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For and on behalf of
**New Road (Ashbrook) Ltd. the Taylor family
and Linden Homes Strategic Land (Eastern)**

**Objection 5190 Policy SP2 Non-allocation of additional land
south-west of Hitchin (Hitchin Priory)**

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January 2018

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MATTER 10 – Hitchin

Preamble

- 1.1 Our Regulation 19 submission refers to the Council's non-allocation of land south-west of Hitchin (SWH) otherwise known as Hitchin Priory which we identify as land comprising some 171 hectares in total of which we consider that about 79 hectares would be capable of supporting residential development – with the remainder comprising functional and incidental open space and land for ancillary development such as schools and a local centre. It is considered that the land has a capacity for approximately 2400 dwellings in total but that only 1250 dwellings would be developed within the plan period which, as a result of our assessment of highway capacity, would come forward in three phases of around 300 dwellings, 550 dwellings and 400 dwellings respectively – thereby materially assisting in the overall supply of housing land in the Plan period.
- 1.2 The land can be considered to be contiguous with Site 209 identified in OLP4 – Housing Additional Location Options Consultation Paper 2013. It could be developed broadly in the form illustrated in our Reg19 submission at Figure 3 and Appendix 1. The overall area would be defined by the provision of a perimeter road which would be designed to form the first phase of a A602-A505 south west bypass for Hitchin.
- 1.3 With regard to our principal arguments that the Submission Local Plan is unsound in relation to; the spatial distribution of housing growth, ensuring that there is a deliverable supply of housing land throughout the Plan period and ensuring that the full OAN is met, is that Policy SP8 should be modified to include an allocation at SWH in order to address these soundness failures of the Plan. Comments are offered in respect of the specific questions relating to the delivery of sites at Hitchin to assist the understanding of the Examination concerning the duly made objection.

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

a) confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the use proposed?

- 10.6.1 The land required for the delivery of Site 209 is owned in the majority by the Taylor and Oliver families. There is a long standing agreement with New Road (Ashbrook) Ltd to promote the development of the land and the provision of a relief road for Hitchin. Recently New Road (Ashbrook) Ltd and the landowners have entered into an agreement with Linden Homes Strategic Land (part of the Galliford Try Group) to ensure the deliverability of the land.

b) supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?

- 10.6.2 The Council has consistently acknowledged the need for a south west bypass for Hitchin. Reference can be found in the work commissioned in 2012 regarding landscape sensitivity and three of the County Congestion Hotspots are associated

with the A602 Park Way, the roundabouts at Stevenage Rd and Upper Tilehouse St (A505) (TI8 Fig 3)

- 10.6.3 LTP3 (still the most up to date LTP) Vol 2 s3.2 recognised in 2011 that the A505 was a key route to Luton Airport but stated that it opposed proposals for airport expansion – an apparent reason for doing nothing. Notwithstanding that it is noted that the Airport is currently undergoing a programme of planned expansion to increase passenger volume from 12 million ppa to 20 million ppa by 2020.
- 10.6.4 The LTP however set out key priorities:
- Minimise the number of people killed or seriously injured on the county's roads through:
 - Targeted activity using latest data analysis techniques and measures
 - Promoting a mix of engineering, education and enforcement activity
 - Reduce climate risk, including reducing congestion and pollution
 - Manage congestion
- 10.6.4 LI8 is the Consultation on a new strategy, undertaken in late 2016. It was accompanied by a Technical Note (AECOM 60279140). This identified 101 future schemes (physical and network management) scoring between 5 and 24. An A505-A602 bypass (only between the A505 west of Hitchin and the Park Way roundabout (as deliverable by these proposals) scored 12 – the highest score available to any bypass scheme (only non-road projects and improvements to the Motorway network scored higher).
- 10.6.5 This was subsequently considered as part of a wider east west corridor between Luton and Stansted airports – mirroring the East West Route that was a key feature of strategic transport planning in the 1980s
- 10.6.5 LP1 13.144 acknowledges that highway mitigation is needed in Hitchin even if no further development took place
- 10.6.7 TI3 states at paragraph 2.8 that '*existing pressures on the network have to be identified and then proposed mitigation outlined to address the growth related to car ownership and general development schemes as well as the additional impacts from Local Plan growth*'. This has not been done in relation to either general growth in the east-west transport corridor and certainly not in relation to Airport growth.
- 10.6.8 Paragraph 3.6 notes that study work by AECOM tested (Scenario 4) SWH both at 4700 dwellings across a variety of sites and 6000 dwellings delivered by 2031. This Report identified that there would be 11 junctions/links with operation problems in the post 2031 period including both A505/B655 and A602/B656 junctions.
- 10.6.9 The 2014 Update (TI3 para 3.14) and 2016 Update continue to highlight the critical nature of the network through Hitchin at these junctions and links.
- 10.6.10 An assessment of current traffic conditions has been commissioned from Wormald Burrows Partnership (WBPL), transportation consultants, to consider the effects of

