

**RPS**

**Proposed Submission  
Local Plan Examination  
Hearing Statement –  
Matter 9**

In respect of

Huntingdonshire District Council  
Proposed Submission Local Plan  
Examination

On behalf of

Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire  
Limited and De Bene Esse Ltd

RPS Ref: JCG19995

6 July 2018

*Secure & Stable*  
ADDING VALUE

# QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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Date:	<b>July 2018</b>
Project Number/Document Reference:	<b>19995</b>

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# CONTENTS

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1	INTRODUCTION .....	3
2	RESPONSE TO THE MATTERS AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE INSPECTOR .....	4
3	CONCLUSION .....	6

## APPENDICES

	APPENDIX A – REPRESENTATIONS LETTER TO CONSULTATION DRAFT DATED AUGUST 2017 .....	7
	APPENDIX B – REPRESENTATIONS LETTER TO PROPOSED SUBMISSION PLAN DATED 5/2/18 .....	8
	APPENDIX C – RAMSEY SPATIAL PLANNING AREA DRAFT ALLOCATIONS SITE APPRAISALS .....	9

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 We are instructed by our clients, Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire Limited and De Bene Esse Ltd to submit Hearing Statements and appear at the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Examination on their behalf in relation the Huntingdonshire Proposed Submission Local Plan and associated evidence base.
- 1.2 RPS previously submitted representations on behalf of our clients to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission (PREP/01), November 2017 Call for Sites, Local Plan to 2036 Consultation Draft 2017 (PREP/02) and the 2016 Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment: Additional Consultation 2016.
- 1.3 The representations to the Local Plan Consultation Draft 2017 (PREP/02) and to the Proposed Submission Plan (PREP/01) are enclosed (**Appendix A and Appendix B**) with this Statement for ease of reference.
- 1.4 This Statement details our client's responses to Matter 9 of the Matters and Issues identified by the Inspector. Hearing Statements have also been prepared in respect of Matters 6, 8, 11, 12 and 13, as well as Matters 3 and 4 (already submitted)

## 2 RESPONSE TO THE MATTERS AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE INSPECTOR

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- 2.1 The Inspector has posed a number of questions in respect of the 15 Examination Matters. This Hearing Statement seeks to respond to questions of relevance to our clients' interest in respect of Matter 9.

### **Matter 9 – Proposed Site Allocations – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area**

*Whether the proposed site allocations for the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area are justified, effective and consistent with national policy*

- 2.2 RA 1 Ramsey Gateway (High Lode) and RA 7 Valiant Square are sites owned/promoted by our clients and have therefore not been assessed within this Hearing Statement.
- 2.3 **Appendix C** provides our analysis of the draft residential allocations for the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area. The Appendix sets out the current planning status for each site, the main constraints, suitability of the site for development, deliverability, viability and delivery. These seek to address what we consider to be the key issues for each site and provide responses to the majority of the Inspector's questions.
- 2.4 In respect of the forecast timescales and rates of delivery, the Council has been very optimistic on a number of sites. Sites including RA8 Former RAF Upwood and Upwood Hill House, Ramsey; RA6 94 Great Whyte; RA5 Whytefield Road; and RA2 Ramsey Gateway all have overly ambitious timescales for delivery.
- 2.5 According to the AMR 2017 (Core Document MON/01), RA8 Former RAF Upwood and Upwood Hill House, Ramsey is expected to deliver 10 dwellings in 2018/19. However, to date no Reserved Matters or Discharge of Conditions applications have been submitted and a considerable amount of demolition will be required on site before construction can commence. We therefore contend that dwellings will not be delivered on site in 2018/19.
- 2.6 Allocation RA5 Whytefield Road, Ramsey is expected to deliver dwellings in 2021/22. However, we note that no application has been submitted to date and the site is subject to a considerable number of constraints which will need to be overcome. Additionally there are potential contamination issues. We therefore contend that delivering dwellings by 2021/22 appears unlikely. The delivery of dwellings should therefore be pushed back to later within the plan period.
- 2.7 Allocation RA6 94 Great Whyte is forecast to deliver dwellings by 2019/20 while for allocation RA2 Ramsey Gateway first completions are expected to be in 2020/21. However, according to MON/01 both sites are to be developed simultaneously as they have an interlinked public space provision. The Officers Report for 94 Great Whyte confirms that no informal open space could be provided on site. Therefore, we assume in accordance with the comments in MON/01 that the necessary open space provision is being provided within the development at Ramsey Gateway.

- 2.8 In our opinion, dwellings should not be delivered on RA6 94 Great Whyte until dwellings are delivered on RA2 Ramsey Gateway. Furthermore, the Council should not consider RA6 94 Great Whyte to be deliverable prior to planning permission being granted on RA2 Ramsey Gateway.
- 2.9 As set out within our representation to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission (**Appendix B**), our client has promoted a number of sites suitable for allocation including Meadow Lane, Ramsey. Meadow Lane is located within Flood Zone 1 and is available and suitable for development. We consider the site could provide a total of 40 dwellings including affordable housing, open space and landscaping.

### 3 CONCLUSION

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- 3.1 On behalf of our clients, we have a number of concerns in relation to the approach taken by the Council towards the Proposed Site Allocations – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area. This Hearing Statement has been produced in response to these concerns.
- 3.2 We consider that draft Local Plan is not justified, effective or consistent with national policy. The draft Local Plan also relies on overly optimistic delivery rates for a number of sites. We contend that the following amendments are required in order for the Plan to be considered sound:
- The allocation of additional sustainable sites to ensure the Council can meet its housing targets including Meadow Lane, Ramsey;
  - Revisions to the proposed delivery rates and timescales for construction of a number of proposed allocations to provide more realistic delivery rates;

**APPENDIX A – REPRESENTATIONS LETTER TO  
CONSULTATION DRAFT DATED AUGUST 2017**

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**Our Ref: 19995/RMG/MB**  
**Your Ref:**

**E-mail: [mark.buxton@cgms.co.uk](mailto:mark.buxton@cgms.co.uk)**  
**Date: August 2017**

Local Plans Team  
Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon  
PE29 3TN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**REPRESENTATIONS TO THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036:  
CONSULTATION DRAFT 2017**

RPS CgMs are instructed to submit representations on behalf of our client, Abbey Properties Cambridge Limited ('Abbey Properties'), to the Huntingdonshire Consultation Draft Local Plan.

