

Introduction

These Representations are made on behalf of Quinn Estates Ltd (henceforth 'Quinn Estates') and relate to Land to the North and South of the A414, North Weald Bassett. The land which is the subject of these Representations is outlined on a map at **Annex 1**. It was last used as a golf course which closed because it was financially unsuccessful.

Quinn Estates and the landowner have entered into a contract of sale with Redrow PLC which means that the site is deliverable and can make a timely and valuable contribution to the delivery of housing and essential supporting infrastructure.

Both Quinn Estates and Redrow have a proven track record of delivery, for example at the former Herne Bay Golf Club which, alongside over 600 new homes, is delivering a major new sports hub and commercial space. This is the only strategic Local Plan allocation out of 11 that is delivering homes to meet Canterbury City Council's pressing need.

In addition, Quinn Estates has a very strong track record in the successful promotion and delivery of a wide range of other sites in a wide variety of different settings. For example Quinn Estates is Swale Borough Council's partner for the delivery of a major regeneration scheme in Sittingbourne town centre that will create hundreds of new homes (development that a number of other companies failed to deliver over a period of more than two decades), and it has also built a strong reputation for the delivery of employment floorspace. As is apparent from the February 2017 Government White Paper *Fixing our broken housing market*, the Government considers that a developer's track record in delivering major schemes is an important consideration, so much so that it has proposed that a developer's track record be taken into account when considering planning applications for major developments.

In relation to this site Quinn Estates has already undertaken extensive consultation with key stakeholders in the local area and intends to continue to do so. On the basis of such consultation it is confident that the development that it is promoting would attract unprecedented levels of support.

1. Relationship with Previous Representations

Representations were made in accordance with the statutory requirements at the Regulation 18 stage of the Local Plan process. Whilst they were duly made, for the reasons explained below our client is concerned that full and proper regard has not been paid to those Representations by the Council. We therefore attach as **Annex 2** those Regulation 18 Representations and ask that detailed consideration be given to them at this stage; they form an integral part of these Regulation 19 Representations.

In essence, we continue to advocate the allocation of the land which is the subject of these Representations for development to help meet not only the significant need for new homes but also to deliver facilities that are required to facilitate such growth in a sustainable manner. As such the development of this site would give rise to very significant social and economic benefits and should be considered for allocation in preference to other less-preferable sites, such as those which are crop-producing or subject of other constraints such as environmental or landscape sensitivities. We explain in greater detail – in part 4 of these Representations – the reasoned justification for the allocation of this site in preference to other options that are being pursued by the Council. We do so in the light of a review of the housing need position which is at part 3 of these Representations. First, however, we wish to highlight a number of serious procedural concerns in relation to the plan-making process to date. We ask that these concerns are also investigated thoroughly, and taken into proper account.

2. Procedural Concerns

Throughout the plan preparation process Quinn Estates has sought to positively and proactively engage with the local planning authority given the significant benefits that could be achieved by the development of the subject land, not only in terms of housing but also in terms of public facilities. Those facilities will make a significant contribution to the sustainability of the district as a whole, for example through the proposed education, sports facilities and services provision.

Quinn Estates' lawyer has already written to the Council to express very serious concerns in relation to the plan preparation process. To date the Council has not provided a full and justified response to those concerns. The concerns are summarised as follows.

(a) Irregular Consultation and Site Selection Exercises

Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan Consultation took place between 31 October 2016 and 12 December 2016. 'Duly made' Representations were made on behalf of our client as has been confirmed by the Council. Those Representations were underpinned by a significant amount of work by a professional team to demonstrate that our client's proposals are feasible and deliverable (discussed later).

As part of its papers for its 11 July 2017 Cabinet meeting (where it reported the outcome of the Regulation 18 stage), the Council published a list of sites. The site which is the subject of our Regulation 18 Representations did not appear on that list.

In the Council's 11 July 2017 Cabinet Report it was noted that:

*"12. Since the previous cut-off date for the site selection process used to inform the Draft Local Plan 93 additional 'new' residential sites have been put forward for consideration by the Council in the finalisation of the Local Plan. Additionally, some landowners/site promoters have requested changes to the boundary of residential sites and 49 amended residential sites will be assessed. Three sites have been withdrawn from consideration. The Council is now beginning the process of further detailed assessment of potential sites for consideration, taking into account comments received through the Draft Local Plan consultation, which will result in a further Site Selection process. The Site Selection process will also consider approximately 13 potential Employment and 14 potential Traveller sites, meaning that in total the Council will be assessing approximately 169 sites. **The methodology for the site selection process will be published shortly on the Council's website. It is not possible to say at this stage whether or not any sites proposed for allocation in the Draft Local Plan will change through this process, but the Council is committed to assessing and evaluating all site options consistently and robustly in accordance with an agreed methodology and national planning policy guidance. This process will not consider sites which have been submitted to the Council after the cut-off date of 31 March 2017.**" (our emphasis)*

First, we note that the content of the Cabinet Report was the first time that we were made aware that submissions were possible until the end of March 2017; we did not receive any notification from the Council and we were not aware of this additional period being advertised.

By the time the Regulation 18 consultation was reported to Members in July 2017, our client's site had apparently already been discounted by Officers for reasons which were not specified to Members – it was not reported to Members and, therefore, was not even an option for them to consider.

However, the Council accepted site submissions that had not been duly-made and indicated in the July 2017 Cabinet Report that they would be assessed for inclusion in the draft Local Plan.

It is clear from the July 2017 Cabinet Report that the relative merits of the sites that had been submitted following the closure of the Regulation 18 consultation period in December 2016 had not been assessed by the date that the Cabinet Report was published and that the Council had not even published a methodology for site selection.

We are therefore confident in saying that our client's site was dismissed prematurely and unfairly – it could not have been assessed against all other sites. We question how many other sites this has happened to (neither we nor the Inspector can know if sites have simply been deleted from a list, or if sites from an unadvertised consultation period have been included) and therefore whether what is being consulted on is a fair, appropriate and thorough representation of alternatives.

It is our contention that the Regulation 19 draft does not represent a fair and complete analysis of alternatives and that, consequently, the draft plan is **not legally sound**. It is not legally sound because it is clear that the draft plan is **not justified** (ie the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence).

Furthermore, the acceptance of representations beyond the advertised period means that the emerging plan is **not legally-compliant**, specifically it is not compliant with Regulation 20 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

To remedy this the Council should:

- (i) discount all representations that were received after the closing date for Regulation 18 representations;
- (ii) produce a fair and comparative analysis (having regard to these Representations) of all sites, including all that were put forward in duly-made representations at the Regulation 18 stage;
- (iii) present a revised report to Cabinet dealing with all such sites and explaining the legal and procedural flaws in the site selection process to date; and
- (iv) seek authorisation from Cabinet to undertake a second Regulation 19 consultation which is based on a sound, fair and procedurally-correct analysis of all options.

(b) Inequitable Treatment

Quinn Estates has acted in a proactive manner and have made significant efforts to discuss its proposals with the local community and its representatives. For example it has met with the Parish Council and has already undertaken a comprehensive public consultation exercise. It is committed to continuing to do, as is its standard practice.

Whilst Quinn Estates has signalled on numerous occasions its willingness to engage with the District Council, it has been denied the opportunities to do so that have nevertheless been afforded to others.

For example, it has been excluded from participating in the Developer Forum even though some of those who have been allowed to participate are promoting allocations that have not been comprehensively tested for viability and deliverability, a critical consideration given the Council's shortfall in housing land at the present time.

Quinn Estates paid for a pre-application meeting, which took place in January 2017, and all Heads of Department and senior planning staff were invited to the public consultation events that Quinn Estates held in June 2017, but all Officers declined without explanation to attend.

Quinn Estates has sought further pre-application meetings with both Development Control and Planning Policy at EFDC but these requests have been declined.

We are aware that the Peer Group was allowed to make a presentation to the Council's Cabinet meeting on 9 March 2017 in connection with a site that it was promoting in the North Weald area. It may or may not be coincidental that the informal period of representations was allowed to extend to the 17 March 2017. In any event, our client was not afforded a similar opportunity at that time to present to Cabinet; a three-minute presentation to Cabinet was only allowed once the Council's list of preferred sites had been published. This would appear to be prejudicial, inconsistent, unfair and wholly irregular in terms of due process being followed.

National planning policy (2012 NPPF paragraph 157) says that: *"Crucially, Local Plans should... be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations..."*. Our client is of the opinion that the Council has failed in this regard. Consequently, the emerging Local Plan is not consistent with national policy and is therefore **not legally sound**.

3. Housing Need

Authorisation to consult on the Regulation 19 draft of the Local Plan was sought at the Council's 14 December 2017 meeting. There are a number of important considerations that have arisen between the Regulation 18 stage and the December 2017 Council meeting.

(a) The Council's Evidence Base – July 2017

The Council's evidence base in respect of need is set out in the July 2017 document *West Essex and East Hertfordshire SHMA – Establishing the Full Objectively Assessed Need*, prepared by Opinion Research Services. This notes at paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 that:

"Having undertaken a comprehensive review of the range of independent data available, we can conclude that the Full Objectively Assessed Need (FOAN) for West Essex and East Hertfordshire HMA is 51,700 dwellings over the 22-year period 2011-2033, equivalent to an average of 2,350 dpa. 4.2

"This includes the need for both market housing and affordable housing. The SHMA affordable housing update (July 2017) establishes a need to provide 13,600 dwellings as affordable housing across the HMA over the same 22-year period (equivalent to an average of 618 dpa). The need for market housing is therefore 38,100 dwellings across the HMA (an average of 1,732 dpa)."