planned network improvements, the capacity of the network to accommodate development of SWH and to examine the wider benefits that would accrue from the works that development would give rise to.

- 10.6.11 Assessment of data has been commissioned by WBPL from AECOM the Highway Authority's retained consultants. This work, whilst scheduled to have been completed is, at the time of drafting, still awaited. Nevertheless WBPL conclude in a Summary Report (Appendix 1) that significant material improvements to the highway network would accrue at the major pinchpoint junctions – with according improvements in air quality – as a result of the provision of a distributor road as proposed. No other solution yields these benefits without further adversely affecting highway capacity.

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

- 10.6.12 LP1 13.146 refers to the AQMA at Gosmore Rd (A602/B656). This is wholly in connection with traffic congestion (Properties on the south side of Stevenage Road, Hitchin, fronting on to the road, between the Hitchin Hill Three Moorhens PH roundabout and 94-98 Stevenage Road – NO₂). As the WBPL Report notes, relief of congestion will ameliorate this matter. A full bypass for Hitchin would remove the issue altogether.

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

- 10.7.1 It is not our view, in light of our evidence on Matters 3-6, that SWH should be substituted for any of the sites that are proposed for allocation. Nevertheless, we do not see other than that those allocations contribute to the exacerbation of highway congestion in Hitchin whilst noting that none of the allocations are required to contribute towards the amelioration of the problem. All will therefore add to traffic congestion – for which some measures are proposed which will apparently do little more than seek to prevent a further worsening of congestion and air quality issues at the key junctions. They will not, by any account, lead to any relief of the problems.

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

- 10.8.1 LP4 provides Site Summaries. The Objection Site is noted as "*South West Hitchin (SWH) including SWHa and 209E and 209W, though part taken forward as HT10*" *In this consideration the development 'would provide 6000-7400 dwellings'*
- 10.8.2 The site was scored in the Site Appraisal Matrices, as a composite of all sites in SWH rather than as Site 209 and subject to further consultation in 2013.
- 10.8.3 Key unknowns included: transport impacts, where the provision for a bypass was acknowledged as potentially able to alleviate transport issues through the town (especially HGV); having a positive impact on noise and air pollution; but that the

potential impact associated with Luton airport expansion, adding west to east movements, was unknown.

10.8.4 A number of 'negative effects and uncertainties' were listed in the schedule of Site Summaries, without drawing conclusion. Similarly, significant negative effects and uncertainties are recorded on LP4 Appendix 6 in respect of all sites allocated albeit this assessment does not identify transport related constraints other than where sites are more than 800m from the station or more than 400m from an existing bus route - the majority of the housing proposed.

10.8.5 There is therefore no clear assessment arising from LP4 that the selected sites perform better against any of the assessment criteria than SWH as a comparison.

10.9 Sites HT1, HT2, HT3, HT5 and HT6 comprise of land in the Green Belt. For each:

10.9.1 Our comments relate to SWH in order that it may be considered in comparison with the evidence to this Examination in respect of the abovementioned sites

a) Do exceptional circumstances exist to warrant the allocation of the site for new housing in the Green Belt? If so, what are they?

10.9.3 Our statement in regard to Matter 7 (Q7.2 and Q7.3) refers to the principles underpinning the exceptional circumstances which require a review and alteration of Green Belt boundaries.

10.9.4 The need to meet OAN is of itself a reasonable justification to review a Green Belt boundary which has endured since it was last reviewed in 1992 (CG1 s2.1).The Council has not exercised its Duty to Cooperate in relation to the constraining effect of Green Belt. Indeed, it has acknowledged its need to accommodate unmet growth from a neighbouring authority – Luton.

