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**EFDC Local Plan Submission Version - Consultation Response**  
**28<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**By David Smith –** [REDACTED] .....Redacted.....

**On Behalf of John Foster – Land Owner of site SR-0195 - Land adjoining the Hying, Vicarage Lane, North Weald, CM16 6AP – which forms part of Site SR-0195B**

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These representations are made in respect to the Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Submission Plan. In summary, it is the opinion of the author of these representations that the Submission Plan is unsound for the following reasons:

1. The Submission Plan assumes a need for 11,400 new homes during the plan period, which falls 1,173 homes short of the objectively assessed 12,573 homes needed within the District – as set out in the 2017 up-date to the 2015 SHMA. The Submission Plan therefore would fail significantly to deliver the objectively assessed housing need for the District.
2. Irrespective of whether the need for EFDC is 11,400 or 12,573 new homes, in either event the Submission Plan does not identify a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide for the identified housing requirements of the District.
3. The Plan has failed to have regard to its own evidential base and NPPF guidance in the approach to existing Green Belt Land.
4. The Council has failed to take into account its own evidential base when specifying sites for development in North Weald Bassett – specifically the omission of site SR-0195B (Land to the North of Vicarage Lane, East, North Weald Bassett, Epping, Essex, CM16 6AP).

The following sections of these representations elaborate upon the reasons set out above.

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## Reason 1

**The Submission Plan stipulates a need for 11,400 new homes during the plan period, which falls 1,173 homes short of the objectively assessed 12,573 homes needed within the District – as set out in the July 2017 up-date to the 2015 SHMA. The Submission Plan therefore is unsound in that it promotes a level of housing delivery significantly less than the objectively assessed housing need for the District.**

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1. The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. As is set out in the NPPF, these dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of mutually dependent roles including, amongst others, ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth; providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment (Para 7 & 8).
2. One of the core land-use planning principles underpinning plan making is to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs (paragraph 17 of the NPPF). There is a presumption that Local Planning Authorities will boost significantly the supply of housing (Chapter 6), whereby LPAs are expected to identify and update annually a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide for five years' worth of housing against their objectively assessed housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. In addition, LPAs are expected identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.
3. At Paragraph 2.58 of the Submission Plan EFDC sets out that it is fully committed to meeting its contribution to the Housing Market Area's objectively assessed housing need which has been identified as a requirement for 11,400 net new homes over the Local Plan period for Epping Forest District.
4. The requirement for 11,400 net new homes is however now outdated; based on 2015 published SHMA. As set out in paragraph 2.43 of the Submission Plan the latest updates to the SHMA were published in July 2017. This assessed the 2016 national population and household projections together with further sensitivity testing specific to local circumstances, including migration. **This update has indicated that the full objectively assessed need for housing across the HMA amounts to some 51,700 new homes over the period 2011-2033; identifying specifically that for Epping Forest District some 12,573 new homes are needed within that period.**
5. Rather than accept this revised objectively assessed need (as they did with the 2015 published SHMA) EFDC state that 12,573 new homes is the 'starting point' and "does not take into account environmental, policy and infrastructure constraints" (paragraph 2.43). The Submission Plan does not however identify what environmental, policy and infrastructure constraints would restrict EFDC from delivering the 12,573 homes now identified as the District's objectively assessed housing need over the plan period.
6. By contrast EFDC's own technical documents, as are presented in the support of the Submission Plan, actually evidences that the District can reasonably accommodate more dwellings than are currently identified in Part B of Policy SP2. Table 1 below shows that the number of new homes identified for delivery in Policy SP2 of the 2016 Draft Plan far exceeds that number which is currently included in Policy SP2 of the Submission Plan – by 1,474 homes, all of which have been through the site selection process in advance of the publication of the 2016 Draft Plan. At that time there were no environmental, policy or

infrastructure constraints identified against the delivery of the additional 1,474 homes included in the 2016 Draft Plan and the supporting technical information supporting the Submission Plan provides no evidence to suggest that this position has fundamentally changed in any way. It follows therefore that there remains no fundamental environmental, policy or infrastructure constraints that would reasonably prevent EFDC from identifying in their Submission Plan further sites within their area for residential development so as to better accommodate the 12,573 homes identified in the 2017 updated SHMA as the objectively assessed need.

