

Fareham Borough Council Local Plan Examination Council's Response to Inspector's Matters and Issues

Matter 6 Housing Allocations

Matter 6.8

HA56 Land west of Downend Road

48.What evidence is there to demonstrate the impact of the development on the local highway network. If that impact is a negative one, would suitable mitigation measures address the issues?

- 48.1 The Strategic Transport Assessment (TOI008) figure 7.2 shows the quantum of development included in the assessment taking account of Local Plan growth. The modelling zone which includes allocation HA56 was modelled for 650 dwellings, which is 100 more than the allocation. The model loads traffic onto the network at specified points. This allows for the cumulative impact of all the local plan development to be considered across the road network.
- 48.2 Table 11-2 of the Strategic Transport Assessment (TOI008) shows the junctions that are impacted by Local Plan development and whether they require mitigation. Table 11-3 and Figure 11-1 show the junctions requiring mitigation following criteria agreed with the Highway Authority for assessing the impact. Delme Roundabout is identified as requiring mitigation in close proximity to the scheme. For this reason, the site allocation policy includes reference to contributions to Delme Roundabout specifically as well as contributions to wider transport impacts.
- 48.3 The Updated Strategic Transport Assessment SRTM Do Minimum Report (FBC016) includes an updated Baseline position to take account of committed highway schemes. This includes a scheme for Delme Roundabout and the A27 between Downend Road and Delme. This scheme was awarded government funding through the Transforming Cities Fund. The scheme focuses on public transport priority as well as vehicle capacity and management at the roundabout. As a result of the addition of this scheme to the baseline, Delme Roundabout is no longer identified as a junction experiencing an impact significant enough to merit mitigation as a result of Local Plan development. There are also no further junctions in the vicinity of the allocation where the cumulative impact of local plan development is considered significant enough to require mitigation. A proposed change to the policy wording at the first bullet point of criterion j to state that contributions will not be required if alternative funding delivers to the necessary improvements to Delme roundabout (see the SoCG with Miller Homes FBC035).
- 48.4 The Updated Strategic Transport Assessment does not necessitate a policy requirement for the link road, shown in the framework plan for site HA56. However, as referenced in the Technical Support for Local Plan: Downend Sites (June 2021) (examination library reference TOI013) at paragraphs 4.7-4.31, modelling has been undertaken on the wider benefits of a link road through the site connecting Downend Road with the A27 and as paragraph 4.17 attests, three key junctions (Downend Road/A27 Portchester Road/Shearwater Avenue, M27 Junction 11 and Delme roundabout) would experience a reduction in vehicle flows due to the installation of a link road, operating at 30mph. The proposals for this scheme have been shared with both the Highway Authority and National Highways, neither raising any objections, as summarised in section 4 of the Highways Technical Support for Local Plan – Downend Sites (TOI013). Therefore, through discussions and as agreed in the SoCG with Miller Homes (FBC035), that with the aim of

good design and bringing benefits to the wider area, two accesses to the site are better than one and so there is reference to the link road, at 30mph, in the policy.

49.How has the indicative yield been calculated?

- 49.1 The indicative yield of the site has been determined in line with the SHELAA methodology, Stage 2: Site Assessment, Calculating Development potential (pages 9-10) coupled with ongoing work by the Council's Urban Designer, taking into account site constraints and through ongoing work and discussions between the Council and the promoters of the allocation.
- 49.2 Further details of the site assessment considerations, including the constraints are set out in the Statement of Common Ground between the Council and the site promoter (FBC035). Outline planning consent for 350 dwellings was granted at appeal in October 2021.

50.Why is it necessary for delivery to be phased to follow the development at Downend Road East? How would this be achieved? Is the policy effective and justified in this regard?

- 50.1 FBC and Miller Homes, in discussion with HCC Highways on the application for HA4, identified a capacity limitation at the junction of Downend Road / A27 in the site-specific localised transport assessment. This capacity limitation was such that following improvements, only 350 dwellings can be accommodated presently. Miller Homes has recently gained outline approval on appeal (FBC036), and therefore the site will be delivered before site HA56.
- 50.2 The SoCG between Miller Homes and FBC (FBC035, section 7) sets out the phased delivery of housing on both sites, with HA56 not scheduled for commencement until 2027.

51.Are the infrastructure requirements justified? What is the implication for site viability?

- 51.1 The infrastructure requirements identified for the allocation have been identified through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (TOI007) process and through engagement undertaken between the Council, the site promoter and infrastructure providers. Consultation with the Local Education Authority (Hampshire County Council) has identified the need to provide the land and appropriate contributions for a 2FE primary school. This is identified in the policy and is agreed in the Statement of Common Ground between the Council and Miller Homes (FBC035).
- 51.2 The allocation will be required to provide outdoor and other sport provision, playing pitches and other open space in accordance with the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document. A local centre is also required, comprised of flexible commercial floorspace including a convenience store and community facilities. This is consistent with the financial contribution's element of the viability evidence in the Viability Assessment (para 5.3.4 VIA001).
- 51.3 Policy HA56 currently also requires 'off-site highway improvement and mitigation works including contributions towards improvements at Delme Roundabout'. This requirement is being removed as a minor modification as set out in the response to question 48. The allocation is also required to provide high-quality pedestrian and cycle links to the A27 Rapid Transit corridor. This is set out in criterion d) of the Policy. Both the Council and Miller Homes agree (FBC035) that reference to The Thicket and Upper Cornaway Lane is

erroneous and irrelevant in relation to the site and should be addressed as a minor modification to remove reference to these two streets.