10.9.5 Whilst significant parts of the District are not within the Green Belt the scale of growth required cannot be met on a sequential basis by reliance on urban development and redevelopment and by sites in locations beyond the Green Belt - both Baldock and Royston are small towns with significant constraints particularly in relation to landscape.

10.9.6 Framework paragraph 84 requires that when reviewing Green Belt authorities take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of settlement. Hitchin is the largest settlement and generates the largest development need – see Reg. 19 submission Report on OAN Table 13. It is located on the principal east west route connecting the larger towns of Stevenage and Luton and has the main railway station so far as it has the highest frequency of stopping trains including direct fast services to London.

10.9.7 In the instance where there is an implication for existing Green Belt boundaries in meeting future housing requirements, it is important that regard is had to matters of sustainability which, in the case of North Hertfordshire, indicates that the most

sustainable locations for development are those which are related by proximity and accessibility to the largest and most sustainable urban areas - within and adjoining the boundary of the district and where the locally generated need for housing is greatest.

10.9.8 SWH meets these considerations by being well located in proximity to Hitchin as the largest source of housing need, and capable of being delivered in a phased manner that will support the provision of infrastructure.

10.9.9 Overall therefore, we consider that the exceptional need to meet housing requirements and the absence of demonstrable and overriding harm to the Green Belt, its purpose or functions – see below – are justification for altering the Green Belt boundary to provide for development now and a future resource such that the boundary remains durable in the longer term well beyond the life of this plan.

b) What is the nature and extent of the harm to the Green Belt of removing the site from it?

10.9.10 The Green Belt is acknowledged to function in this area only to prevent urban sprawl – GC1 Sub Areas 11a and 11b and a small part of 11c. Table 3.1 notes that the land plays no role in preventing the merging of towns and limited roles in respect of encroachment and the setting of Charlton village although 11b is regarded as important to the setting of Hitchin – on the summary grounds that 11b contains Prior Park. Setting aside that Prior Park is severed from SWH by the A602 Park Way the assessment in Table 3.1 demonstrates that, at the relatively fine grained level of assessment, SWH performs no worse, and in some aspects better than, all other areas around Hitch, save Area 13a north of Ickleford which is significantly detached from Hitchin itself using the standardised assessment scoring.

10.9.11 We would suggest that setting aside the impact on the historic town which is not substantiated by any visual interrelationship and in the absence of any designated historic assets in Hitchin itself that would be directly affected by development in Sub Area 11b (see also 10.10.10 below), the only function of the Green Belt is to prevent unrestricted sprawl to the south west of the town. Against this which must be balanced the desirability of focusing growth needs on principal urban areas and securing material benefit to the function and environment of the town through the highway works that are integral to the proposal.

c) To what extent would the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent?

10.9.12 The Green Belt inner boundary would be redefined along a permanent physical feature rather than following a series of disparate property boundaries. It would continue to extend beyond this new inner boundary and would therefore continue to function as a restraint on growth and to prevent sprawl beyond a line of a hard physical boundary formed by the proposed distributor road.

d) If this site were to be developed as proposed, would the adjacent Green Belt continue to serve at least one of the five purposes of Green Belts, or would the Green Belt function be undermined by the site's allocation?

10.9.13 Arising from the above the Green Belt function would not be diminished where it has no function in preventing merger of settlements (CG1 T3.1). The countryside beyond would continue to be safeguarded from encroachment by the permanent boundary formed by a road.

e) Will the Green Belt boundary proposed need to be altered at the end of the plan period, or is it capable of enduring beyond then?

10.9.14 No.

10.9.15 It would be defined along the line of a road and no other boundary would better meet the guidance for boundary definition in the long term as a recognisable and permanent feature (Framework para 85)

f) Are the proposed Green Belt boundaries consistent with the Plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development?

10.9.16 Hitchin is acknowledged as the largest and most sustainable centre (LP1 Vision, SP2 paras 13.117, 13.129 et al.)

g) Has the Green Belt boundary around the site been defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent? Does it avoid including land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?

10.9.17 The provision of a bypass would form a permanent edge with long term defensibility – the application of Policy CGB5 would regulate the use of land excluded from the Green Belt and not forming part of development constituting the allocation of land at SWH – for example land which through masterplanning is considered to form the setting of Charlton village.

10.10 Is the proposed settlement boundary:

a) consistent with the methodology for identifying the settlement boundaries?