7. As a specific example, in the supporting text for Policy P6 (North Weald Bassett - NWB) paragraph 5.89 identifies that NWB has been subject to a masterplan which identifies that the village could accommodate between 500 and 1,600 homes. Despite the capacity for the village to accommodate up to 1,600 new homes, Policies SP2 and P6 of the Submission Plan identify that only 1,050 dwellings will be brought forward in the area; and in that process specifically exclude deliverable sites from the plan which have been otherwise identified through EDFC's site selection work as eminently suitable for residential development. The 2016 Draft Version was itself informed by the NWB Masterplanning and identified 1,580 new homes as deliverable within the village.
8. Paragraph 2.43 of the Submission Plan goes on to state that "it is for Local Plans to consider the most appropriate spatial distribution for achieving the full objectively assessed need across the HMA". This is not in dispute, but does not provide justification for not incorporating the 2017 SHMA updated figure.
9. Paragraph 2.44 goes on to justify the continued use of the '11,400 homes' figure on the basis that it was agreed through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2017 between the Councils across the Housing Market Area. That Memorandum of Understanding however pre-dates the July 2017 SHMA up-date and this Submission Plan. The identified need included within the Submission Plan therefore does not represent the latest position in terms of full objectively assessed need for EFDC. Progressing on the basis of a now out-dated Objectively Assessed Need means the plan is already outdated even before it is subjected to public examination, let alone adoption.
- 10. If the Submission Plan does not reflect the most up-to-date objectively assessed need and, as a result would support the under-provision of housing in the area by 1,173 new homes (based on most up-to date figures), the Submission Plan will quite simply not ensure that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth; nor provide the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations. From the site assessment work EFDC has carried out, there is clearly a sufficient supply of suitable land within EFDC to deliver the SHMA identified need for 12,573 new homes. By not accepting the July 2017 up-dated SHMA in those circumstances the Submission Plan cannot be held to be 'sound'.**

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**Reason 2**

**Irrespective of whether the need for EFDC is 11,400 or 12,573 new homes, in either event the Submission Plan does not identify a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide for those identified housing requirements.**

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11. Table 1 below shows a comparison between the housing numbers identified in Policies SP2 of the 2016 Draft Plan and the Submission Plan. It is evident that despite EFDC maintaining between the plans the need for an overall provision of 11,400 new homes across the settlements (based on the 2015 SHMA), the identified housing delivery in part B of Policy SP2 has reduced by some 1,474 homes from the 2016 Draft Plan to the Submission Plan.

Table 1: Comparison of Housing Numbers Identified in Policies SP2 between the 2016 Draft Plan and the Submission Plan

Site	Policy SP2 2016 Draft Plan	Policy SP2 Submission Plan	Balance
Sites around Harlow	3,900	3,900	-
Buckhurst Hill	90	87	-3
Chigwell	430	376	-54
Chipping Ongar	600	590	-10
Epping	1,640	1,305	-335
Loughton	1,190	1,021	-169
Nazeing	220	122	-98
North Weald Bassett	1,580	1,050	-530
Roydon	40	62	+22
Theydon Bois	360	57	-303
Thornwood	130	172	+42
Waltham Abbey	800	858	+58
Coopersale	50	175	-135
Fyfield	90		
High Ongar	10		
Lower Sheering	30		
Sheering	120		
Stapleford Abbots	10		
Rural East	-	41	+41
Totals	11,290	9,816	-1,474

