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Dear Sir / Madam,

Epping Forest District Local Plan – Proposed Submission Version 2017

These representations to the Proposed Submission Version (Regulation 19) of Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) Local Plan are made by Constable Homes Limited (CHL), an operating subsidiary of the Anderson Group, in respect of land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries, Chigwell. These representations are structured as follows:

- Background to CHL and the Anderson Group;
- Land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries – Site Description;
- Review of EFDC's approach to Spatial Strategy;
- Review of EFDC's approach to Green Belt;
- Review of Chigwell Policy, including assessment of land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries;
- Summary.

For the reasons set out within these representations, it is evident that the Pre-Submission Version of the Local Plan does not currently meet the 'tests' of soundness contained at Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). To ensure that the Local Plan complies with the 'tests' of soundness, it is clear that further sites must be allocated for development within Epping Forest over the Plan period (2011-2033). Due to the recognised lack of suitable sites, it is clear that this will necessitate the release of further land currently included within the Green Belt. On this basis, we are pleased to put forward the land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries, as identified on the enclosed Site Location Plan, for release from the Green Belt and allocation for sustainable residential-led development. The development of the site would make an important contribution to housing delivery within the District.

Background

CHL is an operating subsidiary of the Anderson Group. The Anderson Group was founded in 1987 as a groundworks and civil engineering business. Over the past 30 years, we have grown to become one of the largest privately-owned construction companies in the South East. We continue to undertake major groundworks, civil engineering, and remediation projects within the development sector, including for a number of house builders. We also operate successful and thriving development businesses, trading as 'Constable Homes Limited' and 'Anderson Design and Build Limited', which undertakes commercial and residential developments across London, East Anglia and the South East.

The Group specialises in the delivery of complex sites that are considered by most to be undevelopable.

An example of such a project is Chigwell Grove, which is within the administrative boundary of EFDC. The site was formerly the Tottenham Hotspur training ground. It had also previously been an unregulated landfill, and is located within the Green Belt. Working with the National Autistic Society and EFDC, we have delivered a state-of-the-art education and training centre that provides specialist education for 128 pupils aged 4-21 in a 3,500 sq. m building set within a sensitively landscaped environment. The delivery of the centre is enabled by the construction and sale of 60 new homes, and through funds raised by our charity arm, the Anderson Foundation. The centre opened in September 2017, with the new homes occupied shortly after.

This demonstrates the Group's commitment to investing in a locality, and to working with a Local Authority and community to bring forward sites that might otherwise be discounted, and remain problematic.

Land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries – Site Description

The Site lies to the east of Luxborough Lane, Chigwell, which is accessed directly from High Road. It comprises approximately 3.1 hectares of poor quality scrubland and is identified edged in red on the enclosed Site Location Plan. High Road is the main road which runs through Chigwell, and represents the core of the built development for the settlement. The southern boundary of the Site is approximately 100 metres from the junction of Luxborough Lane and High Road, and therefore it is well related to the existing urban area.

Abutting the Site to the east and south-east is Chigwell Nurseries, a well-established horticultural business. To the south of the site, separating the land from High Road, is a large residential property known as Chigwell Park Drive, which is set within generous grounds. There is a well-established tree belt to the north of the properties curtilage, which acts as a buffer between the existing dwelling and the Site.

The Site is located within the Green Belt, although these representations justify why it is appropriate to consider its release and allocation for sustainable residential-led development. There are no other known environmental or wildlife constraints, and the Health and Safety Executive have no interests in the site. The Site is in Flood Zone 1, and therefore is not at risk of flooding. There are no Listed Buildings on the Site. Two Grade II Listed properties, 'Great West Hatch' and 'Little West Hatch', are located to the south, although are of relative distance from the Site. Any proposed development would need to be mindful of these properties, although would offer an opportunity to improve the setting of these Listed Buildings.

The site has been in its current form for a number of years. Based on a review of EFDC's planning register, there have been no planning applications submitted in respect of the site.

Review of Epping Forest District Council's Approach to Spatial Strategy

Policy SP2 Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033

Policy SP2 identifies a minimum housing requirement of 11,400 new homes in Epping Forest over the Plan period 2011-2033. This is informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015 and additional Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) Updates. This housing requirement is considered to be unsound for a number of reasons. These are set out below.

