

Addendum Sheet

Q1.

The draft allocation comprises a site of approximately 10ha for approximately 305 homes. The Arup Site Selection report informing the draft plan considered a larger 14.75ha site to be acceptable including frontage onto Steward's Green Road but this south-eastern section was removed in final consideration leaving the circa 10ha site in the draft allocation.

Whilst pleased to receive a draft allocation, Pigeon's representations to the 2016 consultation defined 2 potential alternative approaches to allocation at East Epping to better realise the opportunities in this location. These can be summarised as follows:-

- New sustainable neighbourhood at Epping East based on Garden City principles and delivering a range of community benefits; or
- Development of a similar scale to the current draft allocation but with the Steward's Green Road frontage reinstated.

New sustainable neighbourhood to garden city principles

Pigeon are promoting wider land comprising some 57ha at Epping East which provides an exciting opportunity not only to make a significant contribution to housing need but by concentrating development in this location, there is the ability to provide a range of additional community benefits and infrastructure.

The land at Epping East benefits from easy assembly with only 2 willing landowners who have agreed to Pigeon promoting their land. The site does not contain any constraints to delivery on this scale and Pigeon's response to the 2016 consultation included a high-level concept masterplan demonstrating how a new high-quality neighbourhood could be delivered. In contrast, a focus of development to the south of Epping requires a greater extent of land assembly and a range of potential constraints to comprehensive delivery. These include separation by the railway, poor existing road infrastructure, existing pylons and proximity to the M25, as well as distance from the town centre and train station.

The East Epping masterplan has subsequently been developed further and 2 concept masterplans have been provided as part of this submission, providing alternative options for the delivery of a primary school site. These define a high-quality, design and landscape-led, new sustainable neighbourhood, respecting the character of the site and its surrounds with generous provision of open space within a lower density of development. The key elements and benefits can be summarised as follows:-

- New homes to meet identified need including 40% affordable. Lower density ensures flexibility to provide a range of housing typologies and sizes including a high proportion of bungalows and self-build plots, as well as good plots sizes and sufficient off-road parking;
- Higher density development in closest proximity to Epping Train Station and in proximity to neighbouring flatted development;
- Higher density development to include local facilities and services at ground floor level to form a high quality mixed use community hub in a sustainable location on route to the station. This could include a local convenience store and doctor's surgery to meet demand arising from the new development and car parking to serve both the facilities and the nearby tube station;

- C2 Care Village to meet the demands of an ageing population, focused around an enhancement of the historic Stonard's Farm;
- Primary school site;
- New Country Park to provide a significant enhancement to the current open space provision in Epping. This will see the provision of major new green infrastructure within the town without loss of Green Belt;
- Eastern link road between Steward's Green Road and Stonard's Hill to minimise impact on existing road infrastructure from the new development and assist with existing pressures on the network;
- Significant permeability through the development through pedestrian and cycle links including enhanced access to Epping Train Station and the historic Essex Way.

The concept masterplans have been developed based on the initial technical work that has been undertaken for this site, respecting existing constraints and opportunities for the site. Therefore, whilst still relatively high level concepts, the location of roads, SUDS features and the overall layout are underpinned by sound technical advice, demonstrating a viable and deliverable concept for a high quality sustainable neighbourhood.

Development of a similar scale to the current allocation

For the reasons set out above, Pigeon are of the view that a new sustainable neighbourhood at East Epping represents the best opportunity to meet the housing and infrastructure needs for the town. However, it is recognised that the draft Local Plan allocates approximately 305 new homes to our site SR-0153 and EFDC's current approach as set out in the Developer's Forum is for a masterplan or linked masterplans for 'Epping South' that will include SR-0153, pursuant to the draft Local Plan.

Should the approach to the scale of development at East Epping continue to be consistent with the above, Pigeon are in agreement to work with EFDC and other stakeholders on the delivery of a masterplan or plans for Epping South that will incorporate a similar scale of growth to the current draft allocation for SR-0153.

However, Pigeon consider that development of SR-0153 would be achieved much more successfully if the south-eastern corner of the site fronting Steward's Green Road should be reinstated. There does not appear to be a rationale for its removal in the Local Plan evidence base and there is no distinction between this land and the draft allocation in terms of landscape and visual impact, or the Green Belt.

Reinstatement of the Steward's Green Road frontage would bring a range of benefits for the successful development of the site including a purpose built independent access as opposed to the current draft allocation which would require vehicles routed through the neighbouring residential estates, with the potential for disruption.

By contrast, an independent access gives a stronger site frontage, new cycling and pedestrian links, opportunities for place-making and a new gateway into Epping from the East with the potential for traffic calming.