10.10.1 There is a notable inconsistency in the assessment of settlement boundaries, especially in regard to landscape characteristics particularly between Hitchin, Baldock and North Stevenage.

b) appropriate and justified?

10.10.2 The proposed settlement boundary to the south west of Hitchin is not appropriate or justified.

- 10.10.3 With regard to our argument that the Plan fails to take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of settlement and safeguard land to meet longer term development needs (Reg19 Submission paras 8.12 and 8.18-8.22) the enduring role and needs of Hitchin as the principal town have not been properly accounted for.
- 10.10.4 The strategic approach to review is consistent with a wider methodology used in other neighbouring authorities (CG1 s2.4). SWH falls in Area 11. At a more refined level the site is described as Sub Areas 11a, 11b and part of 11c.
- 10.10.5 The value to the Green Belt is summarised as “Making a significant contribution to the Green Belt purpose(s)” for the reason of “...*helping to prevent the expansion of Hitchin southwestwards into open countryside and providing the setting for Hitchin*”.
- 10.10.6 There is no potential for coalescence with Luton – 7.5km – where both urban areas are enclosed by strips of Green Belt of between 1 and 2kms depth. This contrasts with Areas 14, 18 and 10 which separate major built up areas.
- 10.10.7 In terms of the five functions of green belt the function of ‘preventing expansion’ equates only to preserving the setting and special character of a historic town.
- 10.10.8 Reference is made to Hitchin Priory. The Priory is not listed and its parkland is not designated. It is largely located to the north east of the A602 Park Way.
- 10.10.9 Charlton is an attractive village, a Conservation Area with a number of listed buildings. The Green Belt does not serve any function in protecting Charlton for its own sake where other policy designations prevail as a consideration
- 10.10.10 The only heritage assessment is NHE4 which confines its consideration to Hitchin Churchgate and Surrounding Area.
- 10.10.11 GC7 refers to landscape sensitivity. The more sensitive level refers to SWH as areas L1 and L2. – L1 covering a much greater area including the whole of St Ippolytes.
- 10.10.12 The conclusions for these parcels is **moderate-high sensitivity** – the same conclusion reached for North Baldock (where landscape assessment was confined largely only to the land to be allocated – CG1 Unit B4). There is no clearly consistent assessment of proposed strategic growth areas north of Stevenage.
- 10.10.13 Regarding SWH GC7 concludes ‘*Landforms in particular would be sensitive to the potential route for the bypass road being considered for the area*’, and “*If the bypass road is considered in relation to this landscape unit, this should be designed to ‘run with the contours’ and respect landform as far as possible, avoiding the need for extensive re grading*”.
- 10.10.14 Accordingly, there is no indication that a new boundary could not be either appropriate or justified.