Opinion Research Services then states at paragraph 4.4 that:

"Delivering the FOAN will require a step change in the rate of housing delivery in the HMA; and such an increase in housing supply should, on reasonable assumptions, be expected to improve affordability. Such an increase in housing supply is consistent with the expectations of the NPPF and the Government's objective to increase the number of new homes and improve affordability nationally."

Figure 5 of the document sets out the 'Full Objectively Assessed Need for Housing by local authority 2011-33'. For Epping Forest the total is 12,753 or **572 dwellings per annum**.

This figure pre-dates, and therefore does not take account of, the Government's proposed standard methodology for the calculation of housing need.

(b) The Government's Consultation on Need – September 2017

In September 2017 the Government consulted on a standard methodology for the calculation of need (*Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals*). The formula uses affordability ratios for 2016 and average household growth over the period 2016 to 2026 from the 2014-based household projections. The consultation document says that the current local assessment of housing need in Epping Forest District is **514 dwellings per annum**. Based on the Government's proposed formula, however, Epping Forest's need would be **923 dwellings per annum**. Even if this were capped at 140% of the current need (in accordance with the proposal at paragraph 25 of the Government's consultation document) the Council would need to find **720 to 801 dwellings per annum** depending on the OAN figure that one uses (ie 514 dpa or 572 dpa).

The consultation sets out transitional arrangements. In respect of a plan that has been published but not yet submitted it is stated that:

"If the plan will be submitted for examination on or before 31 March 2018 or before the revised Framework is published (whichever is later), continue with the current plan preparation – otherwise, use the new standardised method."

(c) The Emerging London Plan – 29 November 2017

In EFDC's December 2017 document entitled 'Duty to Cooperate Statement for Regulation 19 Submission Version of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2017' it is noted at paragraph 3.1 that a 'Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board' was established in October 2014 as a mechanism for members to discuss cross boundary issues with neighbouring authorities in the East Herts / West Essex housing market area and beyond. In this respect it is noted that the London Boroughs of Redbridge, Enfield and Waltham Forest are members of this board and that the Greater London Authority has 'observer status'.

The Mayor of London is preparing a new London Plan, a draft of which was released for consultation in November 2017. Consultation will run until 2 March 2018. The London Plan is part of the statutory development plan of the London Boroughs of Redbridge, Enfield and Waltham Forest.

Reflecting the continued pressing but unmet need for new homes in London the draft London Plan is proposing a significant increase in housing targets across the capital, rising from an annualised monitoring target of 42,389 in the 2016 London Plan to 64,935 in the emerging London Plan, an increase of about 53%. The boroughs neighbouring EFDC are being asked to deliver a significant share of the increase with two of the three boroughs being asked to deliver more than double their current annual average.

Table 1 – Existing versus Emerging London Plan (November 2017 Draft) Targets

Borough	2016 London Plan		2017 Draft London Plan		Increase from 2016 Figure
	Minimum ten year target 2015-2025	Annual monitoring target 2015-2025	Ten-year target	Annualised average	
Enfield	7,976	798	18,760	1,876	135%
Redbridge	11,232	1,123	19,790	1,979	76%
Waltham Forest	8,620	862	17,940	1,794	108%
London Total	423,887	42,389	649,350	64,935	-

Source – Mayor of London

Large parts of each of those three boroughs are Green Belt and the Mayor of London has clearly indicated that he does not want Green Belt to be released. It is therefore very likely that, in light of these significantly increased targets, London boroughs will require neighbouring authorities to work with them to provide the housing they need, under the Duty to Cooperate.

Paragraph 182 of the 2012 NPPF says that to 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 consistent with achieving sustainable development..."*

This follows on from paragraph 181 which says that:

"Local planning authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination. This could be by way of plans or policies prepared

as part of a joint committee, a memorandum of understanding or a jointly prepared strategy which is presented as evidence of an agreed position. Cooperation should be a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation, resulting in a final position where plans are in place to provide the land and infrastructure necessary to support current and projected future levels of development."

It is abundantly clear, therefore, that the Duty to Cooperate is a continuous process that does not stop when a certain stage of plan preparation has been reached.

The Council specifically recognises the Duty to Cooperate. In the 14 December 2017 Report to Council, it is noted at paragraph 23 that:

"The purpose of this stage of the plan-making process is to enable any person to make representations (known as Regulation 20 representations) about the Local Plan Submission Version. Representations may be made about any aspect of the Local Plan and every duly made Regulation 20 representation will be submitted to the Secretary of State with the Local Plan and must be considered by the Local Plan Inspector appointed to carry out the examination. Reflecting the purpose of the examination, the focus of Regulation 20 representations should be whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate under section 33A of the 2004 Act, whether it complies with relevant legal (procedural) requirements, and whether it is sound."

In that context, it is inconsistent and somewhat surprising that in the paper for the 14 December 2017 extraordinary meeting, Members of the Council were not even advised that a draft London Plan had been published two weeks earlier and that it contains policies proposing a significant increase in the housing targets of EFDC's neighbours.

This is a significant material consideration that Members ought to have been expressly made aware of to inform their decision as to whether to proceed with Regulation 19 consultation. As it stands, the absence of evidence to suggest that the Council has co-operated with neighbouring London Boroughs in respect of the draft London Plan targets means that the draft EFDC Local Plan is **not legally sound because it has not been positively prepared**.

The Council's Resolution on the Regulation 19 Local Plan

Despite the above, the Report to the Council on 14 December 2017 gave the Council only two options:

- (a) to agree and publish the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version 2017; or
- (b) to delay the Local Plan and accept the Government's new housing delivery test requiring an indicative housing target of 923 homes per annum or 20,306 homes over the plan period.

It was also noted at paragraph 8 of the Report that:

"As Members will be aware following the publication on 14 September 2017 of the Government consultation proposals on local housing need 'Planning for the right homes in the right places', the Cabinet on 12 October 2017 agreed an accelerated timescale for the production of the Local Plan to ensure that it was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by 31 March 2018. In order to

meet this timescale this means that the Regulation 19 publication needs to start on 18 December 2017 for a period of six weeks until 29 January 2018."

It seems that this is the crux of the issue. The Council is proceeding with undue haste so as to avoid, at least for the time being, having to identify land for a greater number of new homes. In doing so, its decision has revealed very serious flaws in relation to the soundness and legal compliance of the draft plan and the Council's processes, procedures and decision-making, specifically:

1. the Council is only planning to identify land for 514 dwellings *per annum* as opposed to the current FOAN of 572 dwellings per annum, as per the July 2017 evidence base. There is no convincing justification why the Council is seeking to do this, particularly given that it has discounted deliverable sites that could make a significant contribution to meeting the FOAN;
2. the December 2017 Council Report misrepresents the Government's proposed need calculation by failing to report to the decision-maker that any increase is proposed to be capped. Consequently, the indicative target would not be 923 dwellings *per annum* as was reported to Members but between 720 to 801 dwellings *per annum* depending on the OAN figure that one uses (ie 514 dpa or 572 dpa). Had Members been availed of the correct information they may, indeed should, have made a different decision; and
3. Members were not informed of, and therefore did not take account of, a very important material consideration, ie the publication of the draft London Plan. This consideration could alter the amount of housing that EFDC will need to accommodate and goes to the heart of the Duty to Cooperate.

The Remedy

In light of these serious deficiencies the Council should pause preparation of its Local Plan and gather evidence to demonstrate that it has fully discharged its Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring London Boroughs in the light of the draft London Plan.

The draft plan must also be presented to Council once again and Members should be updated in relation to the draft London Plan and the capping of need if calculated in accordance with the Government's proposed standard methodology.

The Council should then make a fully-justified decision as to whether it will or will not need to allocate additional land to meet objectively-identified needs.

Conclusion

As it stands there are very significant flaws in the Council's approach to identifying land to meet its share of the needs of the housing market area. Whilst the Council is moving forward on the basis of an annual requirement of 514 dwellings, the actual requirement across the plan period is at least (using the Council's own FOAN figure) 1,000 or greater, but more likely several thousands greater taking account of the Government's proposed standard methodology and the significantly higher new targets for London (which Epping Forest should reasonably expect to be asked to accommodate a share of).

4. The Merits of This Site

Based on our review above, and notwithstanding that the Council should re-run some stages of its Local Plan preparation process to address the serious deficiencies that we have identified, we are clearly of the view that additional land needs to be identified to meet housing need.

Our client's site has the potential to make an important contribution to supply, not only to meet the additional need but in preference to land that has already been identified by the Council.

Our Regulation 18 Representations explain why our client's site is well-placed to meet housing need and to deliver other wide-ranging benefits. We request that these be taken into account at this stage, too.

