

Local Plan Regulation 19 Representation
Planning Policy Team
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
323 High Street
Epping
Essex CM16 4BZ

29th January 2018

BY EMAIL

Dear Sir/Madam,

**LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 19 REPRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF PURDY CONTRACTS LTD.
PURDY CONTRACTS LTD. MOTT STREET, E4 7RW**

We are writing on behalf of our client Purdy Contracts Ltd. ("our client") in response to the Epping Forest Draft Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation. Our client owns land known as Brooklyn Lodge, situated on Mott Street, High Beech (Site Location Plan enclosed) and is promoting the site as a logical development opportunity for the Council to consider.

The merits of the site and ability to sensitively accommodate development are discussed further within these representations. However, firstly it should be noted that Purdy Contracts Ltd. is a forward-thinking company which is supportive of the District Councils goals and objectives whilst being respectful of its generally rural location. It is a longstanding employer in the District with aspirations to expand its current operations at Brooklyn Lodge.

In this context our client can confirm the potential of the site to assist the Council with an expansion of its commercial floorspace to approximately 8,500 sq.ft, with the remaining site area capable of accommodating up to 12 houses.

a. Strategic Matters

Firstly, there are a number of strategic matters that need to be considered in the preparation of the new Local Plan in Epping and these are considered in turn below. It is essential the Council submits its local plan to the Secretary of State on the premise that it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

In order for the Local Plan to comply with the NPPF, it is necessary for the Local Plan document to, inter alia:

- Widen the choice of high quality homes [9];
- Positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area [14];

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- Contain sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change [14];
- Be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption in favour should apply locally [15];
- Respond positively to wider opportunities for growth [17];
- Seek to secure high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings [17];
- Boost significantly the supply of housing [47];
- Meet the full objectively assessed housing needs of the housing market area and identify key sites that are critical to delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period [47];
- Plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups [50]; and
- Be deliverable and viable [173].

Paragraph 182 goes on to confirm that, to be sound, a plan must be:

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and where it is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

Duty to Co-operate

Local planning authorities have a duty to co-operate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. The purpose of the duty to co-operate is to ensure strategic priorities are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in Local Plans. The failure to demonstrate compliance with the duty to co-operate would render the plan incapable of being found legally compliant. Recent examinations of Local Plans have confirmed that Inspectors will require robust evidence to be provided to show how a local authority has complied with the Duty to Co-operate.

Specifically, we urge the Council to take into consideration the policies contained within the draft London Plan. Authorities outside London have a similar Duty to Co-operate (Localism Act 2011) with the Mayor on relevant matters of strategic importance as part of the process of preparing their Local Plans. In addition, Planning Practice Guidance states that '*cooperation between the Mayor, boroughs and local planning authorities bordering London will be vital to ensure that important strategic issues, such as housing delivery and economic growth, are planned effectively*' (NPPG – Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 9-007-20140306).

Epping District is highlighted under Figure 2.13 of the draft London Plan as a district with key commuting patterns into London. The Council should therefore take into consideration Policy SD2 'Collaboration in the Wider South East' from within the draft London Plan to consider the proposed uplift in housing numbers and the requirement to find a higher number of sites within the administrative area.

The authority area is also located within the strategic London Stansted Cambridge Corridor Core Area Strategic Vision which seeks to align employment and housing market areas and ensure support is given for facilitating the delivery of new homes, employment and services which meet the needs of existing and future residents. The majority of this sub-region is constrained by Green Belt and as such Epping should ensure its rural communities are sustained.

Evidence base

An up-to-date evidence base should provide a sound basis for the plan and consultation on its content will help to ensure local communities and other interested parties are aware of the issues considered by the Council in the preparation of a Local Plan. The consideration of different options to meet needs should be developed using up to date studies to reflect the most recent information available.

At present, the Green Belt Stage 2 Assessment (EB705A) does not allow for consideration of how smaller, discrete parcels of land contribute to the Green Belt that may be suitable for further consideration for release. Instead, a combination of both small and extremely large parcels are assessed which skews the findings overall.

It is overly reliant on subjective assessment without measurable, transparent and replicable criteria and parameters and does not clearly define a set of measurable parameters for each of the purposes against which to assess the contribution of a parcel to the Green Belt.

b. The Draft Plan

Our client supports the vision of the Council on page 19 in directing development to the most sustainable locations and respecting the attributes of the different towns and villages; however, greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring key services and facilities in rural areas are protected from closure by providing modest development in the smaller settlements.

Further, it is abundantly clear that there is a significant lack of previously developed land available in the District which could be utilised to provide much needed family homes. On this basis and in order to ensure the Council meets its OAN, greenfield land should be assessed on a case by case basis to ensure the tenure, mix and layout required to meet the housing target can be suitably accommodated.

Part of our client's site can be considered previously developed land and should be assessed for the appropriateness of an efficient mixed-use development.

Sewardstone

Sewardstone has been identified as a Hamlet following a review of its range of services in the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper in 2015 which concluded '*Sewardstone is characterised by linear development along Sewardstone Road, between the southern edge of Waltham Abbey and the northern edge of Chingford. There is no discernible centre, and there are few services within the settlement itself. The score achieved is largely a reflection of the frequency of bus services along Sewardstone Road. Residents of this area would have to travel to meet the majority of their daily requirements for education, health, retail and community facilities.*'

The document provides a clear indication of the varied number of small scale settlements which make up the built form across the District as evidenced, that due to over 92% of the District being rural in its nature, this has resulted

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in significant growth pressure on those town and district centres located toward the south of the District on the Central Underground Line.