This letter sets out our objections to, and where relevant, support for, the Consultation Draft Local Plan.

**Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN)**

Paragraph 4.8 identifies that the emerging Local Plan will support the overall provision of at least 21,000 new homes. Paragraph 4.34 states the emerging draft Local Plan identifies that 20,100 homes are required to meet the forecast population growth between 2011 and 2036 according to the Objectively Assessed Need for Huntingdonshire (2017). This equates to 804 dwellings per annum.

To be positively prepared the Plan should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements. While we welcome Huntingdonshire District Council's intention to target an overall provision of new homes above their assessed OAN, the Plan only contains a single sentence (at paragraph 4.1) setting out that the Council has taken this approach. We consider further justification for this approach should be contained within the Plan to accord with the tests of soundness reflected in NPPF paragraph 182.

We also highlight that if the Council seeks to provide at least 21,000 new homes during the plan period they will need to provide in excess of 804 dwellings per annum. We therefore consider that the Council should make it clear how many dwellings are required per annum to achieve the provision of at least 21,000 new homes over the course of the plan period in order for the Plan to be considered sound.

Furthermore, we consider that the Council has underestimated its Objectively Assessed Need for housing in the district. Abbey Properties has commissioned its own assessment of OAN for Huntingdonshire which it considers to be an appropriate Housing Target for the District. This figure has been created using PopGroup Modelling software in order to determine the objective assessed housing need. The software incorporates a wide range of socio-economic data which is sensitive to local circumstances and satisfies the requirements of the NPPF. The

assessment has been submitted to the Council on a number of occasions in support of Outline Planning Applications: 16/01530/OUT, 17/01161/OUT and 17/00931/OUT. A further update has also been commissioned.

This work assessed a variety of different scenarios and concluded that taking account of the Demographic, Economic, Affordability and Market Signals for Huntingdonshire there is clear evidence of a housing need of between 23,809 and 27,068 to be met between 2011 and 2036.

Therefore, we consider that a housing need of 23,809 dwellings is a robust and sound figure based on the sensitivity testing and should be the minimum level of housing need countenanced by Huntingdonshire District Council.

### **Policy LP 1 - Strategy For Development**

The policy concentrates development in locations which provide the greatest access to services and facilities and directs substantial development to two strategic expansion locations: Alconbury Weald and St Neots East. We consider this strategy inhibits growth and does not provide a sufficiently flexible approach to bring further sites forward. The Policy also fails to comply with the NPPF which requires Local Planning Authorities *“to boost significantly the supply of housing”* (Paragraph 47).

The policy does not proactively address the key reasons behind the persistent under delivery of houses within the District during the previous plan period. The Local Plan again places over reliance on the delivery of a small number of large strategic sites which take a long time to bring forward, have substantial infrastructure requirements, and are more likely to be delayed.

We therefore consider that the Distribution of Growth should be planned more positively across the District with greater allowance made for additional small and windfall sites to support the larger strategic sites. The Housing White Paper ‘Fixing our Broken Housing Market’ advocates such an approach.

### **Policy LP 5 - Spatial Planning Areas**

We disagree with the Council’s position on developments on unallocated sites. We consider that this policy is too restrictive and fails to recognise that the built-up areas of identified Spatial Planning Area are unable to accommodate viable and sustainable further growth. We therefore consider this policy is unsound.

The built-up area act as a proxy for the settlement boundaries. These have not been positively planned or adequately reviewed in this Local Plan and therefore do not allow for future growth. This results in limiting and restricting much needed housing growth. Moreover the built-up areas are based on outdated policy, the 2002 Local Plan Alterations, and are no longer relevant nor are they supported by the evidence base.

The supporting text *states “allocations for new development reflect existing known opportunities within each spatial planning area”*. These areas are planned to cater for 70% of future housing growth. However the boundaries reflected in LP5 limit the opportunities to provide the future housing need of Huntingdonshire, as well-located and strategically placed housing settlements are not identified. These settlement boundaries should be reviewed as the areas defined are out of date.

We advise, with consideration to paragraph 151 of the NPPF, that to contribute to sustainable development less constrained boundaries are necessary. We consider there to be further sites suitable for residential development which are appropriately located with excellent access to services and public transport.

### **Policy LP 6 – Key Service Centres**

The Council identifies in its objectives that there should be a good supply of suitable land for growth and the promotion of high quality, well designed and locally distinctive sites. We support this objective but consider that certain policies fail to support this and are therefore unsound.

Policy LP 6 states that a “*proposal for development on a site in addition to those allocated in this plan will be supported where it is located within a built-up area of a Key Service Centre*”. However, we consider the Policy and emerging Plan has failed to support this aim by effectively retaining the existing settlement boundaries originally defined with the 1995 Local Plan and 2002 Local Plan Alterations through the Built-up Areas definition. Any sites suitable and viable for development would have already been identified and developed during the preceding years. We consider evidence of this can be seen through the Council’s failure to meet its annual housing target in 4 of the last 5 years. Therefore, we considered that this policy is unreasonable and fails to plan positively for the District.

As a result the emerging Local Plan relies too heavily upon a small number of large strategic sites which take a long time to bring forward, affecting housing delivery in the district. Notably the Council has failed to meet its identified need over the last 4 years; a position the Inspector at the recent Lucks Lane Inquiry (Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/16/3159161) concluded constituted ‘*persistent under delivery*’. Furthermore we disagree with the ‘built up area’ definition. Excluding sites which are not ‘Previously Developed Land’ or ‘relate to surrounding countryside rather than buildings’ limits the number of sustainable sites which could deliver sustainable development.

Paragraph 157 of the NPPF requires Local Plans to plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area. This means indicating broad locations for strategic development. We consider there are other suitable sites which can positively meet housing need in the District. Therefore, we submit that the Council should identify further locations where development will be supported when it is well-related to the built-up area. This is over and above the policy support espoused in Community Planning Proposals and Rural Exceptions Housing policies.

### **Policy LP8 - Countryside**

This policy states all development in the countryside must “*avoid the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grade 1 to 3a) where possible.*”

While we recognise that this policy is supported by the NPPF, we consider this policy fails to recognise that there are suitable sites for development particularly in agricultural grade 3a. Selective planned development of these sites will not harm the countryside nor materially affect the amount of the best and most versatile agricultural land within the District and would furthermore provide opportunities for the Council to meet its housing need. We therefore argue that limiting development in the countryside is too restrictive and does not plan positively.