Objectively Assessed Housing Need

The SHMA Update 2017 identified the full OAHN for EFDC as 12,573 dwellings over the Plan period 2011-2033. This equates to 572 dwellings per annum. However, the Pre-Submission Version of the Epping Forest Local Plan (EFLP) does not make provision for the full OAHN, instead setting out a housing requirement of a minimum of 11,400 dwellings over the Plan period. This equates to a minimum shortfall of 1,173 dwellings (over 50 dwellings per annum). We consider the implications of this below, through other working examples, similar precedents and detailed analysis.

1. East Herts District Plan – How the Inspector Considered Objectively Assessed Housing Need

We refer to the situation with the East Herts District Plan (EHDP) 2011-2033, which was submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination on 31st March 2017. On 16th May 2017, the Inspector raised a number of questions with East Herts (Inspectors Note 1, reference ED102) regarding the OAHN. The Inspector noted that the EHDP indicated the combined level of housing need across the Housing Market Area was 46,058 homes for the period 2011-2033, with 16,390 homes for East Herts. This was based upon the CLG-2012 household projections, as the 2014 projections had not yet been released. The EHDP acknowledged that the 2014 projections would be relevant and anticipated that this would lead to an increase in housing requirement for East Herts of around 19,500 new dwellings during the Plan period (54,608 dwellings across the HMA). The EHDP proposed to manage this by way of an early review. However, the Inspector stated (paragraph 5 of Note 1 ED102) *“in maintaining the lower requirement and seeking a review, the EHDP would not, therefore, be adopting an approach to OAHN and the housing requirement that is consistent with national policy”*.

Following the responses provided by East Herts to Note 1 (ED102), and the publication of the 2014 projections, a new interim OAHN evidence document was published in July 2017 by the HMA authorities titled ‘Strategic Market Housing Assessment - Establishing the Full Objectively Assessed Need’. The overall conclusion of the new SHMA document was to reduce the previous estimate of OAHN from 54,608 to 51,700 for the whole market area.

In August 2017, East Herts published an ‘Updated Housing Topic Paper’ which used the SHMA interim update (July 2017) household projections as the baseline estimate. At paragraph 2.35 of the Topic Paper, it concluded that the Full Objectively Assessed Need (FOAN) for the HMA was 51,700 dwellings over the 22-year period 2011-2033. For East Herts, the level of need was identified as 18,396, in line with the SHMA Interim Update. The Inspector’s Post Hearing Note considered this a reasonable basis for OAHN, and inferred that this should form a Main Modification to the Local Plan.

On this basis, it is reasonable to conclude that there is strong evidence and existing precedent that EFDC should be meeting their proportion of the OAHN identified in the SHMA 2017. This equates to 12,573 dwellings during the Plan period; not a minimum of 11,400 dwellings proposed in the Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan.

2. Duty to Cooperate

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in March 2017 between each of the authorities in the Housing Market Area (HMA), comprising East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils. The MoU endorsed an OAHN figure of 51,100 dwellings across the whole HMA. This figure was calculated using the 46,100 dwellings identified in the 2015 SHMA, with an uplift to accommodate the predicted new demographic data anticipated in the 2014-based

population projections. The MoU included the spatial distribution across each of the authorities, including 11,400 dwellings in Epping Forest District. However, the MoU was agreed prior to the 2014-projections being published, and therefore the apportion for each Local Planning Authority should have been increased to take its findings into account.