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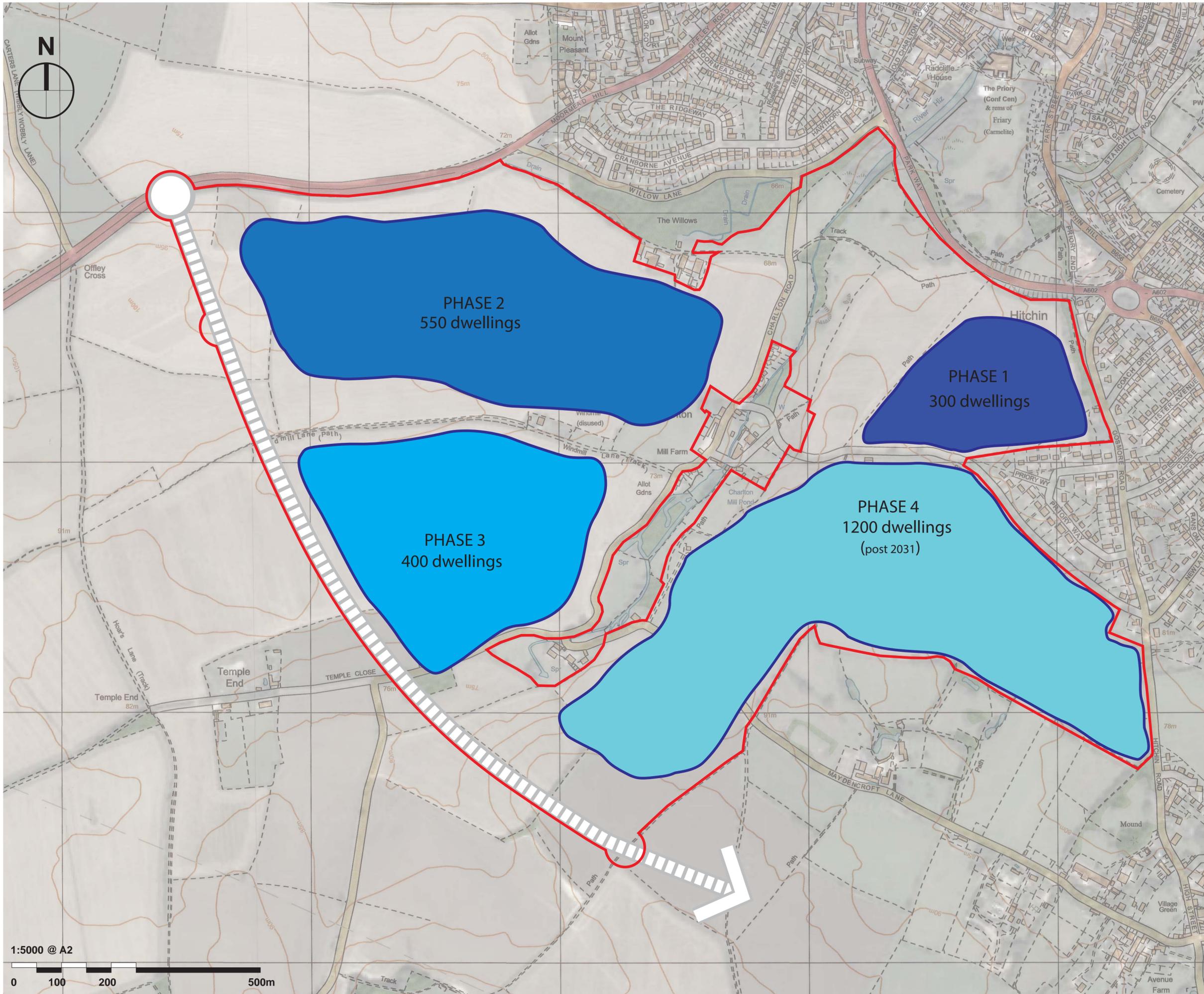
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Project
Hitchin Priory

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Drawing Title
Indicative Phasing Plan

Job No. H5071/2	Date 12.01.2018	Revision
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APPENDIX 2

E3669-Hitchin-Examination Summary Note-110118

January 2018

Written by: Andrew Chipchase

Land South of Hitchin

The Residential Development of land south-west of Hitchin including two 2FE primary schools, public green amenity space and a local centre.

Linden Homes Strategic Land (Eastern) are proposing a development through the emerging North Hertfordshire District Local Plan on previously undeveloped land to the south-west of Hitchin. The area includes what is known as Priory Park, parts of which will be retained as green amenity space or educational use.

Wormald Burrows Partnership Limited (WBPL) was appointed by Linden Homes to assess the impact that development of the site will have on the local highway network and to ascertain the number of residential units on site the local highway can accommodate.

The development will contain residential units, and is assumed also to include two 2FE primary schools, public green amenity space and a local centre. For the purposes of this assessment an initial phase of 300 units has been assumed, with an access only to Gosmore Road in the east of the site with a total of 1250 dwellings built in the plan period to 2031.

A spine road to the development is proposed that will run from the A602 via Gosmore Road to A505. This road will act as a relief road to the urban core of Hitchin at the junctions of Payne's Park and A602/B656. The benefits of a relief road were identified in the 'Transport Strategy' report for North Hertfordshire District Council, October 2017 by Markides Associates, these benefits being:

- Removing long-distance traffic from the core urban area;

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- Freeing up capacity on existing streets: this space could be reassigned for use by other modes (walking, cycling, public transport) or for improved public realm; and
- Improving air quality and reducing congestion delays, particularly in the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's).

Location

The proposed development site is located to the south-west of Hitchin in an area bounded by Hitchin to the north and east, the A505 to the north-west and agricultural fields to the south. It encompasses an area called Priory Park, parts of which will be retained as green amenity space or educational use, and excludes the hamlet of Charlton and its surrounds.