Amongst this identification of an extensive rural community is the capabilities of such places to provide employment which are vital for the rural economy and which should be supported by the Council. The NPPF sets out a number of core principles at Paragraph 17 which requires plan makers to take account of the different roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it. Our client maintains that improvements to the settlement of Sewardstone can be made without detriment to the Green Belt on land which is available and suitable for development as supported by the Council's own site assessment.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

The housing distribution across the District within draft Policy SP2 of the plan outlines a general reduction of proposed dwellings across most settlements from that previously shown in the Regulation 18 consultation. This regulation 19 document is now heavily predicated on the release of large scale strategic masterplan areas which could have implications on the early delivery of housing in the District and the District's five year housing land supply (5YHLS).

At this point in time, our assessment of the Council's 5YHLS position in the Submission Plan shows that from April 2017 to March 2022, the Council can only demonstrate a 3.72 years supply. We consider that further sites are required to ensure the spatial strategy contained within the draft plan are found sound. At present:

- It is not positively prepared as it does not meet the short-term housing requirement of the District;
- It is not justified or effective, as it is not the most appropriate spatial strategy to deliver housing in the short term, especially considering that the Council had a spatial strategy within the Regulation 18 Local Plan which was geared to improving housing delivery as quickly as possible, through a reliance on smaller more deliverable allocations and this is considered reasonable and superior necessary strategy in light of the shortfall; and
- It does not conform with the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.

Policy P3 Waltham Abbey

The site is in proximity of proposed allocations WAL.E5 and WAL.E8 as shown on Map 5.6 contained within the draft plan. The draft policy highlights that both these sites are proposed to bring forward in excess of 40,000 sq.m of employment space, contributing considerably to the District's employment needs.

As such, the availability of land for residential development in proximity of our client's site should be favoured by the Council. We note that residential allocation WAL.R7 on Avey Lane has been allocated for 8 units; however, the sustainability of the location for residential development is questioned

c. Purdy Ltd

The NPPF is clear in requiring local planning authorities to identify sites which are deliverable (paragraph 47), and in order to be deliverable they should be available, offer a suitable location for development, and be achievable (footnote 11). The Council is reliant upon a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2012). The site was assessed under reference SR-0236 as a site 'suitable outside Green Belt policy'. The document assessed the site with those surrounding as being capable of delivering 61 units.

Brooklyn Lodge represents a logical and sustainable location to contribute to the future growth of the District and help meet its objectively assessed needs. The site is capable of meeting housing objectives outlined in the NPPF

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and NPPG in the context of its accessible location to community facilities and public transport. Furthermore, there are no recognisable constraints on the site which cannot be mitigated and no ecological issues which would impact possible development.

Furthermore, as a brownfield site, it is capable of being brought forward in advance of the plan. It also provides the opportunity to meet the needs of the local community, deliver significant benefits to the local community and maximising the efficiency of investment in existing infrastructure.

The site is located in Sewardstone on Mott Street. Purdy Ltd. has operated on the site for approximately 12 years and has contributed significantly to the Council's employment provision for local residents. There are various structures on site including a number of buildings used for offices and storage as well as glasshouse structures.

The site is relatively enclosed and inward looking, there are a number of viewpoints where the existing structures are visible from the surrounding area. Purdy Ltd. has been in discussions with the Council over recent years to expand its operations on the site through a sensitive expansion and enabling residential development on an otherwise derelict glasshouse site on the adjacent land. Unfortunately, an appeal against Epping Forest Council's refusal for the 'Demolition of existing glasshouse and two storey office extension' was dismissed in November 2016 (APP/J1535/W/16/3151154). The main focus of the appeal centred around the effect of the proposals on the openness of the Green Belt and the harm arising from this inappropriateness.

Since this appeal, Purdy Ltd has continued to operate out of its now constrained site, which is increasingly too small for the company's aspirations. The allocation of this site for small scale development will enable a long term vision for the site to be realised, securing the future employment of the site within Epping Forest District Council. We are confident that the Council's reasons for refusal can be overcome in this context to provide a well-designed, sensitive addition to this small settlement. For clarity, the following table seeks to highlight how the site's location within the Green Belt does not contribute to the aims and objectives of such designation within the context of the NPPF.

Brooklyn Lodge
<i>1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sewardstone is not a large built up area; - The site is defined by strong defensible boundaries formed by Mott Street and adjacent development; and Roads present recognisable permanent physical features to ensure boundary would not need to be altered during plan-period.
<i>2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The nearest settlements are Waltham Abbey to the north, segregated by the M25 motorway from local roads; and - As such the development of Brooklyn Lodge would not risk any coalescence of towns.
<i>3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The site can partially be considered previously developed land and is surrounded on three sides by existing development. There is a clear and identified need to identify suitable sites within the countryside to accommodate Epping's growth needs.
<i>4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</i>
Brooklyn Lodge is not in or adjacent to any Conservation Areas, and has no Listed Buildings or other heritage assets of significance in the settlement.



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5. *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land*

- The growth of Brooklyn Lodge would facilitate the recycling of existing built form whilst providing renewed employment provision and sensitively designed residential development; and
It would assist urban regeneration through the brownfield-led development and compensatory employment provision.

Summary

With over 92% of the District designated as Metropolitan Green Belt, the Council should review where appropriate sites such as this one can contribute towards its housing land supply and employment objectives. Should you wish to discuss this further, I am contactable on c.hutchison@glenny.co.uk

Yours sincerely,

For and on behalf of Glenny LLP
Strategic Planning

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