Moreover, the policy position appears to be a direct contradiction to the majority of the Council's Strategic Allocations and the 2017 HELAA. A number of sites being promoted and allocated by the Council are former agricultural land comprising of either Grade 2 to 3a.

We consider that the policy should be reworded to more accurately reflect the Council's Strategic Allocations and positively plan for the District.

### **Policy LP9 - Flood risk**

This policy determines the locations suitable for development and states proposals will only be supported where the flood risk has been addressed. This requires that *"all reasonable opportunities to reduce overall flood risk have been taken"*.

We support this policy but consider there is an inconsistency with this policy and a number of Strategic Allocations. We consider that the Council needs to address this inconsistency and ensure that it correctly implements the Sequential and Exception Tests as set out in the NPPF.

### **Policy LP23 – Affordable Housing Provision**

The policy sets out the provision of affordable housing to delivered on site. It targets the delivery of 40% affordable housing on sites where 11 homes or 1,001sqm residential floorspace or more is proposed except where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable.

We support the principle of this policy, however, we consider that the range of affordable housing types, sizes and tenures should be clearly set out within the main policy text rather than a referring back to the Housing Register, the Cambridge sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other local sources. The Policy currently fails to provide certainty for developers seeking to establish the tenure mix and associated costs. The policy is also likely to create uncertainty during periods when evidence is being updated or in situations when the evidence documents contradict each other. We therefore consider that the Council should state the percentage of affordable housing types, sizes and tenures sought within the Local Plan.

Furthermore we have concerns in relation to bullet point c. This requires affordable housing to be dispersed across the development in *'small clusters of about 15 dwellings'*. This can only reasonably apply to the largest strategic allocations in the District. Furthermore, it exceeds the 11 unit threshold. For example, it would be impossible for a 12 unit scheme to meet this policy requirement.

We consider that 15 dwellings constitutes more than what would typically be considered a *'small cluster'* on the majority of sites. We consider this will result in the majority of the affordable units being located in one area of the site. We are also unaware of any evidence which supports this figure. We therefore consider this element of the policy to be unsound and not supported by evidence. We would wish to see this element of the policy amended with a reduced figure which can be reasonably considered to be a *'small cluster'* in the context of the proposed development. Amending the draft policy to refer to clusters of up to 15 units and removing the reference to a *'small cluster'* maybe an acceptable solution. We consider that this would also provide flexibility for smaller sites where the number of units proposed means a cluster of 15 dwellings is not possible or suitable.

We consider that the policy should also recognise that a site's location within the District and its local housing market characteristics could be a material consideration affecting the percentage

and mix of affordable housing which can be provided on site. The District Council should recognise that the different settlements within the District have different markets for affordable housing with some areas more attractive to affordable housing providers than others. The policy wording or supporting text should reflect that, where it is supported by viability evidence, the location of sites will be a material consideration to justify a reduction in the amount of affordable housing proposed on site.

### **Policy LP28 - Rural Exceptions Housing**

Policy LP28 offers flexibility to proposals outside the built-up area and provides a positive opportunity to meet housing need as a rural exception. The policy requires providing “*affordable housing for people with a local connection*” with the aim of increasing diversity in housing tenures and to meet Huntingdonshire’s housing need.

We support this policy in so far that it recognises that development might be necessary outside of the built-up area. The policy could enable the Council to support sites outside the built-up area of settlement to come forward to help meet the District’s housing need. The policy also recognises the need to provide both affordable and market housing on site to ensure such sites are viable. This could help offset the restrictions of LP1 Strategy for development and LP5 ‘Spatial Planning Areas’.

We are concerned however over the lack of clarity in this policy. The policy states the scale and location of the proposal must demonstrate the availability of services and infrastructure and the effect on the character of the immediate locality. This does not provide sufficient clarity to the development industry over issues such as the location of these exception sites or what scale will be acceptable.

### **Allocations**

We object that a number of sites which we consider to be sustainable and suitable for development have not been included within the emerging plan allocations. We therefore consider the allocations in the Plan to be unsound.

Separate representations on the HELAA and ‘Call for Sites’ forms have been submitted for each of these sites. We consider it is necessary for the HELAA and proposed allocations to be reviewed and additional sites included for the emerging plan to be considered sound.

A brief description and analysis of the additional sites we consider should be allocated is provided below:

#### *Biggin Lane, Ramsey*

Biggin Lane is located to the west of Ramsey and we consider could be developed for at least 141 dwellings. The site is assessed within the HELAA and was found to be suitable for only low density development before being considered as ‘not suitable’ within the summary table for Ramsey. We consider this is inconsistent and the HELAA has failed to consider a realistic capacity for the site.

We note that the majority of Biggin Lane comprises grade 3b agricultural land and is exclusively located within Flood Zone 1. We also consider the site has been incorrectly assessed within the Council’s Sustainability Appraisal for the reasons set out in our separate representation letter. *Old Ramsey Road, St Ives*

Old Ramsey Road is located to the north west of St Ives and despite representations being submitted to the 2016 HELAA Additional Sites Consultation, the site has been omitted from the HELAA 2017.

The site is approximately 10.81 hectares and we consider is suitable for 131 dwellings. The site is located entirely with Flood Zone 1 and could provide at least 40% affordable units. The site has been fully assessed through a number of technical reports submitted in support of Outline Planning 17/00931/OUT which demonstrate that the site is sustainable.

*Thrapston Road, Brampton*

The site is located to the north of Brampton and has in part been included with the HELAA, but limited to the frontage site only and therefore considered to have a capacity of just 8 dwellings. The site was not therefore considered for allocation as it fell below the capacity threshold of 10 dwellings. The full site was not assessed due to concerns relating to flood risk.

However, we consider that the HELAA has failed to reflect the Council's updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which identifies the site almost entirely within Flood Zone 1. The site performs well in the Sustainability Appraisal and we consider should only result in 6 negative impacts of the 32 criteria tested.

We therefore consider that the Thrapston Road site should be reassessed within the HELAA and allocated for 63 dwellings.

**Conclusion**

Overall we disagree with elements of the Council's Draft Local Plan. We believe the Plan to unduly limit potential future development sites. In addition we advise further consideration into its settlement boundaries is needed to deliver sites to meet, and potentially exceed, the OAN for housing and to provide sustainable and inclusive communities for the future.

RPS CgMs reserves the right to appear and speak at the Examination should the emerging Local Plan continue to fail to satisfactorily address our concerns over issues of soundness.