12. Taking into account the current supply of 3,336 dwelling identified in table 2.3 of the Submission Plan (i.e. dwellings completed post 2011, with planning permission up to March 2017 and windfalls), the delivery of the 9,816 dwellings (+ a 10% non-delivery rate) shown in Policy SP2 of the Submission Plan would result in a total of 12,170 new homes across the plan period. Whilst this exceeds the 2015 SHMA identified need of 11,400 by 770 dwellings (a 6.8% buffer); it falls short of the July 2017 up-dated SHMA identified need of 12,573 by 402 homes (3%). This is set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Housing Supply Figures over the Plan Period

Total Supply, as set out in table 2.3 of the Submission Draft: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completions</li><li>• Sites with planning permission up to 31 March 2017 + 10% non-delivery rate</li><li>• Windfalls</li></ul>	3,336
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New Homes Identified in Part B of Policy SP2	9,816
New Homes Identified in Part B of Policy SP2 + 10% non-delivery rate	8,834
Total New Homes Expected to be Delivered Across Plan Period i.e. 3,336 + 8,834	12,170
Comparison to 2015 SHMA objectively assessed need of 11,400 new homes:	+770
Comparison to updated 2017 SHMA objectively assessed need of 12,572	-402

13. Taking into account the current supply of 3,336 homes, EFDC would need to deliver an additional 9,237 new homes to meet the July 2017 SHMA objectively assessed need of 12,572 new homes. Assuming a 10% non-delivery rate and the NPPF requirement for an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market, **EFDC should at the very least be identifying a range of sites which could accommodate 10,669 new dwellings.** The Submission Plan Policy SP2 identifies sites capable of accommodating only 9,816 new homes and thus falls 853 homes short of this figure. By comparison, the range of sites identified in the 2016 Draft Plan could have accommodated 11,290 dwellings; exceeding the requirement by 621.
14. Whilst EFDC will claim that they are identifying enough homes to meet their 2015 SHMA objectively assessed need, they will in all likelihood fail to deliver their housing requirements based on the 2017 SHMA up-date. In any event, any such claim by EFDC needs to be set against a back drop of the Council, by their own admission, significantly underperforming on their housing delivery since 2011. As set out in table 2.3 of the Submission Plan, between 2011 and 2017 EFDC recorded only 1,330 completions. This represents a significant shortfall against the number of homes per annum needed to meet the housing requirement irrespective of what is ultimately concluded as the appropriate housing requirement for the District over the plan period. If for example EFDC's more conservative 11,400 homes requirement is accepted, 1,330 homes represents only a 2.6 year supply over the six year period. If the 2017 updated SHMA 12,573 figure is adopted, this represents only a 2.3 year supply.
15. This underperformance means that following adoption of the Local Plan EFDC will need to ensure the delivery of significant housing before it can even get back on track to its annual requirement of 518 dwellings per annum (based on the need for 11,400 homes – 572 dwellings per annum based on the 2017 updated SHMA 12,573 figure).
16. **To deliver 11,400 homes across the plan period, EFDC would need to deliver 10,070 new homes between March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 and 2033; which would amount to 629 dwellings per annum. To deliver, 12,573 dwelling, 11,243 new dwellings are required between March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 and 2033; at a delivery rate of 703 dwellings per annum. For a Council that has delivered on average 222 dwellings per annum since 2011; either way this represents a significant uplift in delivery – especially as the majority of sites required to meet this delivery have not yet event secured planning permission.**
17. The previous shortfall suggests that without significantly increasing the supply of developable sites through the allocation process, EFDC will struggle to be able to demonstrate a robust five year land supply. In the absence of a robust 5 year land supply, EFDC will struggle to control development in its area via a 'Plan Led' system. If the Plan is undermined via its failure to bring forward sufficient sites in a timely manner,

then it will have failed to have positively planned for the development of the area for the duration of the plan period.