Particularly when compared with Green Belt sites that have not been previously developed and compared with undeveloped land that is in agricultural use, this site ought be considered favourably against the Council's priorities which are summarised at paragraph 12 of the December 2017 Council Report thus:

- i) The creation of Garden Town Communities around Harlow recognising its strategic economic role and needs.
- ii) A sequential flood risk assessment – proposing land in Flood Zone 2 and 3 only where need cannot be met in Flood Zone 1.
- iii) Sites located on previously developed land within settlements.
- iv) Sites located on open space within settlements where such selection would maintain adequate open space provision within the settlement.
- v) Previously-developed land within the Green Belt (in anticipation of the NPPF being updated to take account of the proposed changes published in December 2015).
- vi) Greenfield / Green Belt land on the edge of settlements:
 - a. Of least value to the Green Belt if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
 - b. Of greater value to the Green Belt if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
 - c. Of most value to the Green Belt if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
- vii) Agricultural land:
 - a. Of Grade 4-5 if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
 - b. Of Grade 1-3 if the land meets other suitable criteria for development.
- viii) Enable small scale sites in smaller rural communities to come forward where there is a clear local need which supports the social and economic well-being of that community.

The Council appears only to have considered our client's site 'as is' and has not fully considered its potential – potential that would significantly increase the sustainability credentials of the site.

**Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan
December 2017 Version (Regulation 19)
Representations on Behalf of Quinn Estates Ltd**

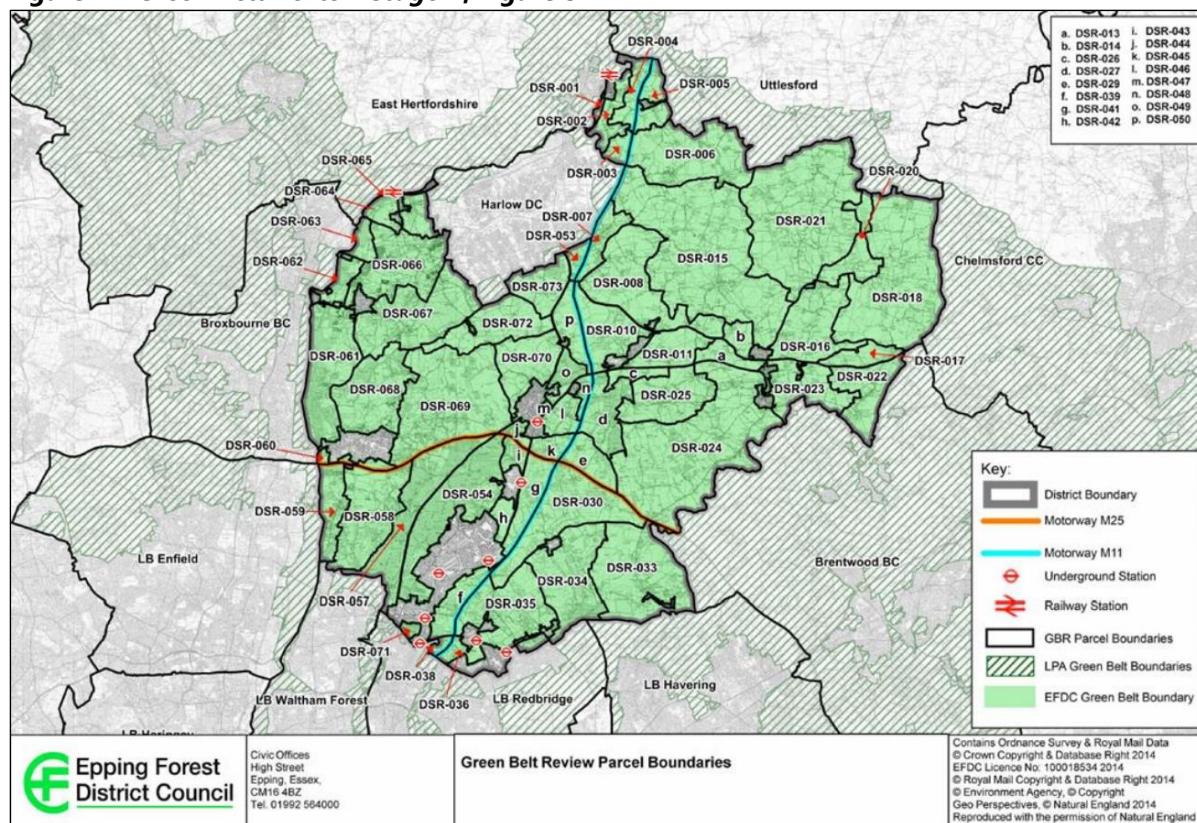
This concern is amply demonstrated by the Council's approach to analysing opportunities for releasing parts of the Metropolitan Green Belt for development.

In its document *Green Belt Review Methodology* (August 2015) it is noted at paragraph 19 that there are "a number of environmental designations within the district which preclude development taking place" and flood zones 2, 3 and 3b are cited as examples. Using such a blunt assessment could unnecessarily rule out development where only part of an assessment parcel is affected but where the remainder of the assessment parcel presents a feasible development opportunity.

There are other potentially more serious concerns with the robustness of the Council's approach to Green Belt release.

In its *Green Belt Review Stage 1* (September 2015) the Council has included all land to the south of the A414, to the west of North Weald Bassett and to the east of the M11 as Parcel DSR-010. This includes the former North Weald Golf Course.

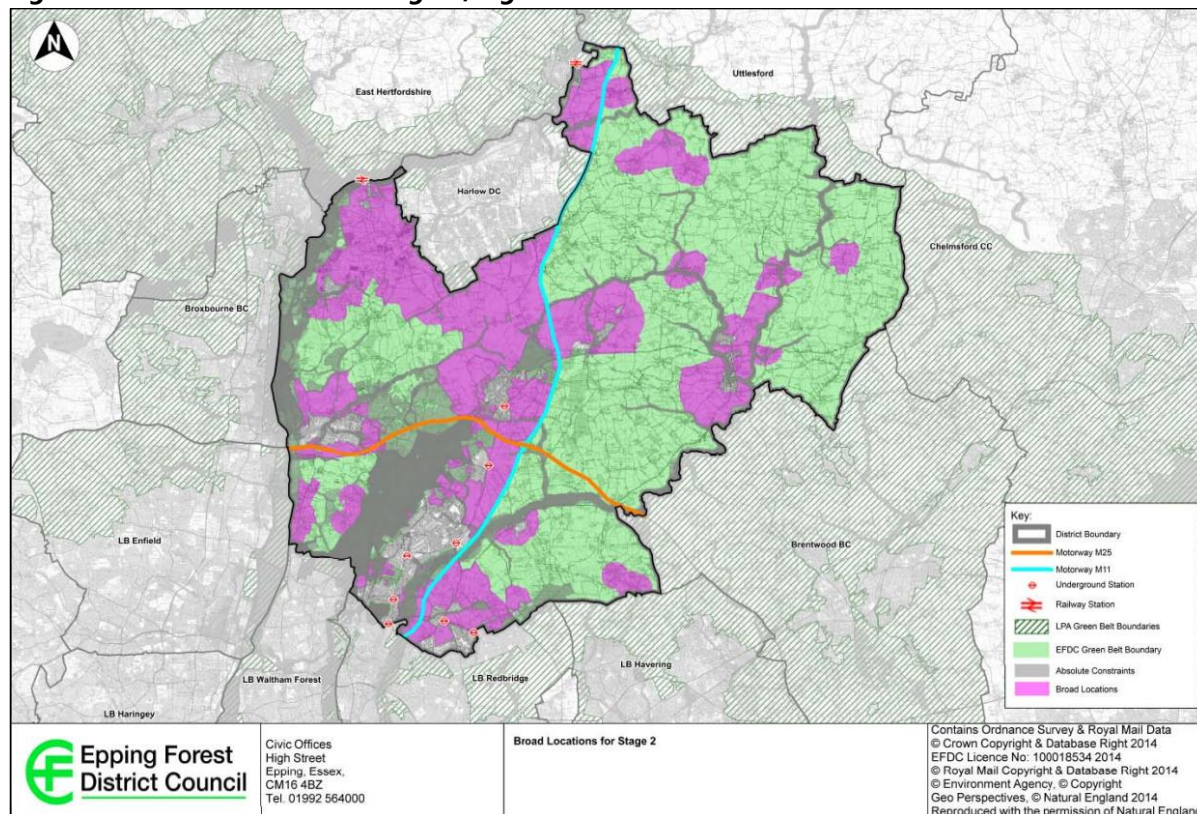
Figure 1 – Green Belt Review Stage 1, Figure 5



Source – Epping Forest District Council

Our client's site was then indicated as part of a 'Broad Location' for further assessment at Figure 18 of that same document (reproduced below).

Figure 2 – Green Belt Review Stage 1, Figure 18



Source – Epping Forest District Council

That ‘further assessment’ was to take the form of the “*Stage 2 Report*” that was prepared by Land Use Consultants and issued in August 2016.

