

EXAMINATION OF THE OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2036

EXAMINATION STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF DE MERKE ESTATES & M.K DOGAR LTD

Matter 2 – Housing Capacity in Oxford

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Examination Statement provides a response on behalf of De Merke Estates & M.K.Dogar Ltd, to those Matters and Issues raised by the Inspectors, and specifically relates to the Housing capacity in Oxford (Matter 2, in respect of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 and its supporting evidence base.
- 1.2 De Merke Estates & M.K.Dogar Ltd own 17ha of land situated adjacent to the northern side of Oxford City at Old Marston.
- 1.3 The site includes 3.52ha of land that is allocated for housing in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 under Policy SP26 – Hill View Farm. The Council's Housing Trajectory anticipates that a total of 110 dwellings will be delivered from this site during the monitoring years 2024/5 and 2026/7.
- 1.4 The remaining parcel of land (13.5ha) is being promoted as an omission site (HELAA reference number: 112a2), with capacity for a further circa 270-360 dwellings¹.

2.0 Matter 2 – Housing Capacity in Oxford:

Question 1 Whether the capacity-based housing requirement for Oxford of 10,884 (544 dwellings per annum over 20 years) set out in OCC1.B is realistic?

- 2.1 No, Neame Sutton does not consider the capacity based housing requirement for Oxford of 10,884 dwellings to be realistic for the following reasons:
- Completions for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19 equating to 1,159 is incorrect and not supported by evidence.
- 2.2 The Council's Updated Housing Trajectories² suggest a total of 1,159 completions for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19, as follows:

| | |
|---------|---------------|
| 2016/17 | 435 dwellings |
| 2017/18 | 373 dwellings |
| 2018/19 | 351 dwellings |

¹ Based on an indicative density range of between 30-40 dpha

² PSD.4 Housing Trajectory V1 Annualised Target, June 2019 and PSD.5 Housing Trajectory V2 Stepped Trajectory, June 2019

2.3 However, table 3 of the Council's accompanying Housing Trajectory Note³ confirms the completions for the same period as follows:

| | |
|---------|---------------|
| 2016/17 | 373 dwellings |
| 2017/18 | 282 dwellings |
| 2018/19 | 351 dwellings |

2.4 There is therefore a discrepancy with the completion figures for the monitoring years 2016/17 and 2017/18.

2.5 It is of relevance to note that the above figures for these monitoring years were relied upon by the Council in its previous trajectory set out within the Annual Monitoring Report, 2017-2018, published in October 2018⁴.

2.6 Furthermore, the completion figures set out in paragraph 2.3 above are confirmed within both the Council's HELAA (2017)⁵ and Background Paper, Assessing and Meeting Housing Need, March 2019⁶, albeit that in the latter it incorrectly identifies the completions for the year 2017/2018 as 249 dwellings.

2.7 Having regard to the above, it is unclear where these additional completions now being relied upon by the Council have come from.

- Total of 303 Outstanding Commitments on sites of less than 10 dwellings.

2.8 Commitments on sites of less than 10 dwellings is a new line entry. However, it is not clear from the evidence which sites make up the 303 dwellings.

- Anticipated supply from deliverable sites HELAA 2019 of 7,518 dwellings.

2.9 Neame Sutton has previously raised concerns at the Reg 19 stage (Chapter 3 specifically refers) regarding the anticipated supply of deliverable sites being relied upon to come forward from the Council's HELAA and has assessed each of the sites against the deliverability test set out in Annex 2 of the Framework 2019.

2.10 This evidence is presented in the trajectories that were submitted alongside Neame Sutton's Reg 19 representations and which have been updated for the purposes of the Local Plan Examination to reflect the Council's most up to date evidence. These are appended to the Matter 4: Housing Delivery Statement.

³ PSD.3 Note to accompany the updated housing trajectory, June 2019

⁴ SUP.4 AMR 2017-2018, October 2018

⁵ Paragraph 4.0.8 of the HELAA, November 2017 (HOU.1)

⁶ Table page 18 of Assessing and Meeting Housing Need Background Paper (BGP.3)

- A total of 1,904 Windfalls.