18. Within the 2016 Draft Plan, EFDC recognised its requirement under paragraph 14 of the NPPF to ensure that the Local Plan includes sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change and thus included reserve sites. The inclusion of reserve sites would have provided flexibility once the plan is adopted should allocated sites fail to deliver. They would also help the Council ensure that sufficient land can be made available to meet five year land supply requirements on an ongoing basis.
19. The 2016 Draft Plan specifically identified that contingency planning is necessary to allow for eventualities beyond the Council's Control, including the economic cycle and factors relating to specific sites of developers, which could result in stalled sites (para 3.62). Through the identification of the additional sites EFDC were satisfied that they were demonstrating a reasonable "commitment to positive planning" (para 3.63). Through the inclusion of a significantly lower number of development sites in Policy SP2, the Submission Plan does not include the same level of contingency planning as was deemed appropriate at the time of the 2016 Draft Plan and does not therefore demonstrate the same commitment to 'positive planning'.
20. The latest up-dates to the SHMA were published in July 2017 and from 2015 to 2017 the objectively assessed need was increased from 11,400 to 12,572 – an increased requirement of 1,172 new homes. It is therefore the case that where the sites identified for development in policy SP2 of the Submission Plan would barely meet the now out-dated 2015 objectively assessed need, they most certainly would allow for positive planning in response to any similar shifts in population projections that may occur over the plan period.
21. At paragraph 2.78 of the Submission Plan the Council "recognises that recent household projections demonstrate a further upward trend in housing need and the identification of additional sites demonstrates the Council's commitment to positive planning". EFDC has though quite simply failed to identify sufficient sites to meet the already out-dated household projections; let alone any further increase to such that may occur before 2033. The Submission Plan therefore does not include the commitment to positive planning set out at paragraph 2.78.
22. For the reasons set out above, irrespective of whether the need for EFDC is 11,400 or 12,573 new homes, in either event the Submission Plan does not identify a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to positively provide for the housing need of the District over the Plan period, taking into account also contingency for how the housing need for the District may change.

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### Reason 3

#### **The Plan has failed to have regard to its own evidential base and NPPF guidance in the approach to existing Green Belt Land.**

23. Whilst one of the core land-use planning principles underpinning plan making is to promote the vitality of our main urban areas and protect the Green Belts around them, there is also a need to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs (paragraph 17 of the NPPF).
24. In the context of the various mutually dependent roles of the planning system, the policies for protecting Green Belt land are set out at chapter 9 of the NPPF.
25. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 80 sets out the five purposes that the Green Belt serves:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
26. In drawing up its local plan, EFDC have a duty to review its current Green Belt boundaries, balanced against the need to promote sustainable patterns of development (para 84). In accordance with paragraph 85 of the NPPF, when defining Green Belt boundaries, local planning authorities should, amongst other criteria:
- ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
  - not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open; and
  - define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.
27. The results of the Stage 2 Site Suitability Assessment (appendix C) do not identify any constraints to the development of site SR-0195B. Of particular importance, it explicitly identifies that “almost the entirety of the site is located within a Green Belt parcel which does not meet the purposes. If the site was released it would not harm the purposes of the wider Green Belt.”
28. As paragraph 2.138 of the Submission Plan sets out, there have been no alterations to Green Belt boundaries since adoption of the 1998 Local Plan – for more than 20 years. It is therefore incumbent upon EFDC to review its current Green Belt boundaries as part of the Development Plan process, having particular regard to the guidance set out at paragraph 85 of the NPPF; one criterion of which is to not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open.
29. Where the Site Suitability Assessment for site SR-0195B explicitly identifies that the site does not meet the purposes of the green belt, it follows in conjunction with para 85 of the NPPF that it is not necessary to keep the site ‘permanently open’ by retention of the Green Belt designation.
30. I have not undertaken a review as to which other sites EFDC have explicitly identified do not meet the purposes of the green belt but have chosen to nevertheless retain within

the green belt. The Inspector will need to satisfy him/herself in this regard in the context of para 85 of the NPPF.

