

# **North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Examination in Public**

## **STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

As agreed between North Hertfordshire District Council  
And Gladman Developments Ltd

Concerning Allocation KB4: Land east of Knebworth

**February 2018**

1. This is an agreed statement of common ground in relation to the identification of land east of Knebworth as a proposed housing allocation within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan under Policy HS1 and shown on the Policies Map as site KB4. The purpose of this statement is to provide the Inspector with a summary of the areas of agreement for the matters to be examined during the hearing sessions scheduled for February 2018.
2. Gladman Developments Ltd has a promotion agreement for the site and is promoting its inclusion in the Local Plan on behalf of the landowners. This statement is made without prejudice to the submission and determination of any future planning application(s) on this site.
3. The Council's own assessments and evidence have been supplemented by ongoing discussion between the parties and the provision of additional information by Gladman Developments Ltd and / or the landowner. This additional information includes further work and / or assessments in relation to:
  - Transport
  - Surface Water Drainage
  - Ecology
  - Landscape and visual impact
  - Heritage
  - Education
4. These reports are appended to the representations submitted by the landowner in response to the Regulation 19 consultation in November 2016 (representor reference 14280) and as part of the hearing statement for Matter 11, submitted by Gladman Developments Ltd in January 2018.

### **Site and Indicative layout**

5. The site lays to the east of Knebworth and consists of a number of discrete land parcels separated by existing roads.
6. An indicative masterplan showing a potential layout of development for site KB4 has been submitted by Gladman Developments Ltd and is attached as Appendix A. This provides high-level detail of a potential layout for the allocation.
7. To the south of Watton Lane, this shows a series of proposed residential land parcels separated and / or bounded by hard and / or green infrastructure. Internally, a number of the parcels are separated by potential road links. This includes the existing road of Old Lane which passes through the site (subject to an indicative proposed realignment in places).

8. The eastern site boundaries in particular include proposed vegetation to reinforce the proposed new Green Belt boundary. Photo montages of the proposed boundaries are included within Gladman's Matter 11 hearing statement. To the north of Watton Lane an indicative school building and associated playing fields are shown.
9. This masterplan has not been fully considered or agreed by the local planning authority and is indicative only for the purposes of the Local Plan examination.
10. The detailed layout of the development will continue to be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and informed by the findings of Environmental Impact Assessment (as required), pre-application study and community engagement.

### **Assessment and treatment of potential planning constraints**

11. It is agreed that the assessment of key potential planning constraints, as shown in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (HOU9) for this site is accurate. It is agreed that parcels 55, 57, 58 and 336 as assessed in the SHLAA are suitable, available and achievable.
12. It is agreed that the following issues warrant consideration alongside the Proposed Development. Where necessary, measures to ensure these issues are appropriately addressed may be secured through conditions and / or legal agreements attached to any future planning permission.
13. Any such conditions and / or legal agreements will be subject to any relevant tests or regulations at the time of their imposition and / or agreement.
14. It is agreed that the subsequent list is not necessarily exhaustive and that the Council (or other parties) may require further issues to be investigated and / or addressed prior to the submission and / or determination of any future planning application.

#### *Highways and sustainable transport*

15. The transport modelling undertaken to support the plan does not specifically identify any mitigation schemes in the immediate vicinity of the site. However, the plan recognises that there are particular issues that will need to be taken into account as schemes in Knebworth are brought forward that would not necessarily be identified through a high-level modelling exercise.
16. In particular, all sites in Knebworth will need to consider the likely cumulative impact of developments upon key junctions in the village centre.
17. The transport representations submitted by Gladman Developments Ltd, and the landowners, state that work undertaken to date has concluded that a suitable access arrangements can be achieved within land that is already under their control or within

the adopted highway. Potential mitigations have been identified for other locations within Knebworth.

18. Detailed measures to promote sustainable transport alternatives, in line with the aims of the Council's Transport Strategy will be subject to further detailed discussion as a scheme is developed. Appropriate contributions will be made towards wider schemes within Knebworth and, if necessary, beyond to ensure the continued safe operation of the highway network and / or the provision of infrastructure to support travel by sustainable modes.