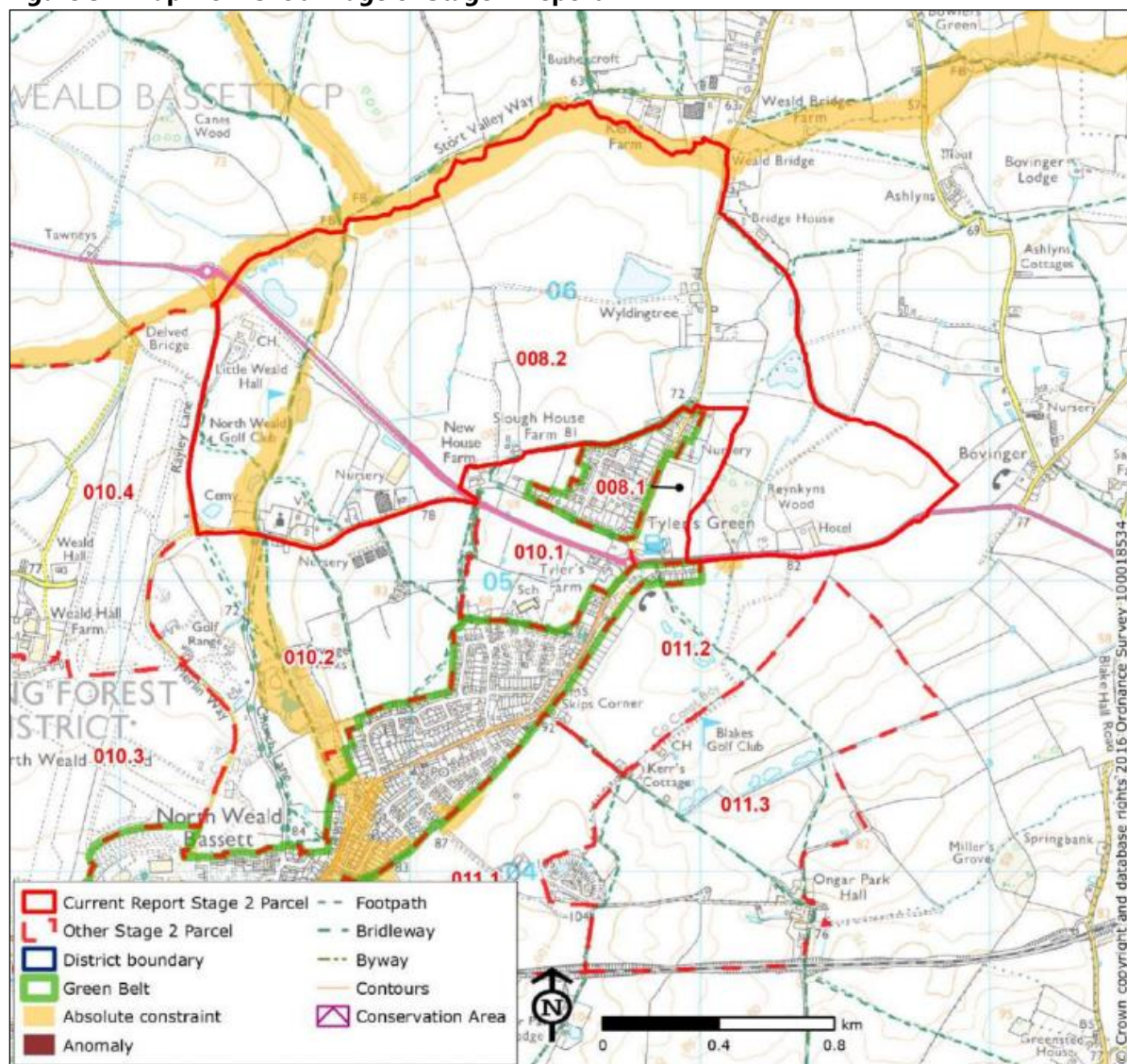
At paragraph 3.12 of that document it is stated that:

“Working out from each identified settlement listed in Table 2.3, potential boundary features were assessed for suitability as Stage 2 parcel edges. As far as possible, the boundaries of each of the sub parcels were defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent, and which could therefore potentially act as a basis for establishing a future Green Belt boundary should the Council decide to release a parcel (or combination of parcels) from the Green Belt. Other factors such as land ownership and proposed development sites did not inform the process for defining parcels.”

However, on the 319th page of the PDF version of the document (the pages are unnumbered) the North Weald Golf Course has been amalgamated with a large parcel of land to the north of the A414 referred to as Parcel 008.2. An extract from the drawing showing this is **Figure 3** (below).

In relation to Parcel 008.2 the Report says that release of this area would cause “*Very High*” harm to the Green Belt purposes. In relation to Parcel 10.2 – which is adjacent to the former North Weald Golf Course and also to the south of the A414 – the Report says that release would cause only “*Moderate*” harm to the Green Belt purposes.

Figure 3 – Map from 319th Page of Stage 2 Report



Source – Epping Forest District Council

Our observations are as follows:

- it is not clear why the extent of parcels has been changed from one Report to another;
- the definition of this parcel does not appear to follow the Report's own parameters that parcels should be defined by strong features that could, in future, form the edge of the Green Belt. The A414 has the potential to be a very clear boundary feature; and
- the former North Weald Golf Course has a very different character to the land that wraps around the north of Tyler's Green which forms the rest of Parcel 008.2. The former North Weald Golf Course would not score so negatively if it were assessed on its own.

The consequence of what appears to be a flawed approach to the identification of candidate land for release from the Green Belt is that the Council is not fully considering all realistic alternatives. Our client's concern that the Council has unjustly dismissed its site and is such that if the Council proceeds

to allocate sites that are less preferable in terms of national planning policy (eg sites that are BMV / crop-producing) it will consider seeking a judicial review of the Council's decision(s).

The potential of the site has already been thoroughly explored by our client with the assistance of professional advisers and we note the following:

- Ardent Consulting Engineers, **flooding and engineering** specialists with significant local experience, have commented that the site being partially in Flood Zone 3 is not a reason for discounting it. The only areas of the site at risk are immediately adjacent to the watercourse. It would not be possible to develop here anyway as it is a main river and therefore subject to an 8m byelaw exclusion distance from the top of each bank. The sequential and exception test will not be required as we are not proposing to develop in the high-risk flood zone. In accordance with the NPPF and associated Technical Guidance our client will be following a sequential approach and allocating development on the site in Flood Zone 1 only. Furthermore, if 30% of the site is in a flood zone where development would not normally be permitted, this should not disqualify the site – it should be used to inform site capacity and it should be seen as an opportunity for habitat enhancement, too;
- Entran, a highly respected independent environmental consultancy with specific niche abilities and expertise in the production of Environmental Statements, has undertaken a preliminary **air quality assessment** which identifies that air pollutant concentrations in the vicinity of the site are well below air quality objectives. Initial air quality dispersion modelling has demonstrated that pollutant concentrations at all proposed residential areas and other sensitive areas of the site will be below air quality objectives and therefore no mitigation measures will be required;
- Connect Consultants, a **highways and transport** consultancy that works across the UK with developers, local authority highways departments and Highways England, offers strategic and local level expertise on transport matters. Connect considers this to be one of the only development sites that is adjacent to an existing bus route (on the A414) and therefore supports the opportunity to deliver further access points / bus stops that could support and sustain a 15-minute frequency bus service with enhanced weekend services, thereby making it a highly sustainable location;
- Connect also confirms that the site, like many of the allocated sites, is more than 4,000m from the nearest National Rail or London Underground station. It is 4.3 miles from Epping Station and 5.7 miles from Harlow Town National Rail station. The 4,000m distance is arbitrary as 4,000m is beyond a reasonable walking distance, within cycling distance but less than the distance that cyclists could reasonably be expected to cycle, and does not take account of the fact that interconnecting bus journeys will not be particularly sensitive to distance, as the quality and frequency of bus services is likely to be more relevant than minor journey length fluctuations;
- Connect also confirms that the site, like many of the allocated sites, is more than 1000m from a bus stop. The site is 1.4 miles from the Harlow Garden Centre bus stop and 0.9 miles from the Harvester bus stop (both on the A414). Bus services would be incorporated into or adjacent to the development proposal to serve the future residents and businesses and it is more relevant to consider the proximity of a site to a bus route, than the existing bus stops which are capable of being moved or supplemented. Discussions with local bus operators are ongoing;
- in respect of **educational facilities**, the site, like many of the allocated sites, is more than 4,000m from the nearest secondary school. The site is 2.9 miles from Passmores Academy in Harlow, 4.2

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miles from St Mark's West Essex Catholic School in Harlow, 4.8 miles from The Ongar Academy and 5.6 miles from Epping St Johns. However, and fundamentally, whilst there is currently adequate capacity in the secondary school estate, the proposal is capable of delivering land for a new secondary school as part of the development scheme to meet future demand and additionally other sites in proximity will benefit from this facility. No other site is capable of achieving this;

