

Urban&Civic



Wintringham St Neots

Huntingdonshire District
Council Local Plan

Matter 12 Statement

Examination in Public

July 2018

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ON BEHALF OF URBAN&CIVIC

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Town Planning and Urban Design



Huntingdonshire District Local Plan Examination in Public

Hearing Statement on behalf of Urban&Civic plc (Consultee 992844)

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Matter 12 – Housing Supply and Delivery

Question 4

Specifically, are the timescales and rates of delivery on large strategic sites realistic?

1. The overarching timescales and rates of delivery on the two largest allocated sites, at the former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm site and at St Neots East (Wintringham Park) are considered to be realistic and are fully supported by recent research¹ and relevant appeals decision. Both are strategic sites that are well placed to make an important contribution to the delivery of new homes over the Local Plan period. Urban&Civic and The Partnership (in relation to Wintringham Park) are committed to ensuring that both sites deliver housing at an ambitious but realistic rate.
2. From an overarching perspective, both sites strongly accord with the NPPF key principle of sustainable development, through the *coordinated* provision of homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure within an accessible location. This equally supports the draft Local Plan's strategic approach of concentrating development in location which provide or has the potential to provide the greatest access to services and facilities.

The former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm site

3. The trajectory in the Council's AMR reflects an average projected development rate of 250 dwellings per annum over the 20-year period (or 5% per year), peaking at 300 dwellings per annum. Significantly, research contained within the Letwin Review² highlights that the median percentage of their 15 study sites built each year averages at 6.5%. This would equate to 325 dwellings per year at the Former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm site, above any of the suggested rates in the AMR.

¹ Independent Review of Built Out: draft analysis; Ministry of Homes, Communities & Local Government (2018), and Start to Finish - how quickly do large scale housing sites deliver; Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners

² Independent Review of Built Out: draft analysis; Ministry of Homes, Communities & Local Government (2018)

4. An average of 250 dwellings per annum is a realistic rate of development given the following combination of factors:
 - the site is in an excellent strategic location between Cambridge and Peterborough (to be linked with a busway) with potential for an on-site railway station (as reserved by the Outline Planning Permission) on the East Coast Mainline, whilst the site will also be supported by the A1 (M) carriageway (currently being upgraded), and the new A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon road (linked to A1 (M));
 - there are already three access points in place on the west side of the site at Ermine Street, with a further access to the south at A141 to be applied for in 2018;
 - early investment in on site infrastructure including the provision of internal roads, utilities, drainage, landscaping etc which enables the efficient delivery of residential units.
 - the absence of constraints as identified by the Letwin Review³, including in relation to lack of transport infrastructure, difficulties of land remediation, delayed installations by utility companies, constrained site logistics, limited availability of capital, limited supplies of building materials, and limited availability of skilled labour.
 - the size of the site as a whole – at 575 hectares and 3 miles in length – to accommodate a high volume of housing delivery;
 - the potential for multiple housing providers to exist at different locations on site with sales outlets not in direct conflict with other housing providers;
 - the potential for a high absorption rate, as a result of wide range of types, sizes, design, context, tenure and price, and physical location of housing;
 - the strength of existing demand for housing on site;
 - the continued delivery of commercial floorspace and jobs within the Enterprise Zone to support housing growth on site; and
 - the delivery of the first primary school on site (open 2016) and other social and community uses;

5. A number of these factors are corroborated by the Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners research paper⁴ which highlights the key influencing factors of local market strength, number of sales outlets and tenure mix in ensuring a high rate of housing delivery.

6. There has been considerable investment in remediation and infrastructure installation at the Former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm to enable delivery to come forward, following the grant of Outline Permission for 5,000 homes in 2014. The site has also benefited from considerable levels of public sector funding including a grant of £5 million (and additional loan) for Enterprise Zone enabling works specifically targeted at enabling the delivery of jobs. As a result of this investment, the entirety of the first development phase (Key Phase 1) is now infrastructured and development

³ Independent Review of Built Out: draft analysis; Ministry of Homes, Communities & Local Government (2018)

⁴ Start to Finish - how quickly do large scale housing sites deliver; Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners

ready and Urban&Civic are well placed to accelerate delivery. Appendix 1 illustrates the full range of reserved matter applications submitted and approved at the Former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm site, including the early provision of infrastructure together with commercial and subsequent residential led applications.