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my colleague Robert Mackenzie-Grieve if you require any information on, or wish to further discuss, this representation.

Yours Sincerely



Mark Buxton  
Director

**APPENDIX B – REPRESENTATIONS LETTER TO PROPOSED  
SUBMISSION PLAN DATED 5/2/18**

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**Our Ref: 19995/RMG/MB**  
**Your Ref:**

**E-mail: [mark.buxton@rpsgroup.com](mailto:mark.buxton@rpsgroup.com)**  
**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

Local Plans Team  
Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon  
PE29 3TN

***By email only***

Dear Sir/Madam,

**REPRESENTATIONS TO THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036: PROPOSED SUBMISSION**

RPS are instructed to submit representations on behalf of our client, Abbey Properties Cambridge Limited ('Abbey Properties'), to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Proposed Submission.

This letter sets out our representations to the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan and should be read alongside the representations made to the July 2017 Consultation Draft. Previous representations were submitted under the name of RPS CgMs.

We set out at the end of each representation whether we consider the policy/allocation meets the tests of soundness and the reasons why.

**LP1 – Amount of Development: OBJECT**

Policy LP 1 sets out the amount of development which is required in Huntingdonshire.

According to the Policy at least 20,100 new homes (both market and affordable) are required within the District. We consider that this policy fails to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the District for the reasons set out in the 'Huntingdonshire Housing Requirement and OAN' report by Regeneris Consulting attached to this letter.

According to the Regeneris Report the Council's OAN evidence contains the following shortcomings:

- A lack of consistency between the figures and aspects of the method in the 2013 SHMA and 2017 CRG study;
- The absence of any substantive consideration of the implications of Huntingdonshire's stand-alone OAN study for housing need figures in the wider Housing Market Area;
- The lack of a thorough assessment of past trends in household formation rates;
- Flaws in the Council's approach to economic growth adjustments in the OAN; and
- An adjustment for market signals which falls far short of an increase in the future housing supply relative to assessed demand which might reasonably be expected to result in an easing of affordability problems.



Regeneris consider that a minimum OAN of 23,750 (950 dpa) should be planned for the district and we support and endorse their conclusions.

Test of Soundness	Yes/No	Reasons
Positively Prepared	No	Not meet objectively assessed development requirements
Justified	No	Not the most appropriate strategy
Effective	No	No evidence of joint working on strategic priorities
Consistent with National Policy	No	Not accord with, inter alia, para 47 of NPPF

**LP2 – Strategy for Development: OBJECT**

This policy seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside surrounding settlements and therefore seeks to apply a blanket protection to the whole of the countryside. This is inconsistent with the NPPF which is clear that account should be taken of the different roles and character of different areas. The NPPF only uses the term ‘protect’ in reference to valued landscape and designated areas. We therefore consider that this addition to Policy LP2 from previous draft versions of the Local Plan is inconsistent with National Guidance.

The policy further concentrates development in locations which provide the greatest access to services and facilities and directs substantial development to two strategic expansion locations: Alconbury Weald and St Neots East. This means that approximately 75% of housing growth is proposed to be located within the four spatial planning areas.

We consider this strategy potentially inhibits growth and does not provide a sufficiently flexible approach to encourage other sites to come forward. The Policy therefore arguably fails to comply with the NPPF which requires Local Planning Authorities “to boost significantly the supply of housing” (Paragraph 47).

The policy does not proactively address the key reasons behind the persistent under delivery of houses within the District earlier in the plan period. The Local Plan again places over reliance on the delivery of two large strategic sites which take a long time to bring forward, have substantial infrastructure requirements, and are more likely to be delayed.

We therefore consider that the distribution of growth should be planned more positively across the District with greater allowance made for additional small and windfall sites to support the larger strategic sites. The Housing White Paper ‘Fixing our Broken Housing Market’ advocates such an approach.

Test of Soundness	Yes/No	Reasons
Positively Prepared	No	Not meet objectively assessed development requirements
Justified	No	Not the most appropriate strategy
Effective	N/A	
Consistent with National Policy	No	Not accord with, inter alia, para 47 of NPPF

**LP7 – Spatial Planning Areas: OBJECT**

We disagree with the Council’s position on developments on unallocated sites. We consider that this policy is still too restrictive and fails to recognise that the built-up areas identified as Spatial Planning Area settlement are unable to accommodate sufficient viable and sustainable further growth to meet the Objectively Assessed Need. We therefore consider this policy is unsound.

The built-up area effectively acts as a proxy for the settlement boundaries. These have not been positively planned or adequately reviewed within the Local Plan and therefore do not allow for future growth. This results in limiting and restricting much needed housing growth. Moreover the built-up areas appear to be based on outdated policy, the 2002 Local Plan Alterations, and are no longer relevant nor are they supported by the evidence base.

The supporting text states *“allocations for new development reflect existing known opportunities within each spatial planning area”*. These areas are proposed to cater for 75% of future housing growth according to Policy LP2. However, supporting paragraph 4.8 states that to allow for the level of growth currently proposed the use of some greenfield land will be required to deliver the necessary scale of development. The policy wording of LP7 does not reflect this need and limits the opportunities to deliver the future housing need of Huntingdonshire, as well-located and strategically placed housing settlements are not identified. These settlement boundaries should be reviewed as the areas defined are out of date.

Test of Soundness	Yes/No	Reasons
Positively Prepared	No	Not meet objectively assessed development requirements
Justified	No	Not the most appropriate strategy
Effective	No	No evidence of joint working on strategic priorities
Consistent with National Policy	No	Not accord with, inter alia, para 47 of NPPF

**LP11 – The Countryside: OBJECT**

This policy requires that all development in the countryside must *“avoid the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grade 1 to 3a) where possible.”*

While we recognise that this policy is supported by the NPPF through directing development to poorer quality land, we consider this policy fails to recognise that there are suitable sites for development particularly in agricultural land grade 3a. Selective planned development of these sites will not harm the countryside nor should it materially affect the amount of the best and most versatile agricultural land within the District. It would furthermore provide opportunities for the Council to meet its identified housing need. We therefore contend that the countryside policy is too restrictive and fails to plan positively.

Moreover, the policy position appears to be a direct contradiction to the majority of the Council’s Strategic Allocations and the 2017 HELAA. A number of sites being promoted and allocated by the Council are best and most versatile agricultural land comprising Grade 2 to 3a.