- the Council is already contemplating the **release of other parts of the Green Belt**. This site scores more positively on a number of points than other Green Belt land (both draft allocated and excluded) within the immediate North Weald Bassett location and elsewhere in the District. The Council has accepted the principle of Green Belt review but has not adopted a consistent approach across all sites;
- the site is adjacent to significant built form at the North Weald Airfield. In addition to the Five-a-side football Clubhouse and pitches and the driving range on the site, land excluded from the development site, but **immediately adjacent** to it, comprises existing development – the former clubhouse (which is consented for conversion to flats), existing commercial (children's nursery and hair salon) and residential / commercial (Little Weald Hall). Furthermore, the site is located in proximity to existing residential, a church and commercial development on Vicarage Lane West;
- in addition, the site is located **immediately adjacent** to the draft allocated site on land south of Vicarage Lane (NWB.R3, NWB.R4 and NWB.R5) and therefore successful integration with other residential areas is eminently achievable;
- the site is located in close proximity to **existing employment** at Weald Hall Farm Industrial Estate (NWB.E3) which is identified for intensification and the draft allocated employment site at North Weald Airfield (for which a masterplan is proposed). The delivery of employment and housing in close proximity should be considered as a positive planning aim as it reduces the need for travel and supports wider sustainability objectives;
- the site was formerly used as a golf course and has **not been in agricultural use nor is it crop-producing**, unlike many of the draft allocated and comparable sites in the North Weald Bassett locality, such as NWB.R3 which is in agricultural use. The site has been subject of a managed maintenance regime as a golf course and consequently has limited ecological and landscape value. Sequentially, this site should be preferable for development purposes as it does not use best and most versatile land, which the above stated sites are designated as, and has been subject of infilling with inert material and regrading;
- there are **no contamination constraints** associated with the site, as historic infilling has been the subject of EA licensing and accordingly has been subject to stringent regulatory checks. In any event, topographical and potential contamination constraints ought not weigh negatively when both can be readily and easily addressed / mitigated. The site is relatively level and flat and any regrading has been man-made and associated with the design of the golf course;
- DW Landscape Consultants has assessed the **landscape** criteria which states 'Moderate Sensitivity' – but taking into account that strong enclosure of the site increases its capacity to accommodate mixed-use development and introduction of appropriate mitigation will ensure limited impact on landscape and views (the score should be '0' or possibly +1 using LPA scoring in site suitability assessment);

- Aspect Ecology has reviewed the assessment criteria. It is noted that neutral scores are applied under the ecology criteria, which accords with survey work undertaken, indicating that the site is generally of **low ecological value** and development is unlikely to impact on protected sites or Ancient Woodland. However, it should also be recognised that the site could potentially deliver significant benefits for ecology, particularly in association with the watercourse corridor as part of the drainage strategy and with potential to form a country park area to the north. This would positively benefit priority species and habitats; and
- Kember Loudon Williams, an adviser on aviation planning matters, including previously advising on development proposals for the North Weald Airfield, has undertaken an assessment which concludes that there are no constraints arising from proposed development in respect of **North Weald Airfield**. This ensures that there will be no adverse impact on the existing aviation operations, existing commercial uses and aligns with the Council's future industrial / employment strategy for the airfield.

Overall Conclusion

There have been, and continue to be, serious issues with the preparation of Epping Forest District Council's new local plan. Those issues mean that the emerging local plan is neither sound nor legally-compliant. The Council must now rectify those issues before proceeding further.

Part of the process of rectifying those issues will involve a re-assessment of all sites that have been submitted to the Council in duly-made representations. Unless the Regulation 18 stage is repeated no other sites should be admitted.

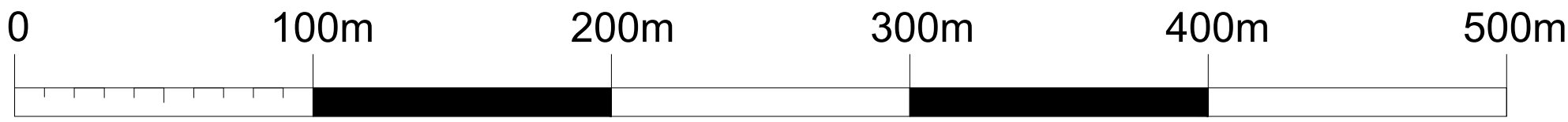
That reassessment ought to assess sites according to their potential as opposed to the existing situation.

Once such a reassessment has been undertaken we are confident that the site which is subject of these Representations will be seen as a realistic option that is sequentially-preferable to other Green Belt options that the Council has explored to date. There is also a significant amount of public support for the development of this site.

The sales agreement between Quinn Estates and a well-established housebuilder means that there can be confidence that this site is considered deliverable (meaning that development can be delivered within the next five years). Thus this site will make a significant and early contribution to helping the District to meet its pressing need for housing and other necessary social infrastructure

Annex 1

The Land Subject of These Representations



Notes:

Please report all discrepancies, errors and omissions.

Verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work on site or preparing shop drawings.

All materials, components and workmanship are to comply with the relevant British Standards, Codes of Practice, and appropriate manufacturers recommendations that from time to time shall apply.

For all specialist work, see relevant drawings.

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rev	date	revision
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Revisions		
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project title
**Quinn Estates
Proposed Redevelopment of
North Weald Park,
North Weald Bassett, Essex**

drawing title
Site Location Plan

scale 1:2000 @ A1	drawing number
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date October 2016	revision
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2860-001	M
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Annex 2
Our Regulation 18 Representations

Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan
October 2016 Version (Regulation 18)
Representations on Behalf of Quinn Estates Ltd

Land to the North and South of the A414, North Weald Bassett

Introduction

About Quinn Estates

Quinn Estates has over twenty years' experience of delivering mixed-use development in the south-east of England. It has planned and constructed a diverse range of schemes including residential, healthcare, industrial, education, leisure and office developments. Quinn Estates has promoted and delivered hundreds of new homes in heritage settings, listed buildings, rural locations and on strategic housing development sites. When promoting large-scale developments it takes a holistic approach, ensuring that development is genuinely mixed-use by incorporating the services that people need (for example small shops and medical facilities) as well as facilities that make a genuine contribution to people's quality of life, for example by providing new sports facilities and publicly-accessible open space.

The Site

The site that Quinn Estates is promoting is located to the east of North Weald Airfield and to the north of Vicarage Lane West. It also includes land to the north of the A414. In total the land extends to approximately 67 ha (165 acres).

Figure 1 – The Site Subject of these Representations



The site is approximately 1.6 km (1.0 mile) to the north of North Weald Bassett and located approximately 1.4 miles from Junction 7 of the M11. The 419 Harlow to Epping bus service passes the site on A414. This is a frequent service which provides approximately seven services per hour in each direction. At the Harlow end, the route terminates at the town centre bus station and therefore provides a connection between the site and the shops and other services in Harlow. At Epping, the bus route terminates at Epping station, which is the northernmost station on London Underground's Central Line. The 419 bus route therefore provides access to shops and services in Epping (including St Margaret's Hospital) along with access to central London via the London Underground. New bus stops would be required on the A414 site frontage to take advantage of the 419 bus route. A new roundabout could be provided on the A414 circa 500m south-east of Rayley Lane which would reduce traffic speeds and is consistent with providing bus stops between the existing and new roundabouts.

Additional bus services use bus stops which are approximately 1.0 km (0.6 miles) to the east of the site at Tylers Green. The 419 route interchanges with these additional services. Finally, there is a former London Underground station at North Weald which is currently operated by a private heritage railway.

The whole of the site is in the Metropolitan Green Belt and is not currently allocated for development.

The site is currently in use as a golf course. Participation in golf, however, has declined significantly over recent years. Statistics from England Golf, for example, reveal that between 2004 and 2013, membership of golf clubs has reduced from 882,184 to 707,424 – a reduction of just under 20%. North Weald has been no exception to this trend, recently experiencing dwindling membership which has rendered its current operational form unviable; consequently, although this site is still in use as a sports facility, the sports provision is not used to the extent that is desired and viable.

The Potential of the Site

Quinn Estates believes that the site has potential for:

to the south of the A414:

- in the region of 700 homes, including 40% affordable housing;
- employment floorspace adjacent to North Weald Airfield which is a draft allocated site and thus presents an opportunity to create linkage and cluster benefits;
- the creation of a new local centre with services to support the new housing;
- new facilities such as a doctor's surgery which will be available for existing residents of the local area as well as new residents;
- significant landscape improvements to remove the golf course – an alien feature – and to create a more naturalistic environment with linkage to the new and publicly-accessible country park;
- a significant contribution to new and improved infrastructure.

to the north of the A414:

- the creation of exemplar sports facilities that will be suitable for a wide variety of sports to take place, enabling a greater proportion of the community to have easy access to healthy activities with positive benefits;
- bespoke new education facilities including a primary school and grammar school / specialist academy;
- a retirement village and a care home;

- a new dedicated facility for the Scouts;
- a new Park & Ride facility with linkages via new and/or enhanced services to Epping and consideration of the re-introduction of commuter services between North Weald station and Epping (for London Underground); and
- a new publicly-accessible country park in excess of 25 hectares incorporating cycle and walking trails and both formal and informal recreation areas, thereby enabling public open space to be enjoyed by the new residents and the wider general public / community.

The residential uses and associated facilities (eg local shopping facilities and commercial) would be located to the south of the A414, set within high quality landscaped surroundings with the education hub, the sports hub, the Park & Ride and the country park located to the north of the A414 with a new dedicated access to comply with highways standards.

Justification for the Proposed Allocation

1. Housing Land Supply Considerations

Five Year Housing Land Supply & Previous Delivery

Epping Forest District Council does not have a five-year housing land supply.

For the period 2011 to 2016, 1,173 homes were delivered (235 *per annum*) compared with a need of 518 dwellings *per annum*, based on a target of 11,400 for the period from 2011 to 2033 (page 38 of the draft Local Plan). We consider this to be a clear case of 'persistent under-delivery' and that, in identifying a five-year supply of housing land, a 20% buffer should be included.

Objectively-assessed Housing Need

At paragraph 3.34 it is noted that the objectively-assessed housing need for the SHMA area is currently approximately 54,600 new homes and it is then noted at paragraph 3.35 that:

"The local authorities have considered the most recent population and household projections. They have identified the potential to increase the level of housing to be delivered across the Housing Market Area but the level of infrastructure constraints, as well as environmental and policy designations are such that to provide for the full OAHN based on the 2016 figures would result in Local Plans which did not fully accord with other policies set out in the NPPF. This has shown that the maximum amount of growth for the Plan period is around 51,100 homes for the Strategic Housing Market Area."