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**Reason 4:**

**The Council has failed to take into account its own evidential base when specifying sites for development in North Weald – specifically the omission of site SR-0195B (Land to the North of Vicarage Lane, East, North Weald Bassett, Epping, Essex, CM16 6AP).**

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31. Site SR-0195B was initially promoted by the Land Owner through the Call for Sites.
32. Despite this, the site was not included in the 'Planning Our Future Consultation Document' as a development option. Representations were made accordingly to EFDC's 'Planning Our Future' consultation on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012 – see appendix Di.
33. Further Representations were made on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014 direct to Allies and Morrison in advance of the NWB Masterplanning study – see appendix Dii.
34. Further Representations were made on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2014 in response to the publication of the NWB Masterplan Presentation Boards on the Council's website; wherein the potential of bringing forward site SR-0195 for development was given limited consideration in the masterplanning options, other than as part of scenario A option 3 and Scenario B option 3. Those representations are included at appendix Diii.
35. Following those submissions, the 2016 Draft Plan was published. The 2016 Draft Plan identified 1,580 new homes as deliverable within the village; including the allocation of Site SR-0195B for housing development. Given the identification of the site for development, we made no formal submissions to the 2016 Draft Plan Consultation.
36. As landowner we have sought to engage proactively with EFDC to facilitate the delivery of housing on a site that EFDC's own technical documents identify as a suitable and sustainable development opportunity. We have never received a formal response to the issues raised in our representations but had, following publication of the 2016 Draft Plan, assumed that the merits of promoting the site for residential development had been accepted. At no place in the 2016 Draft Version is site SR-0195B identified as a reserve site.
37. It is therefore with great surprise and disappointment that, despite its own technical evidence, EFDC have omitted site SR0195B from the Submission Plan without any apparent policy, infrastructure or environmental justification. Indeed, when I contacted EFDC for justification of why site SR-0195B had been excluded from the Submission Plan, I received an email response (see appendix E) saying that the EFDC's consultants had not yet finalised the write-up of the appendices to the site selection report that would provide the justification that I was after and that such appendices would not be available until after 29<sup>th</sup> January – the time by which people are requested to make representations to the Submission Plan. In the absence of a formal justification of why site SR-0195B is not included, EFDC invite me to make representations based on the site selection report, methodology and evidence base documents all published on EFDC's website; all documents which evidence that site SR-0195B should be allocated for development.
38. I therefore provide at appendix D all previous representations made to the Local Plan Up-date Process and set out below the technical evidence submitted with the Submission Plan that evidences that site SR-0195B is eminently suitable and sustainable for residential development. Throughout the Local Plan Up-Date process I have been provided with no evidence or confirmation that the representations I have made with regards to site SR-0195B have been given serious and legitimate

consideration and am thus presenting them here for formal consideration by the Inspector.

#### Site Specific Considerations

39. Site SR-0195B (Land to the North of Vicarage Lane, East, North Weald Bassett, Epping, Essex, CM16 6AP) lies to the north of North Weald Bassett, at the very edge of the settlement boundary - see Figure 1 and Appendix A for full map.



Figure 1: NWB Site Location Map

40. This site has direct access to Vicarage Lane, with its adjacent land projecting eastwards behind bungalow properties which face directly onto Vicarage Lane. The site is bounded to the east by a worked field, to the west by industrial units and to the north by a bridleway that forms a firm delineation between the site and the agricultural landscape beyond. Mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees run along the eastern, northern and western boundaries of the site, affording limited views into or across the site.

41. Whilst currently open land, it serves no recreational or agricultural purpose and has not done in recent history. Whilst certain private views across the site are afforded from the rear of the Vicarage Lane bungalows, the site contributes little to any landscape character or function of any public benefit in this location. Moreover, given the firm delineation given by the bridle way to the north of the site and the form of development as it has evolved north of the A414, **the undeveloped nature of the site is anomalous**

and is likely to be the result of its unavailability at the time of the settlement expansion rather than a planned check on the settlement boundary.