The reinstatement of this land could also see the provision of approximately 100 additional new homes based on the densities applied within the original Arup Site Selection Report.

Q2.

Should the development be taken forward on the basis of the 'similar scale' approach, this would also see early delivery within the plan period. EFDC have defined SR-0153 as part of Epping South, one of 6 Strategic Masterplans with the potential for early delivery through a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). Accordingly this could see the development of the strategic masterplans and planning applications in parallel to the Local Plan, ensuring delivery from the outset of the Local Plan.

Q3b.

A key strength of the site is the proximity to Epping Underground Station, which is less than a 5-minute walk from the closest point of the site. This gives an opportunity for focusing higher density development around this transport hub in accordance with the Government's announcement on 10 April 2016 of focusing development at railway stations and surrounding land. This was reiterated in the Housing White Paper published 07 February 2017 with paragraph 1.53 defining that proposals should address the particular scope for higher density housing in locations that are well served by public transport such as around many railway stations.

Epping Station is situated at the end of the Central Line giving direct access to Central London providing excellent commuting potential from the site with the higher density development approximately a 5 minute walk from the station from the existing footpath, which will be enhanced through development. The community hub also gives potential for parking provision for the station, helping to address the challenges for parking associated with the current station.

The site is also within a sustainable location in terms of the High Street, with its range of shops, services and facilities, being located approximately a 10 minute walk away.

As set out in the response to question 1, the current draft allocation would see access arrangements for the site taken through neighbouring residential development but Pigeon strongly advocate the reinstatement of the frontage with Steward's Green Road. This is preferable from both a place-making perspective but also to reduce disturbance on neighbouring properties including construction traffic.

Initial assessment has shown that an access onto Steward's Green Road is feasible from a highway safety and visibility perspective and it brings the potential for enhancements, linking into the footpath on the northern side of the road, and providing a new gateway feature, such as a roundabout, entering Epping from the east with the potential to reduce vehicular speeds. Should the sustainable neighbourhood proposals be taken forward, a new distributor road would connect Steward's Green Road with Stonard's Hill, easing pressure on the existing infrastructure. Again, no issues are anticipated with an access onto Stonard's Hill with the enclosed Concept Plans showing a roundabout in this location

In summary, therefore, initial assessment has shown the site is highly sustainable giving significant potential for alternatives to the private car, particularly for commuting in the peak times. Development will also not raise concerns in terms of highway safety with the potential for enhancements with an eastern link road as part of the sustainable neighbourhood, taking vehicles away from the congested high street. Both options would also see enhancements to the existing footpath network as part of a highly permeable site.

Essex County Council confirmed that they are undertaking assessments across the District on highway capacity.

Q3c.

For the new sustainable neighbourhood, again as previously set out a second point of access would be created onto Stonard's Hill with a link road between these 2 points of access taking vehicles away from the congested High Street to access the new neighbourhood. Initial work has not identified any particular issues with Stonard's Hill in terms of its ability to serve the development.

As stated in response to questions 3b & 3d, by virtue of its sustainable location and existing road infrastructure, development of either option at East Epping will have a minimal impact on transport infrastructure compared to alternative options, and has the potential to bring forward a significant range of benefits.

Q6b.

Healthcare demand will also be dependent on the status of St. Margarets Hospital, which has a draft allocation for 181 homes under site reference SR-055 but currently helps to meet a lot of local need, which may otherwise have to be met by the local surgeries.

Q7a.

There is also some uncertainty around the retention of the cricket/tennis/bowls provision on the western side of town as this land is also a draft allocation and it is not clear whether the intention is for these facilities to be retained or replaced as part of that development. Pigeon's response to the Local Plan consultation set out the potential for leisure provision as part of Epping East including the replacement of facilities such as the Cricket Pitch. The current masterplans for the sustainable neighbourhood, do not currently include any formal sports pitch or leisure facility provision but they are evolving and could be revised to include such a facility if a particular demand was identified.

A key feature of the sustainable neighbourhood at Epping East would be the provision of a new Country Park providing a significant enhancement of informal open space provision as well as setting a robust Green Belt boundary.

No specific work or discussion has taken place with regard to adult social care or provision for an ageing population. However Pigeon are aware of the need for provision for an ageing population and set out the potential for a C2 Care Village within the response to the draft Local Plan, subject to the size of allocation. In all developments, Pigeon would include a proportion of bungalows that are suited to the needs of an ageing population.

Q9.

Accordingly, Pigeon are of the view that the new neighbourhood in a highly sustainable location in relation to the High Street and Station, represents the best location for strategic development in Epping, and will ensure that the associated benefits in terms of infrastructure and community facilities and benefits are maximised.