AECOM Assessment

AECOM (the Highway Authority's retained consultant) was commissioned to test the proposed relief road and development in the WHaSH-BL 2031 forecast model. The WHaSH-BL model is an integration of the Highways England approved SATURN model of the Stevenage and Hitchin area (SHUM) and its extension to the southern boundary to encompass Welwyn and Hatfield as well as the Royston and Letchworth urban areas. This integrated model incorporates the majority of the A1(M) Strategy corridor. WHaSH-BL contains all current planned development across North Hertfordshire, Stevenage, East Hertfordshire and Welwyn and Hatfield (Committed, Completed, SMART as well as the Local Plan sites). As such, it is consistent with the COMET 2031 Local Plan Do Minimum Scenario.

Several offsite mitigation measures have been specified for inclusion in the tests. These schemes originate from a study by AECOM for North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) on their Local Plan (LP) development proposals (2016). The NHDC mitigation schemes to be included are:

- A505 / B655 Pirton Road roundabout – improvement detailed as HM8 in TN Preferred Local Plan Model Testing – Problem Locations
- A505 Payne's Park / Upper Tilehouse Street Roundabout – improvement detailed as HM10 in TN Preferred Local Plan Model Testing – Problem Locations
- A602 / B656 Hitchin Hill Roundabout – improvement detailed as HM15 in TN Preferred Local Plan Model Testing – Problem Locations.

The purpose of the modelling is to determine what the effect of the development and the spine road would have on the local road network, and to determine at what level the spine road would act as a relief road. Therefore, the development was modelled both with and without the off-mitigation measures at A505/B655 Pirton Road roundabout (HM8) and A505 Payne's Park/Upper Tilehouse Street Roundabout (HM10) to see if the relief road can be

used, or is better utilised, in lieu of these measures or if the measures are indeed still needed, to find out what relief the spine road would give to the two A505 junctions.

To determine this, WBPL has commissioned three Do Something scenarios that are being modelled by AECOM:

- DS1 – 300 dwellings with a single access onto Gosmore Road and HM15.
- DS2 – 1250 dwellings with the full spine road and HM15.
- DS3 – 1250 dwellings with the full spine road and HM15, HM8 and HM10.

WBPL Assessment

The junctions in the local road network that require analysing in order to ascertain what impact a relief road and the vehicular trips generated by the land south-west of Hitchin development will have on their capacity are as follows:

- Junction 1 A505/Willow Lane T-Junction
- Junction 2 A505 Offley Road/B656 Pirton Road/A505 Upper Tilehouse Street Roundabout
- Junction 3 A505 Upper Tilehouse Street/A602 Park Way/Paynes Park roundabout
- Junction 4 A602 Park Way/Charlton Road T-junction
- Junction 8 A602 Park Way/A602 Stevenage Road/A656 London Road/B656 Hitchin Hill/Gosmore Road 'Hitchin Hill' Roundabout

A classified turning counts survey and ATC surveys were undertaken on these junctions as well as three further counts along Charlton Road to determine trips from Charlton and the area of housing north of Willow Lane.

The junctions were tested for the year 2031, the end of the NHDC local plan period. The same trip generation rates were used as in the WHaSH-BL model and the trips distributed according to usual residence and place of work data from the 2011 Census.

Relief Road

The development spine road linking the A505 to Gosmore Road will act as a relief road to the centre of Hitchin for traffic travelling from west to east and east to west through Hitchin.

The traffic survey recorded queues up to 170m along Willow Lane turning into the A505 in the AM peak and up to 215m in the PM peak. Along Charlton Road, up to 410m was recorded in the AM peak and 440m in the PM peak. The relief road will remove these queues.

It is predicted that all of the traffic using Willow Lane/Charlton Road as a link will re-assign to a relief road due to the route being shorter, the road being designed as a main distributor

road and the junctions to the A505 and A602 being designed with sufficient capacity for this level of demand. This will result in vastly less delay to vehicles than currently, and most importantly, the subsequent vast improvement in air quality and environment in the area.

AECOM in their preliminary running of the WHaSH-BL model, also predict traffic will be removed from the A505 Upper Tilehouse Street/B655 Pirton Road and Payne's Park roundabouts: In the AM peak, in the order of 170 vehicles going west to east and 120 vehicles going east to west will be re-assigned; in the PM Peak, no vehicles going west to east but 120 vehicles going east to west will be re-assigned. Nine percent of these vehicles were recorded by the ATC survey as being heavy vehicles. This will result in not only a reduction in delays and queuing at these junctions to vehicles, but also the subsequent improvement in air quality in the Payne's Park area.