Furthermore we object to the policy seeking to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. As stated above this is inconsistent with the NPPF which is clear that account should be taken of the different roles and character of different areas.

We consider that the policy should be reworded to more accurately reflect the Council's Strategic Allocations and positively plan for the District.

Test of Soundness	Yes/No	Reasons
Positively Prepared	No	Not meet objectively assessed development requirements
Justified	No	Not the most appropriate strategy
Effective	N/A	
Consistent with National Policy	No	Not accord with, inter alia, para 47 of NPPF

**LP25 – Affordable Housing Provision: OBJECT**

This policy sets out the provision of affordable housing to be delivered on site. It targets the delivery of 40% affordable housing on sites where 11 homes or 1,001sqm residential floorspace or more are proposed except where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable.

We do not support this policy and consider, amongst other things, that the range of affordable housing types, sizes and tenures should be clearly set out within the main policy text rather than referring back to the Housing Register, the Cambridge sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other local sources. The Policy currently fails to provide certainty for developers seeking to establish the tenure mix and associated costs. The policy is also likely to create uncertainty during periods when evidence is being updated or in situations when the evidence base documents contradict each other. We therefore consider that the Council should state the percentage of affordable housing types, sizes and tenures sought within the Local Plan.

We support the removal of the reference in bullet point c to small clusters referring to ‘about 15 dwellings’. However, we still consider the reference to ‘small clusters of dwellings’ is unclear, inconsistent with the supporting text, and difficult to achieve on smaller sites.

Supporting paragraph 7.10 states that affordable housing should be ‘pepper-potted’ around a development and ‘may be provided in small clusters, proportionate to the scale of development’. However, the proposed wording of Policy LP25 is less clear and does not provide sufficient guidance regarding what is considered to be a ‘small cluster’. Furthermore, supporting paragraph 7.14 still refers to small clusters consisting of about 15 dwellings. While paragraph 7.14 acknowledges that clusters of 15 affordable dwellings could be too large on smaller sites we consider this reference currently provides the only indication of what the Council considers to be a ‘small cluster’.

We wish to see this element of the policy amended to provide further clarity on what is considered to be a ‘small cluster’ in the context of the proposed development or to remove the reference altogether. We consider that this would provide a greater degree of flexibility for smaller sites.

We consider that the policy should also recognise that a site's location within the District and its local housing market characteristics could be a material consideration affecting the percentage and mix of affordable housing which can be provided on site. The District Council should recognise that the different settlements within the District have different markets for affordable housing with some areas more attractive to affordable housing providers than others. The policy wording or supporting text should reflect that, where it is supported by viability evidence, the location of sites will be a material consideration to justify a reduction in the amount of affordable housing proposed on site.

Test of Soundness	Yes/No	Reasons
Positively Prepared	No	Not meet objectively assessed development requirements
Justified	No	Not the most appropriate strategy
Effective	N/A	
Consistent with National Policy	No	Not accord with, inter alia, para 47 of NPPF

**LP30 – Rural Exceptions Housing: OBJECT**

Policy LP30 offers some flexibility to proposals outside the built-up area and provides a positive opportunity to meet housing need as a rural exception. The policy seeks to provide “*affordable housing for people with a local connection*” with the aim of increasing diversity in housing tenures and to meet Huntingdonshire’s housing need.

We support this policy in so far as it recognises that development might be necessary outside of the built-up area. The policy could enable the Council to support sites outside the built-up area of settlements to come forward to help meet the District’s housing need. The policy also recognises the need to provide both affordable and market housing on site to ensure developments are viable. This provides a counter-balance to the restrictions on development of LP2 ‘Strategy for Development’ and LP7 ‘Spatial Planning Areas’.

We are concerned however over the lack of clarity in this policy. The policy states the scale and location of the proposal must demonstrate the availability of services and infrastructure and the effect on the character of the immediate locality. This does not provide sufficient clarity to the development industry over issues such as the location of these exception sites or what scale will be acceptable.

We are also concerned that the policy may not assist with the need to provide additional affordable housing within the District due to the overly restrictive criteria for eligibility. We consider that the need for affordable houses across the District, as set out in LP25, should result in the Council allocating more new housing developments in order to achieve 40% affordable housing provision from those sites. This would address an urgent need within the District and provide access to affordable dwellings to all.

Test of Soundness	Yes/No	Reasons
Positively Prepared	No	Not meet objectively assessed development requirements
Justified	No	Not the most appropriate strategy
Effective	N/A	
Consistent with National Policy	No	Not accord with, inter alia, para 47 of NPPF

**Allocations: OBJECT**

We consider that the following allocations should have been included within Huntingdonshire Proposed Submission Local Plan:

*Land off and to the North of 66-100 Thrapston Road, Brampton*

An application for 63 dwellings was dismissed at Appeal in December 2017 (APP/H0520/W/17/3172571) as the site was considered to have a harmful impact on the local landscape and townscape.

However, we do not agree with the Inspector's findings (and we have lodged a judicial review of the decision) on this point and note the Council did not consider this site to comprise part of a valued landscape in its determination of the original planning application. We therefore consider the site is still suitable for 63 dwellings and lies within a sustainable location which would not harm the landscape or setting of Brampton.

With regard to landscape impact the site is undesignated in landscape terms, contains no features of particular value and is enclosed to the public.

The site is approximately 3.25 hectares and is located to the north of Brampton. It is currently a vacant greenfield site with residential properties to the south. To the north, east and west of the site is open land including Hinchingsbrooke Country Park and Alconbury Brook Pond. Existing agricultural and commercial uses are located to the north and north east of the site including Poplars Farm.

The majority of the site comprises semi-improved grassland, tall ruderals and scrub with the site boundaries comprising individual trees, hedgerows and scrub. Development of the site should not have a negative impact on either Hinchingsbrooke Gravel Pits or Portholme SAC. Great Crested Newts have been identified within the pond on site and appropriate mitigation would therefore be required. No reptiles have been recorded on site.

No Tree Preservation Orders are in place on site and one group of trees would require partial removal to create the vehicle entrance. A number of trees are recommended for removal for reasons of good arboricultural practice.

There are no designated heritage assets within the site and a single listed building is located 100m to the south. The closest Scheduled Monument is located 500m west of the site. Development of the site will not affect the setting of these assets due to their distance from the site and the existing screening. There is no suggestion that the site contains archaeological remains that would prohibit development.