The three other authorities in the HMA are meeting or exceeding their identified OAHN. The Table below shows how the housing targets specified in the emerging Local Plan for each of the authorities in the HMA compared against the OAHN stated in the SHMA 2017.

| Authority in HMA | OAHN in SHMA 2017 | Housing target in Emerging Local Plan | Under / Over requirement |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Epping Forest | 12,573 | 11,400 | -1,173 |
| East Herts | 18,396 | 18,396 | 0 |
| Uttlesford | 13,322 | 14,100 | +778 |
| Harlow | 7,409 | 9,200 (including 1,800 buffer) | +1,791 |
| Total | 51,700 | 53,096 | +1,396 |

EFDC is the only authority that is not basing their housing target on the OAHN contained in the 2017 SHMA. The approach of using OAHN as a housing target is endorsed by the Inspector for the EHDP. Whilst EFDC accept that 12,573 new homes for the District over the Plan period represents the latest OAHN, they are relying on other authorities in the HMA to meet their shortfall. At paragraph 2.7 of the Housing Implementation Strategy, EFDC state that *"The Council is satisfied that the approach set out within the MoU will ensure that the OAHN within the HMA as a whole will be met over the course of the Plan period. As agreed and explained in the MoU, the housing requirement for Epping Forest District Council Local Plan is 11,400 dwellings"*.

As mentioned above, the MoU was signed prior to the publication of the SHMA 2017. Therefore, the MoU cannot be simply relied upon for justification that the other authorities will meet EFDC's shortfall of 1,173 dwellings (2017 SHMA OAHN of 12,573 minus original SHMA OAHN of 11,400); further discussions should have taken place following the publication of the SHMA 2017. There is a clear need for an updated MoU between the Market Area Authorities to agree the distribution of the latest OAHN. This was raised by the Inspector during EHDC's Local Plan Examination (Note 1 reference ED102), to which EHDC clearly stated in their response that the MoU *"will be updated to reflect the latest agreed position across the HMA"*. We can find no evidence of any updated MoU and no agreement that the other HMA authorities will meet EFDC's shortfall. This is therefore a clear failure of Duty to Cooperate.

In addition, the OAHN identified in the SHMA 2017 for the HMA is 51,710 dwellings, which is 610 dwellings greater than the OAHN of 51,100 identified in the MoU. Again, EFDC are relying on the other authorities absorbing this additional housing requirement without an agreement in place in the form of an updated MoU.

EFDC have therefore provided no robust reasons why they should not meet their full identified OAHN of 12,753 dwellings within its own administrative boundaries over the Plan period. Any EFDC shortfall being met by another authority means EFDC will not be meeting their own identified requirements. It is therefore considered that EFDC should identify additional sites to ensure that it can meet its full identified OAHN.

3. Government's 'Planning for the right homes in the right places'

In addition to the concerns identified that EFDC are only intending to deliver 11,400 homes over the Plan period, we consider that there is sufficient justification that the identified OAHN figure of 12,573 should be much higher. It is well-known that the Government is seeking to publish a standard methodology for calculating Local Authorities housing need following the Government's 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' which took place in Autumn 2017. Whilst it is known that the implementation for the standard methodology is slightly delayed, this should not be a reason to postpone consideration of the direction of travel. This is simply poor planning, and delaying the inevitable.

For EFDC, the standard methodology results in a higher housing requirement of 923 dwellings per annum, a 78% rise from that currently planned for. For the other HMA authorities, an increase in housing requirements also results. This is therefore a clear indication that the housing requirement for EFDC is going to rise significantly. EFDC have sought to accelerate the Local Plan to Examination, to avoid having to meet this need in the immediate future. However, EFDC should be planning for this increase now to ensure that the Plan is positively prepared in accordance with Paragraph 182 of the NPPF. It is essential that flexibility is planned for at this stage, including ensuring that sufficient land is released from the Green Belt to meet this future forecasted requirement. If this is not considered now, EFDC will simply be faced with difficulties with their five-year housing land supply in the very near future. This is summarised in the table below.

| Annualised requirement in Emerging EFLP | Annualised Requirement using Government OAHN | Shortfall |
|---|--|---------------|
| 572 dwellings | 923 dwellings | 351 dwellings |

4. Five Year Housing Land Supply

At paragraph 2.59 of the supporting text to the EFLP, the EFDC recognise that the overall level of housing delivery in the early years of the Plan period has fallen short of the annual requirement.