- 2.11 The Council is now seeking to rely on a total of 1,904 dwellings from windfalls (136dpa) compared with 1,020 dwellings (60dpa) previously, and represents a significant increase.
- 2.12 It is understood that this arises from the inclusion of windfalls from garden land, which had previously been excluded, and inclusion of sites of 5-9 dwellings which had previously been discounted to avoid double counting as these sites were identified within the HELAA.
- 2.13 Given that Oxford is an authority constrained by Green Belt, the majority of historic delivery will have come forward from sites within the defined urban area as windfalls. Given that such land is a finite resource this trend cannot be reliably projected into the future.
- 2.14 The Council's case for inclusion of windfalls, as set out in the updated HELLA, March 2019, and Updated Housing Trajectory Note, June 2019, is based on nothing more than a best guess based on historic trends. This is not a positive approach or reliable way forward and is not the compelling evidence that the Framework now requires particularly in the context of the current 5 year period.

Question 2 Whether the policies of the Plan adequately promote housing delivery, and whether the Plan provides an adequate basis for ensuring that the best use would be made of land within Oxford to maximise housing provision?

- 2.15 No, the Council has identified a flat line housing requirement of 544 dpa, which is substantially below the OAN it identifies (1,400dpa), and is well below the minimum housing need figure calculated using the standard method in isolation (749dpa).
- 2.16 This cannot be considered to promote housing delivery.
- 2.17 The Council's approach flies in the face of its purported embrace of growth through the Oxford Housing Growth Deal and will result in an ever increasing crisis in terms of affordability and affordable housing need.
- 2.18 Furthermore, with an assumed capacity within Oxford of 10,000 dwellings, a total of 18,000 dwellings of unmet need arises. Under the Growth Deal a total of 14,300 dwellings will be met by neighbouring authorities thus resulting in a shortfall of 3,700 dwellings.
- 2.19 There is therefore clear scope for an increase in the planned level of housing delivery to ensure a meaningful increase in new housing that seeks to address (at least in part) the worsening affordability, affordable housing need, and the apparent deficit in unmet need within the HMA.

- 2.20 In allocating land at Hill View Farm, Old Marston, for 110 dwellings (Policy SP26), the Council has missed an opportunity not to secure an additional 270-360 dwellings by including the promotion site within the allocated site, and therefore the Council has not made the best use of the available housing land within Oxford to maximise housing provision.
- 2.21 For the reasons set out in Neame Sutton's Reg 19 representations (Chapter 5), the Council had previously rejected the promotion site on the basis of a flawed analysis that fails to recognise the potential benefits of a residential scheme on the site.
- 2.22 In the absence of any assessment, Neame Sutton undertook a Sustainability Appraisal of the promotion site as part of its Reg 19 reps, which confirmed that the site scored similarly to the immediately adjacent allocated sites Policy SP26: Hill View Farm and Policy SP27: Land west of Mill Lane.
- 2.23 The Council has therefore been provided with a clear demonstration of the suitability and sustainability of the promotion site for housing and in not allocating the site, the Council has failed to maximise the sites potential and the Plan's ability to maximise housing provision.

Question 3 Whether the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELLA) is a reliable indication of the capacity of the city for housing and whether greater clarity is required for the numbers to be provided on housing sites and mixed use sites?

- 2.24 Whilst the HELAA has now been updated to include housing numbers to be provided on sites, this is no substitute for setting out the capacity of each site within the Local Plan. The HELAA forms part of the evidence base and as such the site's capacities should be identified within the Statutory Development Plan in the interests of transparency and positive planning.

3.0 Conclusion – Areas where amendment to the Plan is being sought:

- 3.1 The Council has failed to maximise the potential of all available sites with Oxford, such as the promotion site at Old Marston, in order to fully meet the City's housing need.
- 3.2 In this respect, and having regard to De Merke Estates & M.K.Dogar previous representations submitted at the Regulation 19 stage, the Council has the necessary evidence to support the allocation of the promotion site in the emerging Oxford Local Plan and that the contribution of an additional circa 270-360 dwellings would make a valuable contribution towards the Council's open market and affordable housing needs.