

# HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

## HEARING STATEMENT

### MATTER 4 OVERALL PROVISION FOR HOUSING

ON BEHALF OF LINDEN HOMES STRATEGIC LAND

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)  
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

## Pegasus Group

Suite 4 | Pioneer House | Vision Park | Histon | Cambridgeshire | CB24 9NL

**T** 01223 202100 | **W** [www.pegasusgroup.co.uk](http://www.pegasusgroup.co.uk)

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This Hearing Statement is prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Linden Homes Strategic Land, which is promoting land at Lodge Farm, Huntingdon, for development.

## 2. **Q8: Is the Local Plan justified in seeking to make provision to meet this OAN? Is there a case to make provision for a higher or lower number? How does it compare to past rates of delivery?**

2.1 Linden Homes Strategic Land does not itself have any comments on how the Council's stated OAN has been reached, as covered in Questions 1 – 7 of this Matter. However, Linden Homes Strategic Land is aware that other representors, including the Home Builders Federation of which Linden Homes is a member, have raised numerous concerns in respect of the OAN figure. It is important that the Examination process fully tests the OAN and reaches a sound figure if the Local Plan is to be adopted in due course.

2.2 The Inspector will be aware of the emerging standardised housing need calculations which are contained in the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework, the final version of which is expected to be published in Summer 2018. Whilst it is appropriate to examine the Local Plan under the transitional arrangements contained at paragraph 209 of the draft revised Framework, it is nonetheless important that this Local Plan 'lays the foundations' for future plan preparation. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan will be one of many which will have been examined under the existing Framework but will soon be overtaken by a radically changed Framework and national policy context.

2.3 It should be noted that the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) will take effect in November 2018. Whilst the Local Plan may be examined under transitional arrangements, the HDT sets a 'higher bar' for delivery which the Council will need to meet. This further underlines the need for the Local Plan to be able to respond to this and as we will set out in future Hearing Statements, more sites may very well be needed to ensure delivery can keep pace with planned targets in order to meet the HDT.

2.4 Under the standardised methodology, the housing requirement for Huntingdonshire will increase to 1,010 dwellings per annum, a 25.5% rise against

the Council's current stated OAN of 804 dwellings per annum. Under the transitional arrangements, should this current Local Plan be adopted, its housing requirements will remain valid for only five years, beyond which time the standardised figure will take effect. Yet, paragraph 157 of the Framework sets the expectation that Local Plans should cover a fifteen year time horizon and indeed, the Local Plan will cover an eighteen year period after adoption.

2.5 In order to ensure the Local Plan is effective, two key measures should be taken to ensure that it provides adequate flexibility to respond to the anticipated increase in housing requirement, which will take effect at a relatively early stage of the Local Plan's lifespan:

- **The allocation of additional sites and/or identification of broad locations and broad directions for growth.** This would not only 'futureproof' the plan by providing for growth following the five year period, but will also provide flexibility in the early years of the plan through additional choice of sites helping to meet the requirements of the HDT (this issue will be explored in a further Hearing Statement at the appropriate time).
- **A policy commitment to an early review of the Local Plan, with a clear and unambiguous requirement to adopt a new Plan no later than five years after adoption of this emerging plan.** Experience shows that where other local authorities have been required to undertake an early review, the commencement of that review can be delayed and progress is not always rapid. For example, Dacorum Borough Council's Core Strategy was adopted in 2013 and subject to an early review; that timescale has now passed and the Council has only reached the Regulation 18 Issues and Options stage of consultation. Such an outcome leaves the Council without an up-to-date plan. As such, a commitment to a Local Plan review should include timescales for its commencement (for instance, Central Bedfordshire Council intends to review its emerging Local Plan within six months of adoption).