The Housing Implementation Strategy records a significant undersupply of 1,778 dwellings between 2011/12 and 2016/17, based on the identified housing requirement of 11,400 new homes. Paragraph 2.9 of the Housing Implementation Strategy states that over a 5-year period, the undersupply would result in an annual housing requirement of 874 dwellings per annum between 2017/18 and 2020/21 (Sedgefield method), whilst spreading the undersupply across the remaining years of the Plan period (Liverpool approach), would result in a lower annualised requirement of 629 dwellings per annum.

Planning Practice Guidance sets out that local authorities should aim to rectify any undersupply within the first 5 years of the Plan period where possible, otherwise there will be a requirement to work with neighbouring authorities by way of Duty to Cooperate. EFDC recognise this, although consider the 'Liverpool' approach of spreading undersupply across the remaining years of the Plan period to be the most appropriate. The Council's reasons for this are considered unjustified for the following reasons:

- There are additional sites that could come forward in the short-term which EFDC have failed to acknowledge as they have been too narrow in their approach to Site Selection. Indeed, the site selection process cannot even be fully reviewed during the consultation period associated with the Submission Version of the Local Plan as the appendix to the Site Selection Report (2017) containing the assessment of each site is not available.

- Low average housing completion is not a sufficient reason to justify a lower provision and should instead be a driver for addressing past under delivery, particularly in the Green Belt Review undertaken to inform the Local Plan process.
- There is no evidence in the MoU, or elsewhere, that neighbouring authorities will be providing additional housing to address EFDC's previous record of undersupply.
- Undersupply is likely to be much higher.

It is evident that EFDC have had a persistent undersupply of new homes, including in the context of the East of England Plan requirement which included a significantly lower housing requirement. In such instances where there has been a persistent under delivery in housing, Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to increase the buffer of specific deliverable housing sites from 5% to 20% to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Since 2011, EFDC have persistent failed in seeking to meet its housing requirements; a significant undersupply of 1,778 dwellings. EFDC's approach is therefore contrary to national policy and there is clear evidence that it is appropriate to apply a 20% buffer.

EFDC consider their five-year housing requirement between 2017/18 and 2021/22 as 3,304 dwellings. The projected supply is 3,486 dwellings. Therefore, the Council are claiming a 5.3 year housing land supply.

However, applying the necessary 20% buffer as explained above, the housing land supply reduces to 4.6 years. This is on the basis of the Council's suggested OAHN of 11,400, which for the reasons previously stated, we contest, and the preferred Liverpool approach for meeting backlog across the Plan period.

Applying the Sedgefield approach to the backlog, and still using the 11,400 figure for the OAHN, plus the 20% buffer, the 5 year housing land supply position would be significantly reduced to 3.3 years.

We have also calculated EFDC's 5 year housing land supply position based upon established methodology which is wholly consistent with the approach and assumptions taken by the Inspector at the EHDC Examination-in-Public. On this basis, we consider that the Council has 3.7 years housing land supply.

Increasing the OAHN as the evidence suggests, will only further reduce EFDC's ability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. There is therefore a clear need for more sites to be identified in the early part of the Plan period.

It is also noted that paragraph 2.77 of the supporting text to Policy SP 2 states that the identified housing supply to 2033 exceeds the requirement of 11,400 dwellings. The housing trajectory is included at Appendix 5 of the EFLP and identifies the total recorded and projected housing supply to be 13,152 dwellings. This is stated to provide a contingency and recognises the recent household projections that demonstrate a further upward trend in housing need. However, if EFDC consider that they can provide for a greater housing supply, we question why as a minimum the identified OAHN of 12,753 dwellings in not being met in the first instance?

5. Distribution of New Homes

There is clear inconsistency with EFDC's approach to housing supply and distribution. Despite EFDC indicating that they are only planning for a minimum of 11,400 new homes over the Plan period 2011-2031, the housing trajectory indicates a total housing supply of 13,152 new homes. However, this does not accord with the spatial distribution of new homes set out in Criteria B of Policy SP 2, which only equates to 9,816 new homes. It is appreciated, taking into account completed sites since 2011, committed sites with planning permission and windfall sites, that this adds up to 11,400 dwellings. However, this does not accommodate the remaining 1,584 dwellings. This appears to indicate some level of doubt over the planned supply coming forward and inconsistency in the approaches that have been taken.