7. The site has already delivered 132 occupied residential units (as of end of June 2018), despite still being at a relatively early stage of delivery on a brownfield site with all the constraints that this creates. This is anticipated to increase significantly in subsequent years as:
 - a. multiple delivery fronts are opened up across the full breadth of the site;
 - b. additional residential parcels with a variety of housing products come on stream; and
 - c. further investment in additional supporting infrastructure including from government.
8. This entirely correlates with the Letwin Review's initial analysis which set out that the opportunities for multiple house builders and points of sale on site as well as multiple styles of homes and public realm on large sites enhances delivery. Work is ongoing to define the next phase of development and expand the existing key phase – this will allow for further development to take place as the existing consents are built out. There is a strong possibility that future phases and the current phase will have periods of build out at the same time – allowing for multiple markets to effectively operate on the site as a whole. As evidenced by the Letwin Review, large sites are a fundamental part of housing supply with rapid house building a consequence of variety within those sites.
9. The most recent planning appeal⁵ to test the 5-year Housing Land Supply for Huntingdonshire District Council (APP/H0520/W/17/3172571) further reinforces this view. In his report, the Inspector stated that:

'all [4 sites referenced including Alconbury Weald] have planning permission for at least as many units as the numbers relied on for the 5-year supply. Although some reserved matters and other conditions remain to be discharged, there seems no reason to doubt that these can be dealt with in the time available. In the case of Alconbury, the Council's delivery programme is challenging, but the development is already well under way, and a number of different house builders are involved.'

'This is not to say that they are certain to be achieved, but neither the NPPF nor the PPG requires such a degree of certainty. From the evidence given at the inquiry, it seems to me that all of these sites have a realistic prospect of delivery within the required period.'

Wintringham Park

10. The St Neots East Strategic Expansion Location consists of two sites (Wintringham Park and Loves Farm Phase 2) that will be delivered within the plan period and will be built out separately with a

⁵ Planning Inspector's Appeal Report, Ref APP/H0520/W/17/3172571, 11th December 2017 (Paragraphs 28 - 29)

number of distinct phases within each site. Urban&Civic are development partners in Wintringham Park alongside the Nuffield Trusts (The Partnership).

12. The Partnership is committed to early delivery of development at Wintringham Park and the timely submission and approval of a hybrid planning application is key to enable this. The hybrid planning application was submitted in October 2017 and includes infrastructure serving the first phase of the development.
13. The Partnership remain of the view that the construction of new homes will be underway on site in 2018/19. However, due to the fact that the determination of the hybrid planning application has been delayed, it is now unlikely that the 25 homes predicted in this period of the AMR will be possible.
14. With a positive set of outcomes from the planning process in terms of finalisation the S106 agreement, issuing of the Hybrid Planning Permission and the swift turnaround of residential Reserved Matters applications, the Partnership believe that it would be possible to deliver in the region of 65 homes in 2019/20. This still reflects the full build out of the scheme within the Local Plan period but recognises the realities of a delayed start on site.
15. Should the positive planning outcomes sought not be achieved. the Partnership would revert to the view of the Inspector at the recent appeal⁶ at Thrapston Road, Brampton (APP/H0520/W/17/3172571) where he concluded:

“I consider that the trajectory should be pushed back at least one year which would result in a reduction of 250 dwellings being completed within the next 5 years”.
16. In the light of this, delivery is projected over a 13-year period at an average annual rate of 215 and a maximum of 250. This represents an achievable rate of delivery, taking into account the following key considerations:
 - there is already a momentum of delivery in the area building on the current Loves Farm Scheme;
 - this is a greenfield site, with limited constraints and existing infrastructure opportunities;
 - the site is in a fantastic location relative to the market with easy access to St Neots town centre and A1 to the west, the Rail Station with connections to London and to the employment centre of Cambridge in the East;
 - the site is strategically located on the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge growth corridor;
 - the hybrid planning application, including the detailed Design Code and full proposals for initial infrastructure, provides a platform for reserved matters to be brought forward quickly and infrastructure to be delivered at an early stage; and

⁶ Planning Inspector's Appeal Report, Ref APP/H0520/W/17/3172571, 11th December 2017 (Paragraph 27)

- housebuilders for the first parcels have already been identified and reserved matters applications for these parcels are currently being developed.

Comparison to other sites

17. Whilst it is accepted that all development sites have unique circumstances regarding delivery, the figure below provides a comparison to other large sites that have delivered (or are still delivering) a large volume of residential units. The selected sites have all achieved a higher peak number of dwellings within a single year than is currently projected for the Former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm and Wintringham Park sites. All of the selected sites have also achieved an average number of dwellings per annum greater than currently projected for the Wintringham Park site.

Site Name	Local Authority	Total dwellings delivered	Completions		
			Years of completions	Peak Dwellings per annum	Average dwellings per annum
Hamptons	Peterborough	5439	21	548	259
Cambourne	South Cambs	4198	19	620	221
Cranbrook	East Devon	1476	5	419	295
<i>Projection</i>					
Former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm	Huntingdonshire	5000	20	300	250
Wintringham Park		2800	13	250	215

Source - DLA research based on public AMRs

Question 5

How has flexibility been provided in terms of the supply of housing? Are there other potential sources of supply not specifically identified? Can this be quantified?

18. HDC have ensured that enough flexibility is included in the Local Plan housing trajectory and allocation policies. This has been done via the allocation of sites for more homes than the proposed Objectively Assessed Need for housing, which is expressed as a minimum figure – “at least 20,100 new homes”.

Question 10

Is there a case for a staggered or phased housing requirement with a lower figure in the early years of the plan period to take account of the large strategic allocations? If so, what would be an appropriate phasing?

19. Urban&Civic do not believe that a phased approach to the housing requirement is necessary, as the key sites within the Strategic Expansion Locations are either delivering or anticipated to begin delivering housing shortly. The former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm site has already been subject to significant investment and delivery of supporting infrastructure and employment provision and is delivering larger number of homes. The rate of delivery is expected to accelerate

in line with the trajectory as multiple delivery fronts are opened up across the full breadth of the site and additional residential parcels with a wide range of housing products come on stream. The construction of new homes at Wintringham Park (within the St Neots East SEL) will be underway on site in 2018/19 subject to finalisation of the S106 agreement, following the HDC resolution to grant planning permission. Crucially, this is a *hybrid* application which includes early infrastructure provision, including access and internal roads, utilities, and other enabling works to support early residential provision.

20. HDC have provided sufficient flexibility within the Local Plan site allocations for additional homes to come forward and accelerate housing growth, to maintain the 5-year supply of deliverable housing land.