The site lies within the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area (SPA) and presents a sustainable location for residential development in terms of access to local facilities and amenities as well as a good level of public transport provision. The site is well located to access local schools on foot/cycle as well as local shops and larger superstores. The site is also located in close proximity to the cycling routes. The nearest bus stops are located within 250m of the site's frontage to Thrapston Road. Development of the site would not have a detrimental impact on the local highway or sustainable transport networks.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and all built development can be proposed outside of the modelled 1 in 1000 year flood extent. SuDs such as permeable paving and detention basins can be incorporated into any scheme to ensure that runoff rates do not exceed greenfield rates.

According to Natural England Agricultural Land Classification the site comprises Grade 3 Agricultural Land; two grades below the best quality agricultural land. The site is also suitable for affordable housing.

For the reasons above we consider that Land off and to the North of 66-100 Thrapston Road is suitable, available and achievable for the provision of new residential development within the next 5 years. Therefore the site should be included as a residential allocation within the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

#### *Thrapston Road Frontage Site*

Additionally, we consider (in the event that the site above is not allocated) that the smaller frontage site, to the east of no.66 Thrapston Road, should be considered for allocation within the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

The site is 0.49ha and capable of accommodating 14 dwellings along the frontage of Thrapston Road.

We consider that this site would address the perceived impact on the valued landscape raised in the Inspector's Appeal Decision referred to above (notwithstanding that a judicial review application has been lodged). A frontage scheme would not extend further north than the existing ribbon development, could not be described as 'in depth' and would not breach the visual boundary of Brampton.

A frontage scheme would continue the established pattern of houses and would complement the village form and settlement pattern. Additionally any impact on the character of the village edge or the landscape would be limited due to the reduced extension of development into the countryside.

The Council assessed the suitability of this site within the May 2013 Environmental Capacity Study. It was concluded at that time that only the eastern part of the site would be suitable for development owing to flood risk issues. As a result the scheme would have been below the 10 dwelling threshold for allocation within the future Local Plan so was not separately identified.

These concerns from May 2013 over flood risk have subsequently been removed owing to the more up-to-date Environment Agency flood risk maps. The Council should therefore look favourably upon new development in this location on the edge of the settlement which relates more to the built-up area than the countryside.

We consider this site should be included within Huntingdonshire Local Plan Proposed Submission.

#### *Old Ramsey Road, St Ives*

The site is approximately 10.81 hectares and is located to the north west of St Ives. It is a greenfield site currently in agricultural use with a residential property, caravan storage business

to the east (in part) and allotments to the south. To the north of the site is agricultural land and RAF Wyton a short distance further north. The site would be accessed via Old Ramsey Road.

The site lies within the St Ives SPA and is currently subject to Outline Planning application 17/00931/OUT and we consider the site is suitable for 131 dwellings.

The site mainly comprises arable land with the boundaries consisting of individual trees, scrubs, and tall ruderals. A stream runs along the northern boundary. The arable land is not in itself of ecological significance. No reptiles were found on site however the site margins do have the potential to support invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, breeding birds, foraging and commuting bats and hedgehogs. The site also has the potential to support Barn Owls as a Barn Owl box is present on the western boundary.

It is not necessary to remove any trees to enable development but a section of hedgerow on the eastern boundary of the site will need to be removed to facilitate vehicle access. The remaining boundary landscaping can be retained and enhanced through sensitive planting.

There are no designated heritage assets within the study site or the surrounding 1km search area. Evidence provided from the Historic Environment Record demonstrates that the site is considered to have low/negligible potential for significant archaeological evidence from all periods.

Vehicular access to the site could be provided from Old Ramsey Road in the form of a priority junction designed in accordance with DMRB standards. A new footway is proposed to be provided along the western side of Old Ramsey Road. The Transport Assessment establishes that the site enjoys a sustainable location in respect of the services and facilities and in respect of available public transport. A proposed development of 131 dwellings would not be anticipated to have a material impact on the operation of the local highway network.

The site is primarily located in Flood Zone 1 and is not considered to be at a significant risk of flooding from any sources assessed. However, parts of the site adjacent to the ordinary watercourse are at 'medium' to 'high' risk of surface water flooding and therefore any proposed development should be located wholly outside of this area. Sustainable Drainage can also be incorporated into the scheme to ensure that runoff rates do not exceed greenfield rates. This can be done through permeable paving and a retention basin on site.

As the site is located within Flood Zone 1 it is sequentially preferable to a number of sites assessed within the 2017 HELAA. We calculate there are 11 sites with flood risk issues assessed within the HELAA. We consider that these sites are sequentially less preferable to Land off Old Ramsey Road and the Council has failed the sequential test set out in the NPPF by not adequately assessing this site within Flood Zone 1 before actively promoting other sites.

The allocation of some sites within Flood Zone 2 may be necessary in order to meet the Council's Objectively Assessed Need but they should be shown to meet the Sequential and Exception Tests set out in the NPPF. We object to these sites being allocated before all possible sites within Flood Zone 1 have been assessed and allocated where they are identified as being sustainable.

The majority of the site comprises Grade 2 agricultural land. Therefore, we consider the development would not involve the loss of the best quality Grade 1 agricultural land. The site is located in very close proximity to the built up area of St Ives with urban uses immediately to the south east of the site.

The site could also provide additional affordable housing. The Proposed Submission Local Plan sets a target of 40% affordable housing on residential sites. We consider that this site could provide 40% affordable housing (equating to 52 units), or potentially more, while remaining viable. This development site could therefore provide a significant number of the affordable dwellings requirement within St Ives.

A Sustainability Matrix based on the Council's HELAA criteria was prepared and submitted with application 17/00931/OUT and the previously withdrawn application 16/01884/OUT. This found that of the 23 criteria tested, there were 12 positive returns, 10 neutral and only 1 negative (relating to the site not being previously developed land). We therefore object to the fact that a number of sites have been allocated as a result of the 2017 HELAA which have a similar or higher number of negative impacts when assessed against the sustainability criteria.

For the reasons above we consider that land off Old Ramsey Road is suitable, available and achievable for the provision of new residential development within the next 5 years. Therefore the site should be included within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission.

#### *Meeting Lane, Needingworth*

The site is approximately 4.9 hectares and is located on the north west edge of Needingworth.

Needingworth is identified as a small settlement in the draft Local Plan. Draft Policy LP10 'Small Settlements' states that "*a proposal for development on land well-related to the built-up area may be supported where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan*". We contend that land at Meeting Lane is very well related to the existing built up area.