This constrained need represents just under 94% of the objectively-assessed need, a shortfall of 3,500 homes across the housing market area.

Objective versus Constrained Need

The National Planning Practice Guidance¹ discusses the question of whether housing and economic needs override constraints on the use of land, such as Green Belt. It says that:

"The National Planning Policy Framework should be read as a whole: need alone is not the only factor to be considered when drawing up a Local Plan."

"The Framework is clear that local planning authorities should, through their Local Plans, meet objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted. Such policies include those relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives, and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park or the Broads; designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion."

"The Framework makes clear that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan."

The questions arising from this are:

- (a) whether there is a need for additional homes to be provided for in the local plan; and
- (b) whether allocating land for such homes would result in adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of delivering new homes by way of a site allocation.

¹ Paragraph: 044 Reference ID: 3-044-20141006

(a) Whether there is a need for additional homes to be provided for in the local plan

In our opinion there is a clear need for additional homes to be provided for. Across the housing market area there is a shortfall of 3,500 homes and the Council is working on the basis of meeting a constrained need.

Furthermore, there is clear evidence of persistent under-supply of housing which means that the Council should be identifying a greater amount of housing so as to increase choice and competition and to encourage a greater rate of delivery of new homes, lest a backlog continues to accrue.

(b) Whether allocating land for such homes would result in adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of delivering new homes by way of a site allocation

We believe that, in the context of the currently-proposed growth at North Weald and consequential proposed alterations to the boundary of the Metropolitan Green Belt, further alterations to the boundary could realistically be made without undermining the purpose of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

In various parts of the District, including around North Weald Bassett, the Council is proposing to alter the boundaries of the Metropolitan Green Belt to facilitate the delivery of new homes.

Before reaching the current stage in the plan preparation process the Council undertook background work including the preparation of evidence base documents. One such background document is the September 2014 *North Weald Bassett Masterplanning Study*. On page 5 of that document it is explained that:

"Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners were commissioned by Epping Forest District Council to undertake a masterplanning study for North Weald Bassett, to identify a vision for the settlement and to provide a clear framework for future development and investment. The study covers transport and movement considerations, provision of new homes, economic opportunities, shops and community services for the settlement, and the role of open space. This report sets out a vision and objectives for North Weald Bassett, masterplan options and involved stakeholder and community engagement. The study feeds into the Local Plan process for Epping Forest District Council."

It was through that process that development of housing on the Metropolitan Green Belt was explored which has ultimately resulted in the proposed allocations in the current draft of the Local Plan.

On the basis of current national and local policy it must be the case that the Council thinks that the delivery of those new homes would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the adverse impact of altering the extent of the Green Belt and, thus, that those particular areas of Green Belt should not be a constraint on the Council meeting its need for housing.

We do not see why a similar rationale could not be applied to this site, particularly given that the development of our client's site would not undermine the purpose of the Green Belt any more than allocating the adjacent land would, and given that it would bring other significant planning benefits, not least helping the Council to meet its full objectively-assessed need as opposed to a constrained need.

The Call for Sites

The part of the Golf Course to the south of the A414 has previously been promoted for housing and was considered as part of the recent call for sites (site SR-0179). The conclusion in relation to that site and the adjacent site SR-0467 is set out on page 101 of *The North Weald Bassett Masterplanning Study* thus:

"These sites are not considered to be appropriate for new development as they are located a considerable distance from existing development, so will not integrate effectively with North Weald Bassett's existing settlement form. The sites also sit to the north-west of the settlement, towards Harlow and therefore may prompt concerns regarding coalescence with the town."

The main points there can be responded to quite simply, however.

First, if development on the Golf Course is delivered as part of a planned expansion of North Weald Bassett it will be capable of forming part of a coherent settlement where new facilities can be provided in addition to those in the existing settlement.

Second, it will not result in coalescence with the town to the north. Housing would be limited to the south of the A414 and facilities to the north of the A414 would not result in 'urban sprawl', a key issue that Green Belts are meant to keep in check.

Rather, it offers the potential to remove the golf course which is an alien and incongruous landscape feature and to replace it with a naturalistic landscape-led development with, in particular, significant landscape improvement to the north of A414 through the creation of a large publicly-accessible country park. Thus, and whilst the site is not subject of any specific landscape designations, it will benefit from a significant improvement in visual amenity.

2. Suitability of the Land for Allocation

Quinn Estates Ltd's professional advisors have examined the suitability of the land for allocation.

Ecology

Aspect Ecology has undertaken a desktop review and walkover of the site, a summary of which is attached as **Appendix 1**. Aspect notes that the site does not appear to be subject to any significant ecological constraints. Notably, the site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designation. The closest national and international ecological designations are well separated from the site, such that they are unlikely to be subject to any adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.

The site appears to be dominated by intensively-managed grassland of low ecological value, although habitats such as treelines, planted woodland, ponds and watercourses may be of some interest within a local context and offer opportunities for a range of faunal species. As such, a full suite of ecological surveys will be undertaken to provide a detailed assessment of the site and inform the development proposals. Based on the illustrative layout however, Aspect considers that suitable habitat opportunities can be maintained within corridors of open space through and around the development areas and that new habitats can be created to provide gains for biodiversity under the scheme, and thus contribute to national and local policy objectives.

On that basis, Aspect considers that there are unlikely to be any significant ecological constraints to the development of the site, and that the illustrated development would be feasible in ecological terms.

Landscape

David Williams Landscape Consultancy ('DWLC') has analysed the site on the basis of a site inspection in autumn 2016. DWLC notes that:

- the Site forms part of an irregular shaped parcel of land to the north and south of the A414 with the northern boundary of the Site formed by a section of Crispey Brook (and its robust line of trees and taller hedgerows), Rayley Lane to the west and Vicarage Lane to the south and

existing tall hedgerow and trees forming the eastern boundary to the Site. Existing development extends along the north side of Vicarage Lane to the east of St Andrew's Church including a number of large detached properties and area of garden nursery and large glasshouses / barns. The Site forms the part of North Weald Golf Course and is very well contained within the landscape;

- the Site is not located within a designated landscape, such as AONB or Area of Special Landscape Value and forms a small part of the open countryside to the north west of North Weald Bassett between Tyler's Green to the east and North Weald Airfield to the west. The Site lies within the 'North Weald Bassett & North Weald Airfield Fringes' Landscape Character Area (LCA Area 11) as defined in the Epping Forest District 'Landscape Character Assessment' dated 2010 which was completed before the Issues and Options document was published;
- the Site and land to the south east also lies within the 'Landscape Setting Area' of North Weald Bassett (Areas 2 and 3) which is identified as having 'Moderate Sensitivity'. On the basis of the initial landscape appraisal of the Site and surrounding area, the Site therefore has some capacity to accommodate mixed use development;
- there are a very limited number of viewpoints where the Site is visible mainly from the local road and short sections of the footpath network to the north of the Site (Public Footpath No. 201-19 / 20 / 24 / 29 / 30) which form part of circular routes (Bassett Millennium Walks) as well as a section of the Stort Valley Way (long distance recreational path) where there are views of a small part of the northern parts of the golf course. In addition, there are two Public Rights of Way across the Site (Bridleway No. 201-19 and Public Footpath No. 201-31) where views are obtained although due to the undulating topography of the golf course and strong landscape framework of tree belts and area of native shrub vegetation adjoin these footpath views are short and restricted; and
- due to the strong landscape framework within the Site itself and robust hedgerows and trees defining the boundaries to the Site together with the very limited number of viewpoints where there are views into the Site, the introduction of new mixed use development within the Site will have minimal landscape and visual impacts on the locality and the development can be easily and well assimilated into the existing framework of tree belts and hedgerows / shrubs (and topography) within the Site resulting in no adverse landscape impacts on the wider surrounding area. The northern boundary of the Site following Crispey Brook would also form a suitable new Green Belt as it is a clearly defined physical feature that is readily recognisable in the landscape (NPPF paragraph 85 - 6th bullet point).

Agricultural Land

The development of our client's site will not result in the loss of active agricultural land. At present the golf course site is not capable of being cultivated and development of 20 homes on part of the golf course site has already been allowed at appeal (Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/W/15/3134332 dated 13 April 2016).

This situation should be contrasted with the potential of other sites that have been selected as draft allocations which are high-grade agricultural land and currently crop-producing. At paragraph 112 of the NPPF, the Government says that local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality. In that context alone, it is our opinion that sequentially the golf course site should be the first preference amongst the sites to the north of North Weald Bassett that have been considered as potential locations for development as it is more appropriate, sustainable and efficient to use land which is not in high yielding agricultural production over land which is crop-producing.

Drainage & Flooding

Ardent Consulting Engineers have analysed the location and their report is at **Appendix 2**. They note that the Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water drainage strategy for the proposed development will comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Planning Practice Guidance and non-statutory SuDS guidance. In addition the drainage system proposed will be in accordance with Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council's local policy requirements and relevant technical standards.

The proposed surface water strategy will involve the use of SuDS designed to discharge to the nearby watercourses at rates equal to or less than existing greenfield rates and will include an allowance for climate change. This will ensure that flooding is not increased on or off site.