We also question how realistic is it for windfall sites to come forward in a District which is recognised to be so heavily constrained by the Green Belt, and which has had a persistent failure to meet its historic housing targets.

It is welcomed that Chigwell is identified in Policy SP 2 to provide new homes. However, Chigwell is a sustainable location that could accommodate additional dwellings and therefore should be considered for additional growth. This is discussed further in due course.

6. Monitoring of Housing Delivery

Paragraph 2.81 of the supporting text to Policy SP 2 explains how EFDC will monitor housing delivery against the housing trajectory. It is stated that should the Annual Monitoring Report demonstrate that annual housing delivery is less than 75% of the annualised requirement or the projected completion rate (whichever is the lower) for three consecutive years, then EFDC will undertake a partial review of the Local Plan. This does not encourage housing delivery, and would allow for persistent under delivery of between 76% and 99% of the annualised requirement over the plan period without triggering for this reason a partial review of the Local Plan.

If a partial review was triggered, EFDC would be required to reconsider infrastructure capacity, as well as further release of Green Belt land. Instead, EFDC should be identifying sufficient infrastructure and Green Belt sites at the beginning of the Plan making process. EFDC are undertaking a Green Belt Review to inform the preparation of the Local Plan, and every effort should be made at this point to identify sufficient and deliverable sites. The Local Plan should therefore identify additional sites, as well as safeguarded land for future reserve sites should those identified not be forthcoming.

In summary, it is evident that EFDC's approach to identifying and meeting its housing requirement does not meet the tests of soundness set out at Paragraph 182 of the NPPF. Policy SP 2 is not consistent with national policy. The Plan has not been positively prepared as EFDC does not seek to meet its OAHN and relies on other Local Authorities within the HMA to make up its shortfall. The housing requirement is also neither effective nor justified.

Review of Epping Forest District Council's Approach to Green Belt

Given the increased housing targets as detailed in Draft Policy SP 2, we welcome the direction EFDC has taken in the Draft Local Plan in relation to the release of Green Belt land for the delivery of housing. This is in line with Paragraphs 83 - 85 of the NPPF, which allows for the boundaries of the Green Belt to be changed, *"in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the*

Local Plan". This is particularly important given the clear evidence that points towards the requirement for EFDC to significantly increase their housing target.

It is welcomed that EFDC recognise that historical limited changes to the Green Belt (none since the 1998 Local Plan), together with considerable increases in its housing requirement, and poor delivery rates, requires a review of the Green Belt in order to release land for development. Paragraph 9.144 of the Sustainability Appraisal recognises that *"In order to meet the development needs identified, and achieve sustainable forms of development in and around existing settlements, alterations to the Green Belt boundaries are necessary"*. The spatial strategy will therefore necessitate the loss of Green Belt land, including some areas identified as 'high quality' (i.e. identified as contributing strongly to the Green Belt purposes).

Whilst we support the release of Green Belt Land, the approach taken through the Green Belt Review is overly restrictive. EFDC have undertaken two stages of Green Belt Review as part of the Technical Evidence Base to the Local Plan. The Green Belt Review has been undertaken at a strategic level, with large parcels of land, which contain various different land uses, being erroneously grouped, and generalised as a single unit. The Green Belt Review also fails to consider individual parcels of land. This is required in order to undertake an accurate review.

This restrictive approach is similar to that which Welwyn Hatfield Council adopted for its Green Belt Review. However, the Inspector considered the approach of Welwyn Hatfield to be unsound and required a finer grained approach to be applied in order to better reveal the variations in how land performs against the purposes of the Green Belt. The Inspector also confirmed that, in a Green Belt context, concerns regarding openness should only be related to the absence of built development and other dominant urban influences, and should not be concerned about the character of the landscape. The Inspector considered that the fundamental issue to be considered in a Green Belt Review is the extent to which the Green Belt would be compromised by the loss of the parcel either in part or in its entirety or in combination with other parcels.

Supporting text paragraph 2.142 of the EFLP, states that *"The filtering and analysis that has led to the alterations to the Green Belt boundaries has been comprehensive"*. However, for the reasons set out above, we disagree with this statement and request that EFDC review their Green Belt Review Document adopting the "finer grain" approach referred to by the Inspector for the Welwyn Hatfield Examination.