The site is greenfield and accessible from either Meeting Lane or the High Street. The site lies primarily in Flood Zone 1 although access issues need to be satisfactorily resolved. It is located a short distance to the north of two bus stops and Needingworth Post Office. We therefore consider that the site is a sustainable location for development.

The site was assessed within the Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment December 2017. Overall the appraisal was positive with some of the main positive features including the sites close proximity to Overcote Lane playing fields, Needingworth Village Hall, Post Office and One Stop Shop. The site is also only 700m away from the Holy Church of England Primary School and 1.9km from Needingworth Industrial Estate.

However, the Sustainability Appraisal within the 2017 HELAA concluded that the "*the site is not considered suitable for development as it contributes significantly to the character area of the local area*".

This conclusion seems to run counter to the overall assessment and is seemingly based on the fact the site would be inappropriate for higher density development.

We consider the site to be suitable for up to 50 dwellings and is also capable of providing significant public open space. At 4.9ha such a scale of development would qualify as very low density development, well below the Council's own assessment of 'low density' development of 30 dwellings per ha in the HELAA. We therefore consider this site is suitable for low density residential development.



Furthermore the site is supported locally for additional development in the village with the Parish Council expressing a positive early view of the site’s potential.

*Meadow Lane, Ramsey*

The site is approximately 2.2 hectares and is located to the east of Bury within the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area. The site is currently greenfield with an electricity sub-station adjacent to the south-eastern corner and was previously used as a practice ground by Ramsey Golf Club. The development would be accessed from Meadow Lane off Warboys Road.

The site is approximately 650m from Bury Stores and 750m away from Bury Church of England Primary School. The site is also within 2km of both the High Lode industrial Estate and the proposed employment site at Upwood Airfield.

We consider the site is suitable for 40 dwellings, open space and additional landscaping. The site is not located in an area of flood risk. It lies on the south-eastern edge of the extensive Ramsey Conservation Area adjacent to other housing which falls outside the Conservation Area.

There is scope to provide a high quality and sensitively designed housing scheme on this site which could enhance this part of the conservation area and provide an improved edge to the settlement boundary in this location. It would also help to secure the long-term future of Ramsey Golf Club.

Accordingly, we consider the site should be allocated for low-medium density residential development in the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

A site location plan for this site is attached to this covering letter (area marked by black hatching).

Test of Soundness	Yes/No	Reasons
Positively Prepared	No	Not meet objectively assessed development requirements
Justified	No	Not the most appropriate strategy
Effective	No	Plan will not deliver levels of development needed over its period
Consistent with National Policy	No	Not accord with, inter alia, para 47 of NPPF

**Proposals Map: NOTE/OBJECT**

We consider the key to the Proposals Map is currently misleading. It contains a reference to SPA which is understood in this context to apply to ‘Special Protection Areas’ but could equally apply to ‘Spatial Planning Areas’. We consider this should be clarified and cross reference to relevant Plan policies in the key could assist in this regard.

**Conclusion**

We object to the Council’s Proposed Submission Local Plan for the reasons outlined above. We consider the Plan unduly limits potential future development sites. Further consideration of the settlement boundaries is required to deliver sites to meet, and potentially exceed, the OAN



for housing and to provide sustainable and inclusive communities for the future. We therefore consider the Local Plan, as drafted, fails the tests of soundness

RPS wish to participate at the oral examination on behalf of Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire Limited to ensure that our clients' interests are adequately addressed.

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my colleague Robert Mackenzie-Grieve if you require any information on, or wish to further discuss this representation letter.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Buxton', written in a cursive style.

Mark Buxton  
Director

**APPENDIX C – RAMSEY SPATIAL PLANNING AREA DRAFT  
ALLOCATIONS SITE APPRAISALS**

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## Proposed Site Allocations – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area

<b>Site Allocation</b>	<b>RA2 Ramsey Gateway</b>
<b>Unit size</b>	1.8ha for approximately 50 homes
<b>Current planning status</b>	Planning application 16/00311/FUL was submitted in February 2016 with a number of amended documents submitted in June 2018. The application is still to be determined.
<b>Constraints</b>	<p>Landscape/townscape impact – the site is at a prominent gateway entrance to Ramsey and lies within Ramsey conservation area.</p> <p>A small portion of the site at the north western edge lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3a.</p> <p>There may be protected species existing on the site due to the presence of suitable habitats on and adjacent to the site, including a pond, trees and brambles.</p> <p>High and medium pressure gas pipelines run through the site.</p> <p>There are clearly delays to determination of the planning application as this was submitted over 2 years ago and still no decision has been made. Amendments to site layout, block layout and elevations were submitted in June 2018. The application has previously received objections by various consultees, including the Environment Agency which considered the Drainage Strategy to be unacceptable. There has also been lengthy correspondence with the Highways Authorities.</p>
<b>Suitability</b>	Previously developed land in close proximity to services, employment and public transport.
<b>Availability</b>	The site is available according to the Agents. The site is to be developed simultaneously with 94 Great Whyte (Allocation RA6 in Draft Local Plan) as the AMR 2017 states that the sites have interlinked public open space provision. According to the AMR 2017 the site will be able to deliver units by 2020/21.
<b>Viability</b>	Delays to planning application could result in or result from issues with viability.
<b>Deliverability</b>	The site is dependent on the development of 94 Great Whyte (Allocation RA6) as the sites, whilst not contiguous, have interlinked public open space provision. Therefore should either of these sites not come forward (for whatever reason) then the deliverability of both sites should be brought into question.
<b>Delivery</b>	No comments.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The latest AMR expects the first 20 dwellings to be completed in 2020/2021. We consider this to be optimistic as the planning application is still pending determination even though it was submitted over 2 years ago. Amended documents have only recently been submitted to overcome previous objections to the scheme. Once a decision is made there will still be considerable obstacles to overcome including resolving issues around the existing gas pipelines. The application is also likely to have a number of pre-commencement conditions that will need to be discharged.