Junction Modelling

WBPL undertook detailed LinSig 3 capacity modelling of Junctions 2, 'Upper Tilehouse/Pirton Road Roundabout', 3 'Payne's Park Roundabout' and 8 'Hitchin Hill' Roundabout', these being the critical junctions in the network that are most likely to be impacted upon by vehicles generated by the development and the re-assignment of vehicles to the relief road as determined by the traffic survey data.

The testing undertaken formed two parts. The first part was to test the impact of a development of 300 dwellings with access to Gosmore Road. The second was to test the impact of a larger development up to 1250 dwellings and the effect of the relief road re-assigning vehicles traversing Hitchin west to east and east to west. A sensitivity test was undertaken to ascertain the number of dwellings that are possible in the development.

For the peak hours, the junctions were assessed for the traffic flows generated by each of the scenarios as follows:

- 2017 Existing Flows: the surveyed flows
- 2017 Flows Grown to 2031 using the growth factors determined in 3.1.
- 2031 Grown Flows plus development flows for 300 units.
- 2031 Grown Flows plus the re-assignment of the flows due to the relief road and the development flows for up to 1250 units.

The roundabout junction of A602 Park Way/A602 Stevenage Road/A656 London Road/B656 Hitchin Hill/Gosmore Road 'Hitchin Hill' will require mitigation to accommodate proposed development on the land south-west of Hitchin. Signalisation of the A602 Stevenage Road, Hitchin Hill and Gosmore Road approaches, as well as other lane widening measures will be required to accommodate growth of traffic up to 2031 and the predicted development traffic.

The roundabout of A505 Offley Road/B656 Pirton Road/A505 Upper Tilehouse Street and A505 Upper Tilehouse Street/A602 Park Way/Payne's Park are likely to require signalisation as proposed by AECOM in their TN Preferred Local Plan Model Testing – Problem Locations.

The modelling results show that at the Pirton Road/Upper Tilehouse Street roundabout, re-assignment of traffic due to a relief road reduces delay significantly at the junction in scenarios where up to 850 dwellings are developed.

Sensitivity Test

A sensitivity test was undertaken to determine the number of dwellings possible to be developed on site without increasing or decreasing the reserve capacity of the roundabout beyond its current capacity. With the relief road encouraging traffic on Gosmore Road, the modelling determined that 850 dwellings are possible.

Beyond 850 dwellings a change in capacity at the Hitchin Hill roundabout will be required, as well as mitigation schemes to other junctions in the areas, such as the schemes proposed to Junction 2 and 3 (see below). Subject to these measures and with re-assignment of traffic in the Hitchin Area it is considered that there is scope for an increase in dwelling provision on the land south-west of Hitchin beyond 850 dwellings. This will be determined by the results from the running of the WHaSH-BL model by AECOM which are not yet available. For the purposes of this summary, the 850 dwelling figure should therefore be treated as preliminary, subject to AECOM's modelling results.

Conclusions

An initial phase of 300 dwellings only will require mitigation at the 'Hitchin Hill' Roundabout.

Further development will allow a spine road between the A602 via Gosmore Road to A505 south-west of Hitchin. This road will act as a relief road to the urban core of Hitchin at the junctions of Payne's Park Roundabout and A602/B656 Roundabout, and to Willow Lane and Charlton Road. It has been determined by WBPL that with a relief road, queuing and delays at the roundabouts in the urban core will substantially decrease and be eliminated on Willow Lane and Charlton Road. This will result in a vast improvement in both air quality and the environment of the public realm as well as reducing journey times.

WBPL preliminary modelling indicates that up to 850 dwelling are possible on the site with no other significant works in addition to those that are already intended. This however, this is subject results from the running of the WHaSH-BL model by AECOM.

WBPL modelling also indicates that the A505 Upper Tilehouse Street/B655 Pirton Road and Payne's Park roundabouts will require mitigation in the form of signalisation even with the relief road in place. This mitigation, with further works likely to be identified as a result of the

completion of the modelling commissioned from AECOM, is considered likely to demonstrate that additional capacity above 850 dwellings on land to the south-west of Hitchin can be achieved, together with the traffic relief to the existing network and junctions described above.

The results from AECOM's modelling remain pending.