As well as the approach taken within the Green Belt Review to identifying sites to be released from the Green Belt, based upon the current strategy, it is evident that a further Green Belt Review will be required within the Plan period to accommodate increased housing requirements. EFDC's existing approach is therefore contrary to Paragraph 85 of the NPPF which requires Local Planning Authorities to be satisfied that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered by the end of the Plan period. EFDC should also be including 'safeguarded land' for possible future development in order to meet longer-term development needs that stretch well beyond the Plan period, particularly given the strength of evidence that the housing requirement will significantly increase.

Criteria C of Policy DM 4 is clear that the construction of new buildings comprises inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It is key therefore that sufficient land is released from the Green Belt as part of the Plan-making process, otherwise Green Belt Policy in the context of decision-taking would clearly prevent EFDC from meeting its future housing requirements.

The Sustainability Appraisal which accompanies the Local Plan states that the approach taken through the Site Selection process seeks to protect the most high value Green Belt land wherever

possible (drawing on the findings of the Green Belt Review: Stage 2). However, we question the robustness of this approach given that the completed site proformas used for each of the sites assessed have not been released by EFDC. This suggests that sites have been allocated prior to the detailed site assessments taking place, making it impossible for the Plan to be positively prepared on this basis.

Policy P7 Chigwell

The Vision for Chigwell set out in the Local Plan specifies that there will be a focus on brownfield sites and sustainable Green Belt release to ensure the existing visual identity of the settlement is maintained whilst providing future homes. In principle we support this approach, although consider that EFDC need to be realistic in the amount of land released from the Green Belt in Chigwell.

Policy P7 'Chigwell' allocates a number of sites in the Local Plan. The capacity of these sites is considered to be 376 dwellings. However, we consider that Chigwell is a sustainable location that should accommodate additional housing given that EFDC's housing requirements are much higher than 11,400 dwellings during the Plan period. As identified in the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper 2015, Chigwell scores highly for existing services and facilities. Chigwell also performs significantly better than other large villages.

Land at Chigwell Nurseries, which abuts the site to the east, is allocated in the EFLP for approximately 65 homes (CHIG.R5). EFDC therefore clearly recognised the suitability of this location for future residential development.

Land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries

Green Belt Assessment

Land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries was initially considered as part of the Stage 1 Green Belt Review. It was considered as part of Parcel 036. The parcel was initially discounted from the Stage 2 Green Belt Review, although was later included to meet the requirements of Paragraph 84 of the NPPF for land to be assessed in greater detail which has a direct relationship to existing settlements (Para 2.17). As such, it was further considered as part of the Stage 2 Green Belt Review as Parcel 036.2. Whilst smaller parcels are considered for Stage 2, we consider there to still be variations in the contribution that the different areas of land within a parcel make to the identified Green Belt purposes. We strongly disagree with the overall conclusion that that whole of Parcel 036.2 would have a very high level of harm on the Green Belt.

Indeed, EFDC have allocated land comprising Chigwell Nurseries (CHIG.R5) for 65 dwellings, which was assessed as part of Parcel 036.2. At this point, it is not possible to review EFDC's assessment of this individual site as the "Appendix" to the Site Selection Report which contains the completed proformas for each site is not available to view. This is concerning given that the Local Plan is at the Pre-Submission stage.

Development of land adjacent to Chigwell nurseries would not compromise the five purposes of the Green Belt, as set out within Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, for the following reasons:

- *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.* Development in this location would help to 'round-off' the western edge of this part of Chigwell between Luxborough Lane and Chigwell Park. Land at Chigwell nurseries is allocated for approximately 65 dwellings within the EFLP (CHIG.R5) and land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries would well relate to this

proposed development. Beyond the site to the north are strong tree belts with the M11 motorway beyond. These are considered to be strong boundaries as defined by Paragraph 85 of the NPPF and would prevent any sprawl.

