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**EXAMINATION OF THE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL  
PLAN 2011-2031**

**EXAMINATION HEARING STATEMENT – MATTER 10 THE  
HOUSING ALLOCATIONS AND THE SETTLEMENT  
BOUNDARIES: THE TOWNS - ROYSTON**

**Prepared by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Countryside (ID16152) and  
Sir Francis Newman**

**January 2018**

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## **North Hertfordshire District Plan 2011 – 2031 (Examination)**

### **Matter 10: The Housing Allocations and the Settlement Boundaries: the Towns - Royston**

#### **Introduction**

1. Strutt & Parker has been instructed by Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd to submit this Hearing Statement to the Examination for the North Hertfordshire Local Plan. It is being submitted on behalf of Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd and Sir Francis Newman. Previous submissions on behalf of our clients have been made to North Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) at the Regulation 19 stage of the Local Plan process.
2. This Hearing Statement addresses issues raised by the Inspector in the Matter 10 and specifically relates to the section and questions about Royston and the land south of Newmarket Road, which is identified as Site RY10 in the Submission North Hertfordshire Local Plan.
3. This matter statement does not seek to repeat information previously submitted to early consultations, as this is information of which the inspector is already aware. What this statement seeks to do is answer specific questions raised by the inspector in relation to housing allocations at Royston and in particular to demonstrate the deliverability of the proposed site allocation. In this way it can be clearly demonstrated that Site RY10 makes an important contribution to Royston's housing requirements and indeed the overall soundness of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

#### **Are all of the proposed housing allocations deliverable?**

3. It is not possible for us to establish whether all the sites identified within the Submission Local Plan are deliverable since we do not have site specific details on all sites. I can, however, confirm that Site RY10: Land south of Newmarket Road, which is identified in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan as a residential for allocation of 300 homes is deliverable for a number of reasons, which are set out in this Matter Statement.
4. Paragraph 10.16 of the Schedule of Matters and issues for Examination raises queries about the deliverability of sites, raising specific questions about whether or not all of the proposed housing allocations are deliverable. The site is deliverable when assessed against the definition set out in paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy

Framework, which states that *'To be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable'*.

5. It has been confirmed by the landowner that Site RY10 is available for its proposed use by virtue of representations that have been submitted to previous stages of the Local Plan process.
6. To demonstrate the landowner's commitment to bringing forward the site for development, he has entered into an option agreement with Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd and jointly submitted an outline planning application (with all matters reserved except access) for residential development of up to 325 dwellings on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017, with additional information submitted on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 (LPA Ref: 17/00110/1).
7. While it is noted that Site RY10 is identified as having a dwelling estimate of 300 units, it should also be acknowledged that paragraph 13.3 states *that 'These figures are not a target and do not necessarily represent the maximum number of new homes that will be built'*.
8. The planning application was validated on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, and is at the time of writing being determined. Over the past few months the majority of planning issues have been resolved with the exception of affordable housing, education contributions and the signing of the Section 106 agreement, all of which are currently being negotiated. The case officer's intention is for the application to be presented to planning committee in early 2018, and a reserved matters application for a first phase of development will be submitted shortly afterwards.
9. The planning application is supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided, and this has been confirmed to its satisfaction in writing by the Highways Department at Hertfordshire County Council.
10. The proposed scheme provides vehicular access on to Newmarket Road to the north adjacent to Burloes Cottages, with a secondary access to be used by emergency vehicles on to the Burloes estate road, which runs along the site's eastern boundary. The site also provides additional footpaths linking to nearby footpaths and helping to integrate the scheme more effectively into neighbouring residential areas to the west and north.

11. The proposed housing allocation at Site RY10 is justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development, which will be largely positive.

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

12. The proposed allocation of Site RY10 and other housing allocations in Royston are justified and appropriate. Royston is one of the district's most sustainable settlements, and given the county boundary and the A505 on the town's northern edge, together with Royston/Therfield Heath (much of which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) on the town's south west edge, it is clear that in order for Royston to continue to grow and evolve as an increasingly attractive and successful market town, additional residential development will be necessary.
13. There are relatively few locations within or adjacent to the town where this can be successfully achieved in a way that properly integrates the new community into the existing built-up area of the town and therefore Site RY10 provides one of a limited range of opportunities at which to do this

**Are all of the proposed allocations the most appropriate option given the reasonable alternatives?**

14. Site RY10 is appropriate given the reasonable alternatives. North Hertfordshire District Council has a challenging housing target to meet and much of the district is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Indeed, Royston is the largest town not located within the Green Belt, and the third largest town within the district.
15. Furthermore, Royston benefits from a good range of shops, services, and facilities including supermarkets, public houses, bars, restaurants, cafes, banks, public houses, places of worship, sports facilities, a swimming pool and leisure centre, a comprehensive range of local bus services, and a mainline railway station providing fast sustainable transport links to nearby towns and cities including Cambridge, Baldock, Letchworth, and Hitchin.

16. The allocation of Site RY10 is consistent with the settlement hierarchy, which seeks to deliver 'The majority of the District's development will be located within or adjoining' the main towns.

**Is the proposed settlement boundary consistent with the methodology for identifying settlement boundaries and is it appropriate and justified?**

- 11 The proposed settlement boundary is consistent with the methodology for identifying settlement boundaries and is appropriate and justified.