Foul water flows from the development will be discharged into existing Thames Water sewers.

Overall, therefore, there should be no reason not to allocate this site on the basis of drainage or flooding issues.

Transport

In transport terms, we think that the subject site is preferable because for car trips, the manoeuvre from the A414 south-east of Junction 7 is likely to put less stress on the motorway junction than development on the A414 to the north of the Motorway junction during the weekday morning peak hour, which is normally the busiest peak. This might affect the quantum of development which can come forward before improvement triggers for Junction 7a. The location also enjoys frequent bus services to Harlow and Epping on a route which offer the certainty of sustainable access in to the future, as does the easy access to Epping London Underground station.

The proposed development also offers a unique opportunity to secure significant additional sustainable transport benefits:

- existing public bus services run in proximity to the site;
- these services can be supplemented and upgraded enhancing the sustainability credentials of the site;
- Park & Ride which will offer significant sustainability benefits, reduce emissions and congestion and improve air quality locally;
- the Park & Ride is most suitably located geographically to offer alternative transport choice to local residents and commuters;
- the Park & Ride can provide linkage to Epping, Harlow and Ongar either directly or via connecting services; and
- the Park & Ride can also offer a versatile transport solution, operating as a dual purpose means for transporting children to the new schools – this is a complementary, flexible and sustainable means of transport.

Education

Perducta are a specialist education consultancy who have worked for Essex County Council for a considerable period of time and have excellent local knowledge of the education provision and future requirements. They were appointed to provide recommendations to inform Quinn Estates' initial proposals. The conclusions of that exercise were that the Quinn Estates aspirations for both primary accommodation in partnership with St Andrew's and a small secondary grammar school annexe and post-16 facility for St John's will raise educational standards in Epping and will reduce the need to transport pupils from the area to Loughton and King Harold in Waltham Abbey. We

highlight that in no way is Quinn Estates advocating the closure or relocation of the aforementioned schools, however; they are mentioned on the basis that new school provision is often delivered as an annexe to, or in co-operation with, an existing well-regarded local education provider. The need to improve local provision is clear to Quinn Estates and Quinn Estates have a strategy to address this.

3. Sustainability & Community Benefits

New Community, Education and Sports Facilities

The allocation of this site presents a great opportunity to secure a step change in the range and extent of local facilities and infrastructure at the disposition of local people. The provision of local services on the site would increase trip containment within North Weald for local residents, by offering facilities within walking distance.

As well as new education provision at no cost to the taxpayer, new sports facilities will be provided.

Our client has initiated discussions with a number of local sports clubs including Epping Youth FC and Epping Karate Club with more than 1,000 members, all of which support the principle of new sports facilities. These, as well as other organisations and groups, will benefit significantly from the proposed sports hub comprising two 3G pitches and two grass pitches as well as the 3,000-4,000 sq ft multi-use community building. In addition, a new scout facility is proposed with dedicated open space to enable a greater range of activities for local young people.

As well as exemplar sports facilities there will be a significant amount of public open space which will be naturalistic in appearance and open to the general public.

The proposal also has the potential to deliver much wider benefits, for example a furniture warehouse and distribution centre for a local Hospice, a much-valued local facility.

Furthermore, proposed facilities such as a doctor's surgery would be available to existing as well as new residents, meaning that the existing community would see tangible benefits from the proposed development.

The provision of a new Country Park will provide publicly-accessible open space for local residents and the wider community. This will be the largest new facility of its kind in the locality and will have a positive benefit for the community, offering walking and cycling trails and formal and informal areas for recreation. The Country Park will be in excess of 25 hectares and will provide a unique and complementary setting for the proposed development. The creation of linkages with existing footpaths and the wider footpath / cycle network will enable accessibility from the wider locality and ensure integration with existing built development in the North Weald Bassett area.

Affordable Housing

A key benefit of allocating this site would be policy-compliant affordable housing (ie 40% affordable). The proposed development could realistically and genuinely support an unprecedented scale of affordable housing delivery. This should be given significant positive weight on the basis of houses prices / the high housing pressure and the chronic shortage of affordable housing in Epping Forest District.

Infrastructure Potential

The contribution that the development site could make to infrastructure is also a consideration of significant positive weight.

On page 6 of the *Masterplanning Study* it is noted that local residents were given the opportunity to feed their knowledge and thoughts about North Weald Bassett into the study at a workshop early in the process. The general attitude towards development was found to be positive so long as it brings improvements to social and physical infrastructure.

In transport terms, development of up to 1,670 dwellings was tested and it was concluded (page 57) that a range of interventions would be needed:

- development would impact the A414 between Rayley Lane and the M11. Suggested upgrade of the A414 / Rayley Lane junction with a cost in the order of £200,000 triggered by 1,200 homes;
- improvements to M11 Junction 7;
- 500 homes – flare on northbound exit slip, £150,000;
- 1,000 homes – free-flow connection between A414 and south bound on slip road, £500,000;
- widening of northern bridge and associated circulatory carriageway estimated at £3.0m triggered by 1,000 homes;
- A414 / Vicarage Lane junction improvement estimated at £300,000 triggered by 500 homes;
- replacing A414 / High Street roundabout with signalised cross roads, estimated at £100,000 at 1,000 homes;
- £500,000 allowance made for modest highway capacity improvements at B181 / B1393 junction; and
- investment in public transport and walking / cycle networks, allowance between £7m – £10m for infrastructure enhancement.

The document also includes other transport aspirations, for example it is noted on page 94 that financial contributions from developers could help to allow the heritage railway to act as a public transport service.

Clearly, securing the delivery of such infrastructure will be critical, as will be the timely delivery of that infrastructure; local plan policy will need to be sufficiently robust to deal with this. Important factors in ensuring that there are good prospects of delivery include:

- optimising the potential of areas where growth will occur so as to maximise the potential for contributions. This is particularly important where transformational change / major infrastructure investment is necessary;
- creating opportunities for multiple developers to bring forward new homes – where there is a small number of parties involved the delivery of new homes can be slower because of a lower level of competition between developers; and
- realistic triggers at which infrastructure payments will be sought. Again, where multiple parties are delivering development, aggregated contributions can help infrastructure to be delivered at an earlier stage as opposed to waiting a longer time between triggers on a larger development site with fewer housebuilders.

We suggest that the deliverability of additional infrastructure will be improved through the allocation of additional homes in the emerging development plan and in particular the provision of new housing on the North Weald Golf Course.

Achieving a critical mass of housing by way of an additional allocation will mean that the necessary infrastructure can be delivered earlier, reducing the construction phase impacts that can often be experienced in the early years of implementation as a consequence of the full effects of development not being mitigated in the earlier stages of implementation but rather at a later stage in delivery.

Additional development will also increase the potential for investment in infrastructure to result in transformational as opposed to incremental change. The Park & Ride facility would make use of the 419 bus service to alleviate parking pressure at Epping station. Quinn Estates Ltd has undertaken initial discussions with representatives of the Epping Ongar Railway and there may be consideration to provide commuter services on the Epping to Ongar railway, a prospect that is far less achievable with more limited growth which would rely on road-based movement. Infrastructure and public transport improvements would offer real and tangible benefits to the new residents of all developments and also to residents of the existing settlements, and be of greater benefit to the environment, too.

The site is also capable of being connected to Tylers Green and North Weald Bassett by the construction of footways and cycle facilities along the A414 to the east of the site, possibly using Vicarage Lane East as a cycle route. By providing the site access on A414 in the form of a roundabout, traffic speeds would reduce, and a reduction on the speed limit would foster greater potential for walking and cycling.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion we consider there to be a convincing argument for the allocation of North Weald Golf Course.

The development of this site:

- is deliverable in ecological terms;
- will remove the golf course – an incongruous landscape feature – and replace it with a high-quality landscape-led development that is appropriate to its context;
- is preferable to other locations in terms of proximity to the existing highways network and existing public transport services;
- can deliver a significant package of public transport and highways improvements; and
- is currently in use as a failing golf course and therefore is a sequentially-preferable development opportunity than surrounding sites which are in agricultural use and high-yielding crop production.

It will also:

- enable the Council to meet its full objectively-assessed housing need;
- deliver necessary and desired social infrastructure;
- provide bespoke new educational and sporting facilities for local benefit;
- allow for significant visual improvements to be made to landscape to the north of the A414; and
- enable transformational transport infrastructure improvements to be delivered.

Quinn Estates Ltd is in control of the site and following discussions is in legal with a high-quality national housebuilder who is committed to this site which confirms certainty of delivery. Other surrounding sites are subject to options and subject to planning terms which does not ensure delivery of the private and affordable housing and the significant package of social, economic and environmental improvements and benefits.

We therefore respectfully request that the Council allocates this site for residential and associated development as outlined above.