<b>Site allocation</b>	<b>RA3 West Station Yard and Northern Mill</b>
<b>Unit size</b>	1.6ha for approximately 30 homes
<b>Current planning status</b>	No planning application submitted.
<b>Constraints</b>	<p>Landscape/townscape impact – the site is at a prominent gateway entrance to Ramsey and there are views in and out of the site. The site is located in Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>The impact on heritage assets is a development constraint. The site lies within Ramsey conservation area and Northern Mill has local historic significance.</p> <p>There may be protected species existing on the site due to the presence of suitable habitats on and adjacent to the site, including a pond, trees and brambles.</p>
<b>Suitability</b>	The site comprises previously developed land in close proximity to services, employment and public transport
<b>Availability</b>	The site is considered to be available.
<b>Viability</b>	We are unaware of any viability issues relating to the site.
<b>Deliverability</b>	No comments.
<b>Delivery</b>	No comments.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The AMR forecasts the site to be delivered in 2031/2032. As this is near the end of the Local Plan period and allows time for issues to be resolved we do not dispute the delivery of this allocation.

<b>Site Allocation</b>	<b>RA4 Field Road, Ramsey</b>
<b>Unit size</b>	5.2ha for approximately 90 homes
<b>Current planning status</b>	A planning application for 90 dwellings (1401852OUT) was approved in October 2016, and a Reserved Matters application was approved in May 2017 (16/02379/REM). All pre development conditions have been discharged.
<b>Constraints</b>	<p>The site is located on Grade 2 agricultural land but is located in close proximity to services, employment, public transport and open space.</p> <p>Landscape constraint – The site lies adjacent to open countryside and residential properties.</p> <p>The site is located within Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>There may be protected species existing on the site due to the presence of suitable habitats on and adjacent to the site, including woodlands, a pond, trees and brambles.</p>
<b>Suitability</b>	The Council consider the site is suitable for the proposed development with planning permission granted and all pre development conditions discharged.
<b>Availability</b>	The site is considered to be available.
<b>Viability</b>	We are unaware of any viability issues with the site providing 40% affordable homes.
<b>Deliverability</b>	No comments.
<b>Delivery</b>	No comments.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The first 45 dwellings are forecast to be delivered in 2019/2020. The

	housebuilder's website states that homes are 'coming soon'. As all pre development conditions have been discharged we do not dispute this trajectory.
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<b>Site Allocation</b>	<b>RA5 Whytefield Road, Ramsey</b>
<b>Unit size</b>	0.9ha for approximately 40 homes
<b>Current planning status</b>	No application to date but agent confirms an application will be submitted in the near future.
<b>Constraints</b>	<p>Due to its relatively small scale and location it is unlikely to provide opportunities to link with the strategic green infrastructure network.</p> <p>The development of the site would result in the loss of employment land given the site's former use as a petrol station. The site is also likely to be contaminated.</p> <p>The site is located within Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>The site's visibility from the wider area and its location within Ramsey conservation area mean that the townscape impact and impact on the conservation area could constrain the development. We also consider the close proximity to Ramsey Community Junior School playground and playing fields could constrain development.</p>
<b>Suitability</b>	The site comprises previously developed land and in close proximity to services and transport facilities. It is suitable for residential development subject there being no contamination
<b>Availability</b>	The site is understood to be available.
<b>Viability</b>	Potential for contamination on the site could cause viability issues.
<b>Deliverability</b>	No comments.
<b>Delivery</b>	No comments.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The latest AMR forecasts that the site is to be delivered in 2021/2022. We consider this to be ambitious as no application has been submitted and there are a number of obstacles residential development would need to overcome. The site is on a former petrol station and there is potential for the site to be contaminated. However, overall the site is appropriate to be allocated and could be delivered during the plan period.

<b>Site Allocation</b>	<b>RA6 94 Great Whyte, Ramsey</b>
<b>Unit size</b>	0.7ha for approximately 35 homes
<b>Current planning status</b>	<p>Planning Application 15/02384/FUL for 32 dwellings was approved on 22 June 2018.</p> <p>A number of pre commencement conditions need to be discharged before development can commence.</p>
<b>Constraints</b>	<p>The site is within Ramsey conservation area, and there is a listed building opposite the site.</p> <p>The site is located within Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>Due to the former uses of the site, a contamination risk assessment is</p>

	required which could raise issues for the expected delivery of the site.
<b>Suitability</b>	The site comprises previously developed land and lies in close proximity to services and transport facilities.
<b>Availability</b>	The site is available subject to site clearance. It is understood the site will be developed simultaneously with RA2 Ramsey Gateway allocation as the sites have interlinked public open space provision.
<b>Viability</b>	Viability could be an issue if the site proves to be heavily contaminated.
<b>Deliverability</b>	The site is dependent on the development of Ramsey Gateway to deliver the interlinked public open space provision. Planning application 16/00311/FUL is yet to be determined with a number of outstanding issues still needing to be resolved. Therefore, for dwellings to be completed in 2019/2020 appears optimistic.
<b>Delivery</b>	No comments.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The latest AMR forecasts the first 16 dwellings will be completed in 2019/2020. We consider this is optimistic and the delivery of the site is questionable until permission has been granted for Ramsey Gateway.

<b>Site Allocation</b>	<b>RA8 Former RAF Upwood and Upwood Hill House, Ramsey</b>
<b>Unit size</b>	25ha for approximately 450 homes
<b>Current planning status</b>	Planning application 1201274OUT was approved with the S106 Agreement completed in June 2017.  No Reserved Matters application submitted.
<b>Constraints</b>	There is currently poor access to services and facilities.  The site is constrained by its former uses with potential for heritage assets and wildlife/ecological interests to be protected.  The site is located within Flood Zone 1.  Substantial demolition would be required - There are a number of buildings on site that need to be removed.  Protected trees will act as a constraint to the siting of development.  Despite these constraints as planning permission has been granted for the site HDC must consider it is suitable for residential development.
<b>Suitability</b>	HDC granted planning permission for redevelopment in June 2017. Before the site is able to deliver units, demolition, clearance, and potentially decontamination is required.
<b>Availability</b>	The site is available but a number of buildings must be demolished before development can commence.
<b>Viability</b>	A viability assessment was submitted with the outline application. It was agreed that the smaller 150 unit scheme would be viable with at least 23% affordable housing (Officers Report April 2015). Therefore, we consider that additional sites should be allocated to address the shortfall in affordable dwellings likely to be delivered on the site.
<b>Deliverability</b>	No comments.
<b>Delivery</b>	No comments.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The latest AMR forecasts the first 10 dwellings will be completed in

	2018/2019. This is very optimistic as no Reserved Matters application has been submitted. There are also a number of pre commencement conditions that need to be discharged as well as a considerable amount of demolition.
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