals only with matters relating to delivery. We leave other matters such as employment land supply, meeting FEMA needs and the selection of sites and consequent changes to the Green Belt to North Herts.Council.

DELIVERABILITY

We confirm on behalf of HCC that the County Council is the owner of the land included within Site BA 10, and it is available for B class uses.

We also confirm the statement made by HCC in its comments on the Submission Version of the Plan that a planning application will shortly be submitted for the development of B class uses within the site allocated as BA10. This application will demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians will be provided, and that the development will be carried out in accordance with the four provisions listed in the Local Plan for Royston Road.

- The delivery of new employment uses on BA 10 will be supported by a comprehensive package of transport and traffic flow improvements to Baldock that will be realised through the wider release of development land in the town for housing and new infrastructure in the form of site allocations BA1, BA2, BA3, BA4.





These proposals are described in the submitted planning applications, and in particular the construction of new northern and southern link roads will encourage traffic to use town centre roads less, as high quality access direct to the strategic road network will be available.

- The applications describe a new drainage strategy
- The submitted EIA explains the proposed noise mitigation measures for new premises in relation to noise associated with the railway line to the north of BA10, and for the mitigation of any impact of activities on BA10 on Clothall Common residential area.
- The submitted EIA confirms archaeological surveys will be completed prior to development.

The application for site BA 10 will be included in a comprehensive package of applications for HCC land in Baldock that will also cover housing-led development sites BA 1, 2, 3 and 4. They will be supported by an illustrative master plan.

In order to maximise the potential for deliverability and the attractiveness of the site to the market, we believe the present Plan would benefit from an amendment. This is illustrated on the drawing attached as Appendix 1; this is presented in the form of an amended Proposals Map, showing the area suggested to be substituted as a residential development area.

Intermingled with the western portion of site BA 10, on the northern side of Royston Road closest to the town, there are several residential properties. These have been excluded from the proposed employment allocation, and are not owned by HCC. However, their location may act as a constraint on the types of uses that could operate in such close proximity as well as on the individual planning and layout of sites and premises. This is likely to make part of the BA 10 allocation less attractive to developers who may feel compromised by the need to plan and undertake development and operations in a manner that minimises impact on nearby residential property.

Furthermore, the potential conflicts arising from this situation have led to concerns on the part of some of the residents. We have received strong representations objecting to the allocation during the course of public engagement events arranged to publicise the planning applications.

Fitting in new employment uses around existing residential properties in the western portion of BA 10 does not present an ideal situation. It is likely to compromise and make less attractive both the residential and the commercial environment. In terms of making BA 10 a successful employment area, it could have an impact on deliverability. Of course,



one approach could be to restrict the use of the areas close to existing housing to B1 uses only. But that will be contrary to the desire from the landowner (and the local planning authority) to make the allocated land as attractive as possible to the widest range of commercial users.

THE PROPOSAL

On behalf of HCC the landowner we ask that consideration be given to a partial substitution of allocations, as depicted on the Plan at Appendix 1.

Please see that we suggest that the westernmost portion of BA10 is re-allocated as 'residential development'. This would remove most of the potential conflicts between housing and employment uses, and create a new housing area close to the town centre, where some individual housing already exists. Furthermore, the Clothall Estate already lies immediately to the south, on the opposite side of Royston Road. To the north will be the major new housing area BA1.

The Master Plan to be submitted in support of the planning application for BA 1 will show a proposed new pedestrian/cycle link southwards across the railway to Royston Road that will provide safe and convenient access to this emerging new area of the Town.

The remainder of BA 10 will remain as depicted in the Local Plan Proposals Map. The County Council in its Reg.19 Plan representations has referred to a requirement for a site for a household waste recycling centre, a NHDC depot and possibly a waste transfer station. These may be suitably accommodated within BA 10 at its far eastern end, beyond the new main access from the Royston Road roundabout to BA 1. Requirements are still being reviewed, and if the site is selected the proposals will be the subject of an additional, separate planning application.

The suggested amendment raises no strategic issues as it is proposed that the amount of employment land substituted is replaced within BA 1, in a suitable location, where the full range of B uses could be undertaken.

Thus, as a result, there will be no change to the respective total areas of employment allocated in Baldock, nor to the amount of housing that can be delivered. In fact, it is possible that the number of dwellings may slightly increase as the highly accessible Royston Road location close to the town centre would be suitable for higher density developments comprising smaller units.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Due to the proximity of several existing dwellings to the proposed allocation of BA 10 Employment in its western portion, it is possible that the flexibility for development in the



full range of B class uses may not be achieved and attractiveness to the market and ultimately delivery therefore could be compromised.

To give greater certainty of delivery we are suggesting a substitution of part of the proposed employment and residential allocations in BA 10 and BA 1 that will overcome any potential impacts of residential development in close proximity. There will be no change to the strategic totals of employment and housing.

To progress this amendment, we propose the N Herts. Council includes it as a Main or an Additional Modification, if the Inspector is in agreement, following discussion at the appropriate Hearing. (Week 4 – 12/12/17). It would then be subject to public consultation and then a final recommendation in the Inspector's Report.

DETAILS OF RECOMMENDED CHANGE

Please refer to the Plan at Appendix 1. This is proposed to substitute for the relevant section of the Northern and Baldock Areas Proposals Map.

1. The BA 10 employment allocation is amended from site area 19.6 ha to 13.6 ha.
2. Policy SP14, Proposal BA 1 North of Baldock is amended and refers to the inclusion of approximately an additional 6.00 ha of employment land.
3. New residential land allocation (BA 12?) at western portion former BA 10 of approximately 6.00 ha with indicative capacity of 250 new homes.

Please note for consistency our suggested revised Proposals Map also includes 2 other amendments for Baldock proposed by Hertfordshire County Council;

1. Extension of BA 2 south-eastern boundary to A505
2. Inclusion of 'white land' east of BA 4, north of BA 3 within the proposed residential area

We will deal with these more fully in our submission for Inspector's Matter 10 –Baldock, in Hearing Week 5.

ENCLOSURE: APPENDIX 1 – Proposed substitute section of Proposals Map for Northern and Baldock Area.