42. In January 2010, Chris Blandford Associates produced for the Council a **Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study (SELSS)**. This assessment sought to provide a landscape sensitivity study of areas around the principal settlements to inform policy within the Epping Forest District Local LDF. It also outlined the extent to which these areas of landscape contribute towards the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and how they contribute now, and potentially in the future, towards Green Belt objectives.
43. The northern boundary of the site is lined with mature hedge rows and/or trees which, where appropriate and desirable, could be safeguarded. The boundary between the site and the neighbouring built development is identified in the SELSS as a Soft Green Urban Edge. However, the site is explicitly excluded from the Landscape Setting Area of the settlement (Figure 2). In addition, the development of the site would not prejudice the Key Pedestrian/Recreation Route which currently runs along the northern boundary.

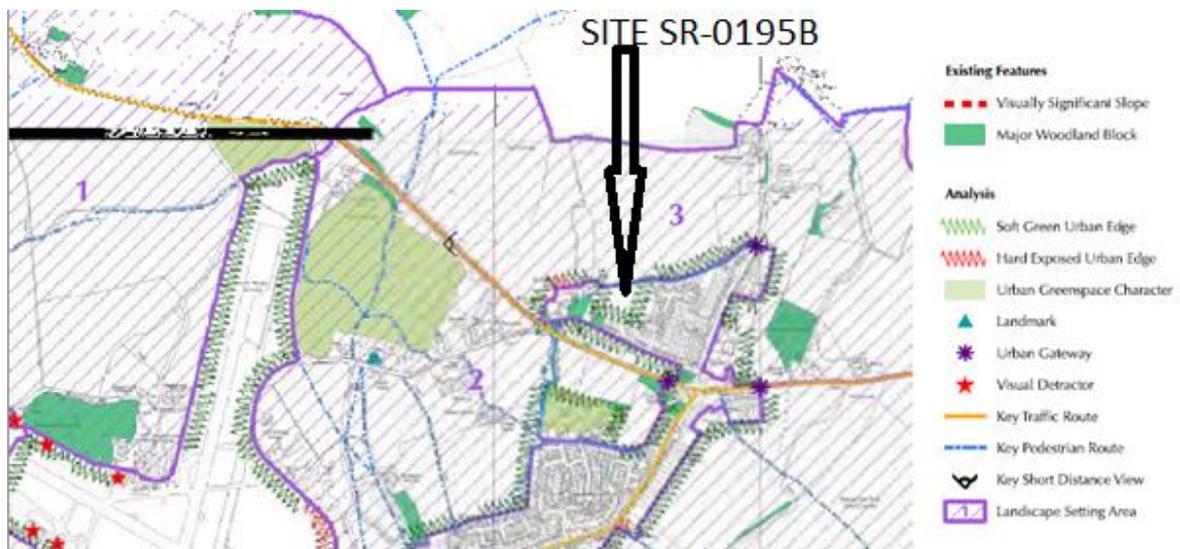


Figure 2: Figure 11.1 of the SELSS – Visual Character

44. As per figure 3 below, the SELSS confirms that the site is not subject to any critical and less critical environmental designations related to nature conservation, the historic environment, landscape and other aspects such as protected flood plains.

