

Epping Forest District Council Representations to the Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016 (Regulation 18)

Stakeholder ID	2191	Name	Kerr	Family
Method	Letter			
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Letter or Email Response:

1.1 The following document constitutes a representation on behalf of our client, the Kerr Family, in respect of the Epping Forest District Council's Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016. 1.2 We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Draft Local Plan and support its high-growth strategy regarding the allocation of land for housing, and specifically the allocation of site SR-0003 in North Weald Bassett, shown overleaf at page 6. 1.3 We particularly welcome the Council's support for Scenario B of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Study, directing growth towards the less sensitive and more sustainable north-western edge of North Weald Bassett. We note that this direction of growth has the support of local residents and will create a more compact, sustainable and economically-vibrant community with a strengthened service provision. This direction of growth will protect the more visually-sensitive green belt landscape towards the southern edge of the town and will assist in unlocking and maximising the redevelopment potential of the Airfield. 2.0 SITE ASSESSMENT 2.1 The perpetual under delivery of housing in Epping Forest has led to a severe shortage of housing within the District. We therefore welcome the high growth option for North Weald Bassett allocating 1,580 dwellings under Policy SP 2. 2.2 Site SR-0003 will make a significant contribution of 276 homes towards the total housing allocation for North Weald Bassett. The allocation of this site is inherently sustainable, socially, environmentally and economically, by way of its location within the town. The allocation of the site is consistent with Scenario B of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Study, which was identified as the favoured option for growth for the town, through feedback from local residents. 2.3 The points below address how the site performed against ARUP's site selection criteria in terms of impact on the environment, heritage and biodiversity, value to green belt, accessibility, land use efficiency, landscape and townscape merit, and physical constraints and conditions. Although we generally agree with the conclusions drawn by the study, certain categories are unfairly assessed, requiring revision, as set out in Appendix 1. Siting 2.4 The site is located in very close proximity of the town centre of North Weald Bassett, directly north/north-west of the High Road. The site straddles Church Lane and lies North of Lancaster Road, marking the northern perimeter of the western part of town, west of the western perimeter of town, and east of the Airfield which will be allocated for employment use. 2.5 By way of its siting vis-à-vis existing and proposed development, the allocation would constitute a coherent, rational extension to North Weald Bassett, rounding off the existing built area. The site is small enough to be flexible and deliverable, whilst not undermining the character of the town centre nor placing strain on its services and infrastructure. 2.6 The allocation of the site is fundamental to the success of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan as a whole, given that without this site being brought forward, future development at the Airfield would be incoherent as it would be neither visually nor physically linked to the centre of North Weald Bassett. 2.7 The development of the site will boost investment to strengthen the commercial centre and establish North Weald Bassett as a sustainable place in its own right with an active community

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life. Environmental 2.8 ARUP's Report on Site Selection (September 2016) concludes that the site passes all four stages of assessment, and recommends it for the allocation of between 200-250 homes. 2.9 Overall, the site's development would result in very few significant and minor negative environmental impacts, particularly in comparison to other assessed sites. Development of the site would have no impact on Internationally and Nationally protected sites, Ancient Woodland, protected trees and TPOs or Priority Species, thus complying with draft Policy SP6, which seeks to protect the natural environment. 2.10 Additionally, the site is located within close proximity of bus stops, employment locations and other local amenities, being directly adjacent to the town centre. There are also no physical development constraints that would impinge on delivery: gas, oil and power lines and access to the site do not pose any constraints. 2.11 Whilst the site's land is categorised as high quality 'versatile agricultural land' (grade 1-3) within the assessment, it is not very productive given its size, lack of access to irrigation and proximity to housing, and can be classified as grade 3a. This perceived constraint is outweighed by the benefit of delivering homes in a sustainable location, making a major contribution to Epping Forest's objectively assessed housing need. It is further noted that the District's agricultural land supply consists predominantly of grades 1-3 and the loss of such land is therefore unavoidable. 2.12 Despite the site being located within the Green Belt, the level of harm caused by the release of the land, as set out in the site matrix, would be low in comparison to other, more sensitive sites southeast of the town. 2.13 As such, we are supportive of draft Policy SP 5, which sets out parts of the Green Belt to be released for development, including parts of North Weald Bassett. Although we recognise the need to protect Green Belt land, given that it covers 92% of the district, small-scale release is considered essential to provide urgently required homes, and the Council should prioritise protecting highly sensitive sites. Deliverability and Site Capacity 2.14 The site's immediate deliverability is achievable and rational. Its development would need to be part of North Weald Bassett's Phase 1 of development, to ensure development further out is connected to the centre of town and is visually coherent. This quick deliverability is readily achievable due to the lack of significant infrastructure investment required to bring forward the site for development, in contrast to a number of the larger site allocations in North Weald Bassett which will require significant infrastructure investments to deliver. It is considered that the early phasing of site SR-0003 is crucial in reducing the current unmet housing need for the area, for the successful delivery of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan and to achieve wider sustainable growth aspirations; we would therefore propose the phasing of the site be brought forward towards the early stages of the plan period. 2.15 In addition, in order to maximise the sustainable location of the site, the Council should consider the proposed density for the site, which will assist in delivering a wide range of housing types, a need highlighted in the draft Local Plan and the Council's aspirations for development in the plan period. Whilst it is acknowledged that the site may not be suitable for higher density housing on a broad scale, flexibility should be built into the plan to provide for a more sustainable settlement pattern, a reduction in the need to travel, a wider range of housing types and a reduction in the pressure on further removals of land from the green belt. We recognise that the Parish Council supports this approach. Design 2.16 A Masterplan for the site would be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, local residents and other developers guided by principles of placemaking. This development will be of a high design standard, delivering a range of house types, in line with draft policy H 1 and will be well connected with surrounding developments. 2.17 The existing public footpaths running through the site will either be reinstated into a future Masterplan for the site or replaced within the proposed road network. Service Provision 2.18 In line with draft policy SP 2, and through a dialogue with other developers, we intend to bring forward adequate services and infrastructure for our development, which will ensure that existing services are not strained. 3.0 SUMMARY 3.1 In summary, we are broadly supportive of Epping Forest's approach to housing provision within the emerging Local Plan. In particular, we support draft policy P 6, which allocates the fields east and west of Church Lane, north of Lancaster Road (SR-0003) for approximately 276 homes. 3.2 Despite this site being in the Green Belt, its allocation is seen as essential to the overall success of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan and the Epping Forest Local Plan, as the site constitutes a rational extension to the settlement's built form, which will deliver a more compact, sustainable and economically-vibrant North Weald Bassett. The site owner intends on bringing forward a Masterplan for the site, in dialogue with other landowners and the Council, to deliver high quality new homes to North Weald Bassett, which are well connected to the town and surroundings. APPENDIX 1 - SITE ASSESSMENT MATRIX - amends APPENDIX 2 - LOCATION PLAN

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