- *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.* This is not relevant as the site does not prevent Chigwell from merging with another town. The existing defensible boundaries also prevent this.
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.* The existing site comprises redundant scrubland of low value. Development of the site would therefore not lead to encroachment into the countryside. The site would not extend beyond the existing urban edge to the west of Chigwell. Furthermore, and to the north of the site further along Luxborough Lane is existing built development including the gas works, hockey club and the Recycling and Waste Centre.
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.* This is not applicable in the case of Chigwell; however, development of the site would help to enhance this western edge of Chigwell.
- *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.* The land is currently redundant scrubland to the urban edge to the west of Chigwell. The site is not suitable for uses traditionally associated with the Green Belt (agriculture, forestry etc.) and leaving the site as redundant scrubland would deprive Chigwell of a high quality and sustainable housing site which is required to meet an increased housing requirement from that initially planned for.

Deliverability of Land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries

To address the increased housing requirement and the shortfall in five-year housing land supply, it is necessary for EFDC to consider alternative options for sustainable residential development, including the release of further Green Belt land. It is considered that the site adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries would reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development and is deliverable in line with the tests of the NPPF as follows:

- It is in a sustainable location in close proximity to a wide range of services and facilities. It is located within easy walking distance (0.6 mile) of Chigwell Underground Station which is on the Central Line into London. There are continuous made footpath links along Luxborough Lane and High Road to the underground station. The nearest bus stop is just a 4-minute (0.2 mile) walking distance. The site is clearly well located in relation to sustainable transport links.
- It is available now. The site is in single ownership and is not the subject of any long-term lease or other landownership constraint which would preclude its delivery.
- It offers a suitable location for residential development. Given the allocation of the adjacent site at Chigwell Nurseries, it is clear that EFDC consider the site's location to be suitable.
- The development of housing on the site is achievable within the next five years. Subject to it being released from the Green Belt and allocated for residential-led development, CHL proposes to submit a planning application to allow works onsite to begin as soon as is practically possible. From our Chigwell Grove development, EFDC recognise that we

implement planning permissions as soon as practically possible in order to assist with meeting a number of objectives set out in its planning policy documents. It is clear therefore that land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries offers a realistic prospect that residential dwellings can be delivered in the short term, and notably within the first five years of the Plan period.

- The development is deliverable. We consider that the development of the site for the scale and nature of uses envisaged is financially viable. This is subject to planning obligations placed on the development meeting the NPPF requirement that sites should not be subject to such a scale of policy obligations and burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened, and the tests of planning obligations set out in the NPPF.

For all the reasons set out within this submission, we strongly believe that land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries is suitable and sustainably located for release from the Green Belt for residential-led development. Development of the site can comply with the Infrastructure Requirements and other criteria set out within emerging Policy P7 comprising a suitable site for residential development to help EFDC in meeting increased housing targets.

Summary

Constable Homes Limited have strong concerns regarding the soundness of the Epping Forest District Local Plan.

In Particular, policies SP 2 (Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033) and SP 6 (Green Belt and District Open Land) are not considered to meet the tests for soundness set out at Paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

We also have serious concerns that the Local Plan will not make sufficient provision for housing, with insufficient supply coming forward across the Plan period.

In its present state, the EFLP has not been positively prepared in seeking to meet the OAHN for the District and this also raises soundness concerns over the Duty to Co-operate.

The housing requirement identified is not effective nor justified by the evidence base, which as set out above, indicates a higher housing requirement is necessary.

We do not consider that EFDC can demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and a "finer grain" approach to the Green Belt Review is necessary to determine additional sites within the administrative boundary.

Land adjacent to Chigwell Nurseries is considered to be a suitable site for residential development and is in a highly sustainable location. It is considered that the site meets the tests of the NPPF and the objectives of the Local Plan in terms of the development in sustainable locations, the types of development needed and the quality of development it could bring forward. The site is available to come forward within the Plan period and we request it is considered for its release from the Green Belt and allocation for residential development.

We ask to be kept informed of the progress with the Local Plan and look forward to further opportunities to engage with EFDC in respect of these representations.

Should you wish to discuss these representations in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



TOM PIKE
PLANNING MANAGER | FOR AND ON BEHALF OF CONSTABLE HOMES LIMITED

Encs. Site Location Plan.