### Education

19. Based on Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC's) preferred approach, a development of 200 homes as proposed for Site KB4 would generate a peak requirement for 0.4 Forms of Entry (FE) of education provision<sup>1</sup>.
20. However, it is recognised that this allocation provides the opportunity to reserve land for potential education provision for the wider benefit of Knebworth and, in particular, to ensure that the plan contributes to the identification of sufficient opportunities to address anticipated long-term secondary education requirements within the Stevenage School Place Planning Area (SPPA) as defined by HCC.
21. The 'Stevenage Education Strategy' submitted by HCC to the Matter 6 examination hearings suggests additional secondary-age schools provision within the Stevenage School Place Planning Area will not be required until after 2028.
22. Beyond this point, HCC have identified a requirement for North Hertfordshire to deliver 8FE of additional secondary-age provision to meet long-term needs arising from new development.
23. The plan effectively sets out to split this requirement across two sites each of which could provide 4FE of additional secondary education provision. KB4 is one of these sites.
24. Evidence commissioned by NHDC (ED17) concludes that there is no compelling evidence to show that secondary schools of 4FE or below cannot produce good educational outcomes, provide a broad and balanced curriculum, maintain themselves financially or establish themselves as Single-Academy Trusts or participate in Multi-Academy Trusts (ED17, p.3).
25. This position was set out by NHDC at the Matter 6 Examination hearing in November 2017 with the assistance of their education consultant.
26. The indicative masterplan shows a potential school on land to the north of Watton Road. The entirety of the land to the north of Watton Road measures some 5.7

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<sup>1</sup> One form of entry is equivalent to a class of 30 students in each year group of a school.

hectares. The indicative masterplan shows some of this land given over to other uses necessary to secure access to the land.

27. However, as per paragraphs 9 and 10, the detailed layout of any future scheme – including the precise format of any school – is subject to continued negotiation through the Development Management process and will be informed by ongoing monitoring of long-term requirements.

#### Ecology and green infrastructure

28. No apparent fundamental ecological constraints to development have been identified through the preparation of the plan.
29. Ecological issues will be addressed through the completion of appropriate surveys as detailed proposals are developed, including to comply with any requirements arising under the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations. Survey results will help to inform detailed site design, incorporating any necessary mitigation measures and ensure any risks are minimised to the fullest reasonable extent and that the site contributes to net gains in biodiversity.
30. It is considered that any ecological issues arising can be dealt with through the development management process and the application of the requirements contained in draft Policy NE6.
31. The provision of structural planting along the eastern site boundaries will be an essential part of any proposal, providing additional green infrastructure as well as addressing potential Green Belt, landscape and heritage impacts.

#### Green Belt

32. Site KB4 has been assessed in the Council's Green Belt review as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes to the south of Old Lane and a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes to the north of Old Lane . Development of this site is therefore accepted as resulting in moderate to significant harm to the Green Belt.
33. It is agreed that NHDC have demonstrated the necessary *exceptional circumstances* in both general and site-specific terms such as to justify the release and allocation of this site for the reasons set out in the Council's Matter 7 and Matter 11 statements and this position is supported in the statement prepared by Gladman for Matter 11.
34. The provision of additional and / or reinforced planting around the site perimeters, as required by the site-specific criteria for KB4 shown indicatively in the attached masterplan will help ameliorate impacts and create a permanent and recognisable Green Belt boundary around the site in line with advice in the NPPF.
35. It is agreed that the creation of new Green Belt boundary features capable of enduring in the long-term around the site is the optimum solution having regard to the

requirements of paragraph 83 and the absence of any existing or alternate permanent features within the vicinity of the proposed eastern boundary alignment.

### Landscape

36. The Council's evidence concludes that the site is in areas of low landscape value and low to moderate sensitivity. Landscape impacts will be considered further as any scheme is developed. As with the Green Belt heritage issues above, the incorporation of buffers and planting around the site perimeters will help contain the development and reduce wider landscape impacts.

### Water, flood risk and utilities

37. No fundamental constraints are identified in the Council's evidence base. The site is in Flood Zone 1. There are areas of surface water flood risk, principally running west-east in the parcel of land to the south of Watton Road. This is not considered fundamental to the site's deliverability. These issues are addressed by generic policies in the plan including those relating to SuDS. These issues will be subject to further consideration and consultation with relevant bodies as more detailed proposals are developed.

### **Next steps**

38. Gladman Developments Ltd will continue to liaise with NHDC, HCC and other relevant stakeholders as proposals for this land are developed.
39. Gladman are preparing a planning application for the site at present, and will through discussion with NHDC and the land owner consider the most appropriate time to submit the planning application. A planning application would be submitted no later than 3 months following the adoption of the Local Plan.

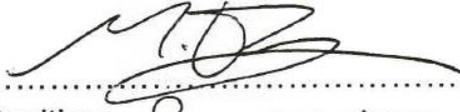
### **Conclusion**

40. The proposed Local Plan allocation at Site KB4 Land east of Knebworth constitutes an appropriate and deliverable extension to Knebworth which supports the vision and objectives of the plan. It would extend Knebworth to the east and make a moderate to significant contribution towards the housing and associated infrastructure needs of North Hertfordshire consistent with proposed settlement hierarchy.

**Declaration**

The content of this document is agreed for the purposes of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination.

Signed on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd:



Position: PLANNING POLICY MANAGER

Date: 23/2/18

And

Signed on behalf of North Hertfordshire District Council



Position: Executive Member for Planning and Enterprise

Date: 23 February 2018

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Indicative Masterplan

**Appendix 1 – Indicative Masterplan**