Details for Submission

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Directorate of Neighbourhoods
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
323 High Street
Epping
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The deadline is **5pm on 12 December 2016**

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Appendix 1
TN1: Ecological Summary to Inform Representations to Local Plan
Aspect Ecology
December 2016

Technical Briefing Note

Project: North Weald Golf Course (ECO5087)

TN1: Ecological Summary to Inform Representations to Local Plan

Date: December 2016

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. Aspect Ecology is advising Quinn Estates Ltd in respect of ecological matters relating to the site at North Weald Golf Course, at North Weald Bassett in Essex. This note provides a summary of ecological issues at the site to inform representations to Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan for mixed use development of the site.
- 1.2. The site comprises approximately 70ha of land located either side of the A414, to the north of North Weald Bassett. The southern parcel is bounded by Rayley Lane to the west, beyond which lies North Weald Airfield, and Vicarage Lane West to the south. The northern parcel is bounded by open farmland, dominated by arable fields.
- 1.3. The site itself is currently in use as a golf course, and as such is largely dominated by mown grassland forming greens and fairways, together with rough grassland and scrub areas forming roughs. Other habitats present within the site include treelines, areas of planted woodland, ponds and a watercourse, whilst a group of buildings is present in the western part of the south, just south of the A414.
- 1.4. This note is based on an initial review of desktop sources, including the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database, which utilises data provided by Natural England, the Woodland Trust database, and information from Epping Forest District Council's website including the Adopted 1998 Local Plan and Adopted 2006 Local Plan Alterations, and the Local Wildlife Site Review 2009. A review of aerial photography has also been undertaken to provide an assessment of habitats present at the site, and any potential for protected, rare or notable species.

2. Summary of Ecological Issues

Ecological Designations

- 2.1. The site itself is not subject to any statutory designations. The nearest statutory designation to the site is Church Lane Flood Meadow Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located 475m to the south of the site. This comprises an area of flood defence now supporting a wet meadow and pond supporting a range of plant species.

- 2.2. The closest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is Epping Forest SSSI, with a component of the SSSI located 1.9km to the south-west. The SSSI is designated as one of the few remaining large-scale examples of ancient wood-pasture in lowland Britain, supporting a range of notable habitat types and important assemblages of invertebrates, amphibians and birds. Part of the SSSI is also subject to international designation as part of Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), although this is located 6km to the south-west of the site at its closest point. No other international designations are located within 10km of the site.
- 2.3. Based on a review of information from Epping Forest District Council's website, the closest non-statutory designation to the site is St Andrew's Churchyard, North Weald Local Wildlife Site (LWS) located at the southern boundary of the site. The LWS is designated as a relict piece of ancient grassland retaining a species-rich sward. The next nearest non-statutory designation is Church Lane Flood Meadow LNR LWS, located 475m to the south of the site, designated for its diverse range of habitats supporting reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates.
- 2.4. Consideration will need to be given to ecological designations within the nearby proximity of the site, notably St Andrew's Churchyard, North Weald LWS at the southern boundary of the site. However, incorporation of an appropriate buffer of open space adjacent to the LWS, together with standard safeguarding measures during the construction phase (such as control of dust creation and management of drainage) should avoid adverse effects on such designations.
- 2.5. Epping Forest SSSI and other more distant designations are well separated from the site, such that they are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development. Notably, a review of the SSSI Impact Risk Zone tool on the MAGIC database does not highlight any potential issues in relation to these designations arising from residential or commercial development within the site.

Habitats and Potential for Faunal Species

- 2.6. A review of the MAGIC database does not indicate the presence of any notable or priority habitat types within the site (such as Ancient Woodland or unimproved grassland). Aerial photography indicates that the majority of the site is dominated by mown grassland forming greens and fairways, with intensive management of these areas likely to limit their value for wildlife. However, other habitats present within the site, including treelines, planted woodland, ponds and watercourses, may be of some interest at the local level and offer elevated potential for wildlife.
- 2.7. It is proposed that a full suite of ecological survey work is undertaken to inform the development proposals, to include a Phase 1 habitat survey and specific faunal surveys where potential habitat opportunities are present. Based on the habitats evident at the site, this is likely to include surveys for bats, Water Vole, Otter, breeding birds, reptiles and Great Crested Newt.
- 2.8. Such surveys will allow key habitat areas to be identified and will provide an assessment of use of the site by protected and notable faunal species. This will inform the detailed layout, indicating areas for retention and protection, and requirements for mitigation and compensation under the proposals. However, based on the illustrative layout, it is considered that suitable habitat opportunities can be maintained within corridors of open space through and around the development areas, whilst new habitats can be created to provide gains for biodiversity under the scheme, and contribute to national and local policy objectives. As such, it is unlikely that habitats or faunal species present within the site would form a significant constraint to proposed development.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. Based on an initial review of desktop sources, the site does not appear to be subject to any significant ecological constraints. Notably, the site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designation, whilst the closest national and international ecological designations are well separated from the site, such that they are unlikely to be subject to any adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.
- 3.2. The site appears to be dominated by intensively managed grassland of low ecological value, although habitats such as treelines, planted woodland, ponds and watercourses may be of some interest within a local context, and offer opportunities for a range of faunal species. As such, a full suite of ecological surveys will be undertaken to provide a detailed assessment of the site and inform the development proposals. Based on the illustrative layout however, it is considered that suitable habitat opportunities can be maintained within corridors of open space through and around the development areas, whilst new habitats can be created to provide gains for biodiversity under the scheme, and contribute to national and local policy objectives.
- 3.3. On this basis, it is considered that there are unlikely to be any significant ecological constraints to the development of the site, and the proposed development would be feasible in ecological terms.

Appendix 2
Flood Risk and Drainage Summary
Ardent Consulting Engineers
December 2016

Flood Risk & Drainage Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Ardent Consulting Engineers (hereafter referred to as Ardent), has been appointed by Quinn Estates Ltd to provide planning support for a proposed Greenfield development at North Weald Golf Course.
- 1.2. The purpose of this note is to set out a high level flood risk and drainage summary for inclusion in Quinn Estates representations into Epping DC's Local Plan.

2. Existing Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The site is a Greenfield site and is presently utilised as a golf course.
- 2.2. The site is bounded to the North by the Cripsey Brook, and to the East by an unnamed tributary of the Cripsey Brook. The Cripsey Brook forms part of the Upper Catchment of the River Roding. Both watercourses adjacent to the Site are designated main rivers and therefore the Environment Agency (EA) has permissive powers over these watercourses.
- 2.3. The Site is currently a golf course which is positively drained due to the topography of the area and discharges to the adjacent watercourses. There are a number of existing ponds on the site, it is not known at this stage if these form part of the golf course drainage system or if they are water features/hazards associated with the golf course, or a combination of the both.
- 2.4. Mapping published by the British Geological Survey indicates that the Site geology comprises superficial glacial deposits (Lowestoft Formation) underlain by London Clay bedrock.
- 2.5. The site is shown to be mainly located within Flood Zone 1 on the EA Flood Maps for planning, meaning that it is at low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. The parts of the Site immediately adjacent to the watercourses are shown to be in Flood Zone 2 and 3.
- 2.6. In terms of pluvial flooding or surface water flooding, the parts of the Site immediately adjacent to the watercourses are also shown to be at risk.
- 2.7. Analysis of the British Geological Survey's "Potential for Groundwater Flooding" maps indicate that the Site is not at risk of groundwater flooding.
- 2.8. It is assumed that no public sewers cross the site and therefore the site is not at risk from sewer flooding.
- 2.9. The site is not shown to be at risk from any artificial sources of flood risk e.g. reservoirs, canals.

3. Flood Risk, Surface Water Drainage Strategy

- 3.1. To manage potential fluvial (river) flood risks arising from the Cripsey Brook, in accordance with national planning policy, a sequential approach will be taken to ensure most vulnerable uses of the proposed development will not be located in areas at risk of flooding.
- 3.2. In accordance with the requirements of national and local planning policy, the post development surface water discharge rate for the development will be equal or less

Flood Risk & Drainage Summary

than the existing (Greenfield) runoff rate to avoid increasing flood risk on and off-site.

- 3.3. Given the underlying ground conditions (London Clay) not being conducive for the implementation of infiltration techniques (to be confirmed by site investigation), the surface water drainage strategy will involve maximising storage across the site via the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) techniques.
- 3.4. The drainage strategy is likely to involve a variety of surface and sub-surface attenuation features, and the design of which will have regard to Essex County Council's SuDS design guide and Epping District Council's draft policy on Sustainable Drainage Systems (Policy DM16). In addition the design will include an allowance for climate change. It may be possible as part of the drainage design for the proposed development to retain existing ponds.
- 3.5. As the development will be DDA compliant (Disability Discrimination Act) and designed to comply with Part M of the building regulations, the proposals must also respect exceedance flow routes. The design will have regard to external levels ensuring that, in the event of a rainfall event which exceeds the capacity of the drainage network, water will flow away from the properties and towards the basins or watercourses using roads or designated overland flow routes to convey the excess water.
- 3.6. To manage foul water flows arising from the development it is proposed to discharge into Thames Water's foul public sewer, subject to agreement from Thames Water.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water drainage strategy for the proposed development will comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Planning Practice Guidance and Non statutory SuDS guidance. In addition the drainage system proposed will be in accordance with Essex CC and Epping Forest DC local policy requirements and relevant technical standards.
- 4.2 The proposed surface water strategy will involve the use of SuDS designed to discharge to the nearby watercourses at rates equal to or less than existing Greenfield rates and will include an allowance for climate change. This will ensure that flooding is not increased on or offsite.
- 4.3 Foul water flows from the development will be discharged into existing Thames Water sewers.

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

REV	ISSUE PURPOSE	AUTHOR	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
-	Draft	LI	LI	BC	06.12.16
	Final	LI	LI	BC	08.12.16

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