Appendix 1 - List of Planning Applications

Type	Planning Ref	Application summary	Permission Date	Status
Infrastructure	11/02094/FUL	Enabling works for the Alconbury Enterprise Zone including provision of highways accesses, and landscaping and associated works	28/02/12	Built
Commercial	12/01363/FUL	Business Incubator Unit comprising B1 and B2 uses and associated works	28/09/12	Built
OUTLINE	12/01158OUT	Up to 290,00sqm of employment floorspace, up to 5,000 dwellings, mixed use hub and mixed-use neighbourhood facilities, non-residential institutions including primary schools, nurseries, a secondary school, open spaces, woodlands and sports provision, new vehicular access points from Ermine Street and the A141, associated works etc	01/10/14	Under construction
Infrastructure	14/01300/FUL	New road infrastructure to support the delivery of the Alconbury Enterprise Zone	16/10/14	Built
Key Phase 1	14/08220/COND	Key Phase 1 Definition (submitted under Condition 9 of the Outline)	08/12/14	n/a
	14/08285/COND	Key Phase 1 Framework including Design Code (submitted under Condition 10 of the Outline)	26/03/15	n/a
Education and Community	H/5000/15/CC	Erection of a primary school and nursery, soft and hard paly areas, sports pitches, parking, landscaping	26/03/15	Built
Infrastructure	14/01979/REM	New highways, new junction to Ermine Street, hard and soft landscaping, utilities, SUDs, to support delivery of Primary School	31/03/15	Built
Commercial	15/00259/REM	Enterprise Zone Club Building comprising B1, D1, D2, and A3 uses and associated works	06/05/15	Built
Infrastructure	15/00540/REM	New highways, landscaping, SUDs infrastructure and associated works	26/06/15	Built
Infrastructure	15/00542/REM	New landscaping, land remodelling and associated works	26/06/15	Built
Residential	15/01117/REM	128 dwellings, pocket park, associated highways, landscaping and ancillary works	11/12/15	Under construction
Commercial	15/01847/REM	31,893m ² of mixed B1(a), B1(b), B2 & ancillary B8 floorspace and associated works	27/01/16	Built
Infrastructure	15/02380/REM	New highways, landscaping and ancillary works	11/02/16	Built
Infrastructure	15/02254/REM	SUDs Infrastructure including foul water pumping station	03/03/16	Built
Commercial	15/02331/REM	Mid-Tech Building comprising B1(a), B1(b), B1(c) and ancillary B8 uses, and associated works.	22/06/16	Under construction
Commercial	16/00752/REM	Mixed-use building including office, research and development and a training facility (Use Class B1(a)/B1(b))	29/06/16	Built
Infrastructure	16/01047/REM	New highways including associated highways landscaping and ancillary works	17/08/16	Built
Commercial	16/01066/REM	43,846.5m ² mixed B1(a), B1(b), B2 and ancillary B8 floorspace and associated highways, landscaping and ancillary works.	02/09/16	Built
Infrastructure	16/01148/REM	Strategic foul & potable water main, water pressure boost pump, foul water pumping station and pedestrian and cycleway	15/09/16	Built
Commercial	16/01546/FUL	13,287sqm building comprising B1(A), B1(B), B1(C) and B8 uses. highway works, landscaping, and associated works.	14/10/16	Built
Residential	16/01329/REM	165 dwellings, pocket park, associated highways, landscaping and works	25/10/16	Under construction
Infrastructure	16/01445/REM	Primary electrical substation, and ancillary works	09/12/16	Not yet implemented
Education and Community	16/01851/REM	New community park, including allotments, MUGA, NEAP, skate park, amenity open space, landscaping, car parking	16/02/17	Built
Residential	16/02013/REM	200 dwellings, two pocket parks, a linear park, associate highways, landscaping and ancillary works.	24/02/17	Under construction
Commercial	16/02663/REM	Business incubator unit comprising 1,710m ² B1 use and associated works.	20/03/17	Under construction
Infrastructure	16/02262/REM	New cricket park, watchtower green area, the boulevard and SUDs infrastructure	04/04/17	Under construction
Education and Community	16/02553/REM	New community building and allotment building and associated ancillary works	28/04/17	Part Built

Residential & Commercial	17/00079/REM	101 dwellings, 1179m ² of A1, A3, & D1 floorspace, 5082m ² of b1a/b1b/b1c floorspace, and all associated works.	23/05/17	Under construction
Commercial / Community	17/00434/FUL	Change of use of the former airfield watch office to community use (d1) and office use (b1a)	12/06/17	Under construction
Residential	17/00802/REM	31 flats, 6 townhouses and all associated engineering and earth works, including ground remodelling, hard and soft landscaping and ancillary works.	09/08/17	Under construction