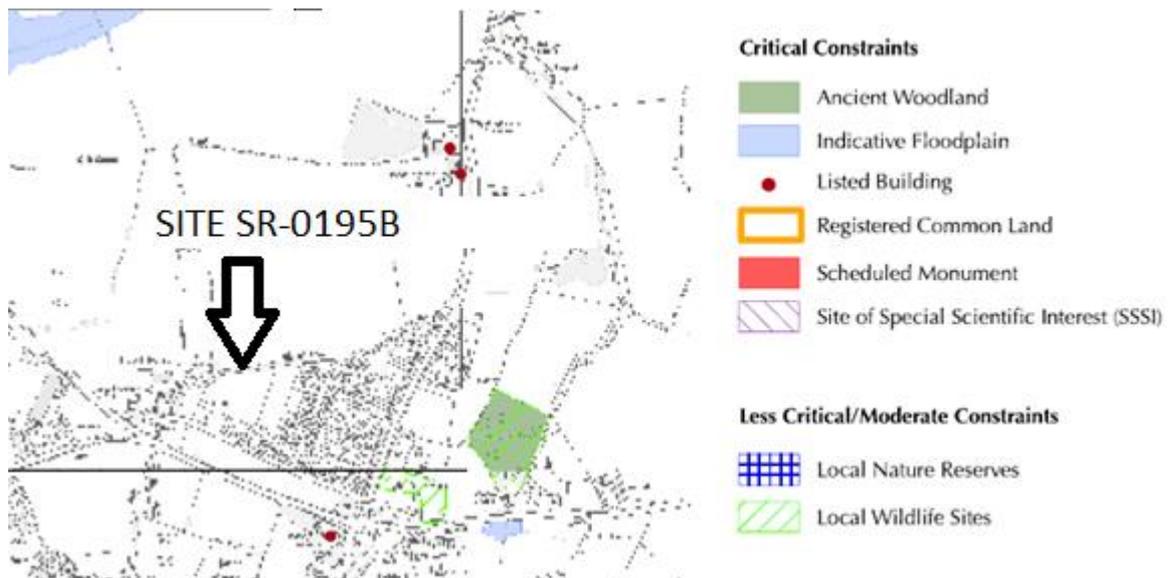


Figure 3: Figure 11.3 of the SELSS – Designated Environmental Constraints

45. Given that the site lies adjacent to, but is not included within, Landscape Setting Area 3 it must be assumed that the site as it currently exists does not contribute strategically or significantly to the structure, character and setting of the settlement. Neither is the omission of the site from Landscape Setting Area 3 a surprise, where the bridleway along northern boundary of the site provides for the natural and distinctive break in landscape character at the settlement edge. Moreover, the site does not contribute in any meaningful way to the fundamental aims and purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
46. Whilst the site is identified as 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century field enclosure within the SELSS, this identification did not justify the inclusion of the site within the Landscape Setting Area 3. Neither did the identification of other similarly identified 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century field enclosures preclude the inclusion of those sites as potential development sites in the Submission Plan.
47. As per the SELSS, those Landscape Setting Areas which are identified as having a high or moderate overall sensitivity to change are desirable to safeguard in landscape terms and are considered to have a significant role in contributing to the structure, character and setting of the settlement. Both Landscape Setting Areas 2 and 3 are identified as having moderate sensitivity to change. Site SR-0195B does not fall within either of the identified strategic Landscape Setting Areas and therefore it must be assumed that sensitive development would not harm any aspects of identified importance of the structure, character and setting of the settlement. **Other sites identified in the Submission Plan for development in NWB do, by contrast, fall within those Landscape Setting Areas and therefore must be considered 'moderately sensitive' to change.**
48. Given the conclusions of the SELSS (and specifically the omission of the site from the identified Landscape Setting Area 3), it must follow that the site as it currently exists does not meaningfully serve any of the purposes of Green Belt land as set out at paragraph 80 of the NPPF. Where the site makes no meaningful landscape or functional contribution towards the identified purposes of Green Belt land, it is unnecessary to keep the land permanently open such that serious consideration must be given to allocation of the site for development pursuant to paragraph 85 of the NPPF. The bridle way running along the northern boundary of the site provides a natural, logical, legible, clear and

physical delineation for the settlement boundary and can be reasonably safeguarded through the release of the site for development.

49. The NPPF is explicit in its direction that Green Belt boundaries should not include land which it is unnecessary to keep open (paragraph 85). In this context site SR-0195B should be prioritised in a sequential test for identifying development opportunities so as to promote more sustainable patterns of development. It is only through the release of sites such as SR-019B5 (which do not fall within the strategically identified Landscape Character Areas and do not meaningfully contribute to the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy) that the LPA will be able to properly afford robust and stringent protection to those other sites that are identified as having more intrinsic Green Belt value.
50. The SLAA has already identified site SR-0195B as suitable, available, achievable, deliverable and developable.
51. Other than the existing Green Belt designation, there are no other site constraints in planning terms that would restrict the development of the site. As part of the site appraisal undertaken via the SLAA, no critical strategic or local constraints were identified which could not be suitably mitigated. The site is not within a Flood Risk Zone; is not within a SPA, SAC, SSSI, NNR, ESA or Ancient Woodland; does not contain or sit adjacent to a listed building, scheduled ancient monument or historic park and garden; is adjoining an existing boundary settlement; is not a local nature reserve or local wildlife site; does not contain any protected trees; is not being considered for development in the Minerals and waste Plan; is sufficiently distant from gas and electricity infrastructure; and is not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area.
52. Whilst the Land Character Assessment identified site SR-0195B as falling within the North Weald Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area (area F5), the same author did not see fit to include the site within Landscape Area 3 of the co-jointly produced SELSS. In addition, the Landscape Character Assessment identifies the potential for expansion of the urban edges of North Weald Bassett as key planning and land management issues – but it does not preclude it. The release of the site SR-0195B would neither challenge nor prejudice the suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines or the Suggested Land Management Guidelines included at 3.7.32 of the Landscape Character Assessment.
53. Other sites included within the NWB allocations in the Submission Plan are located within Landscape Setting Area 2 which, as set out at paragraph 11.5.2 of the SELSS, is attributed a 'moderate sensitivity to change'. Despite the harm to the Landscape Setting of NWB, these sites have nevertheless been allocated in the Submission Plan.
54. ARUP have undertaken a Site Assessment in 2016. The results of the Stage 1 Site Assessment identify that site SR-0195B is unconstrained. In addition, the results of the Stage 2 Site Suitability Assessment (appendix B) do not identify any constraints to the development of the site. The Stage 2 Assessment actually makes the following explicit comments:
  - 2.1 Almost the entirety of the site is located within a Green Belt parcel which does not meet the purposes. If the site was released it would not harm the purposes of the wider Green Belt.
  - 5.1 The site falls within an area of medium landscape sensitivity - characteristics of the landscape are resilient to change and able to absorb development without significant character change.
  - 5.2 Development is unlikely to have an effect on settlement character.

55. Appendix B1.6.5 of the **Site Selection Report** includes the 'Results of Identifying Sites for Allocation' (**ARUP 2016** – Appendix C). For site SR-0195B it identifies the following:
- “No on-site restrictions or constraints have been identified and there are no other constraints that have been judged as insurmountable”; and
  - **“The site should be allocated”**.
56. Moreover, the development of site SR-0195B would not fundamentally challenge the historic form or character of the settlement. It would undoubtedly develop land to north of the settlement, but it would not actually push into the SELSS identified Landscape Character Area 3. The SELSS quite clearly identifies Landscape Character Area 3 as the physical, strategic and necessary check to urban sprawl to the north of North Weald Bassett.
57. On the balance of its own evidence base, submitted in support of the Submission Plan, site SR-0195B undoubtedly presents an eminently legitimate and sustainable residential development option. It is thus irrational that the site has not been promoted for development in EFDC's Submission Plan. Indeed, the only constraint that would restrict this site from presenting a legitimate planning application at this time is the Green Belt designation. As per the evidence above, this existing Green Belt designation is an outdated policy constraint, rather than an environmental or infrastructure constraint. The technical documents clearly identify that the site does not meet the purposes of the wider green belt; whilst the NWB masterplan identifies that NWB could accommodate up to 1,600 new homes. It is therefore illogical that the site should continue to be constrained by a now outdated green belt designation; a policy constraint that in the context of the NPPF (para 85) should be adjusted through the Local Plan process.

Appendices	
Appendix A	North Weald Bassett Map
Appendix B	Site Suitability Assessment (ARUP)
Appendix C	Appendix B1.6.5 Results of Identifying Sites for Allocation (ARUP)
Appendix D	<p>Previous Representations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Representations made to Planning our Future Consultation</li> <li>ii. Representations made in advance of the NWB Masterplanning Study</li> <li>iii. Representations made in response to the publication of the NWB Masterplan Presentation Boards</li> </ul>
Appendix E	Correspondence with EFDC LDF Consult Team