52.Should public transport accessibility be addressed in the site-specific requirements?

- 52.1 The Council does not think that any further reference to public transport accessibility is needed. The Policy HA56 Framework Plan identifies the route of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme along the route of the A27. This route is a key public transport scheme in the sub region running from Gosport to Portsmouth via Fareham. The Highway Authority has recently received substantial grant funding to deliver improvements along this route, particularly at Delme Roundabout. The importance of this route is identified in Policy TIN3 with safeguarded routes and nodes identified. Links to this key public transport network are specified in criteria d) of the Allocation Policy, requiring high quality links to be provided to this route. These links and the route of the BRT are highlighted on the HA56 Framework Plan. The BRT route stops are within the 400 metres/5-minute walking time specified in Table 1 (page 3) of the Accessibility Background Paper (DS008). However, as stated in the responses to questions 48 and 51, the Council is proposing minor changes to the Allocation Policy regarding the requirement for financial contributions to Delme Roundabout, and the referencing of specific street names for walking routes.

BL1 Broad Location for Housing Growth

53.On what basis has the indicative yield of 620 homes been calculated?

- 53.1 An overall land ownership assessment of the growth area was undertaken, (of note is that approximately 77% of the growth area is in Council ownership, as shown on the map in appendix F of the Position Statement (FBC042).
- 53.2 The Council has carefully considered whether the amount of development proposed is suitable, with regard to the key objectives of the policy and the size and make-up of the broad location for housing growth (BLHG) and considers that 620 homes is a realistic and appropriate yield. This figure provides an increase of 500 dwellings from those identified in the two town centre allocations which now fall within the growth area (being FTC1 and FTC2) which were consulted on at Regulation 18 as part of the 2017 draft plan and subsequently in the first Regulation 19 consultation.
- 53.3 The Council recognises that further work will be required to progress this site and has committed to producing a masterplan but considers the growth area meets the Framework's definition of developable in that there is a reasonable prospect that the site will come forward within the timescale envisaged'. The BLHG is available, suitable and likely to be economically viable in accordance with paragraph 68b of the NPPF. The potential capacity of the site is further detailed in section 5 of the Position Statement (FBC042).

54.Is the Policy justified? What consideration has been given to delivery and viability at this stage?

- 54.1 The Council has produced a Fareham Town Centre Position Statement (FBC042). The Position Statement provides evidence on the delivery, and likely viability of BL1 and enables the Council to conclude that there is a reasonable prospect of development coming forward in this location. In terms of delivery, the Council has actively engaged and consulted with the major stakeholders within BL1 the outcomes of which are positive and can be found in section 4 of the Position Statement.

The Council is the main freeholder within BL1 (approximately 77% of the site) and is committed to town centre redevelopment and to lead on a masterplan, which it has committed to progressing at the earliest opportunity.

- 54.2 Regarding viability, BL1 is included within the viability study (VIA003). The study recognises the challenges of town centre sites such as BL1 and this is reflected in the 20% Affordable Housing requirement within Policy HP5 rather than higher rates of provision required on brownfield sites. The Council is aware the Viability Study tested the viability of BL1 with a smaller typology rather than a larger amount representative of the total indicative capacity for the site. However as stated within paragraph 2.1.4 of VIA003 the site is a wide area, which will include a range of different sites, rather than a single development opportunity and therefore it is broadly considered that this is covered by the existing typologies. In addition, paragraph 5.35 in the Plan states that the Council may require a review mechanism by way of a planning obligation, to assess if circumstances have improved the positions to increase the provision to the full policy compliant amount. This is more likely to be appropriate on larger or phased developments such as at BL1 where further viability investigation could be required. This could be carried out as part of the future masterplan work.
- 54.3 Additional work has been undertaken with regards to delivery in relation to BL1 (see FBC042 paragraph 6.3 to 6.18 and appendix D). The work identified there is a clear market interest in the site with a number of potential developers contacted including 3 general home providers, 10 Build to Rent developers, 3 older person housing provider and a range of registered providers responding positively. It is clear that there is potential to provide a mix and range of development types which could be brought forward and that traction in the marketplace will help the overall delivery. The information provided in FBC042 and in particular Appendix D of that report has been prepared to satisfy the Inspector with regard to the consideration that have been given to the delivery and viability of BL1 at this stage.

55. In order to be effective, should Policy BL1 refer to conserving and enhancing heritage assets in the Town Centre?

- 55.1 The Plan provides in Strategic Policy HE1 that all development should seek to conserve and enhance the Historic Environment. As set out in paras. 1.8 and 1.9 of the Plan, in accordance with para 47 of the NPPF, the plan should be read as a whole, and all relevant policies should be considered. As such the Council does not consider it necessary to make specific reference within policy BL1 to the relevant Historic Environment policy (HE3 – Conservation Areas) as it is clear to the reader that there are heritage constraints neighbouring the boundary of the broad location, with the Conservation Areas being identified on the policies map and in the inset on page 152. However, if it was considered that such an amendment would be of benefit to users of the Local Plan, the Council would be happy to make such an amendment.
- 55.2 The Council would like to draw attention to the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) (SCG004) between the Council and Historic England in particular the Areas of Further Work section, paragraph 4.2 of the SoCG. The Council remains committed to engaging with Historic England further in the production of the masterplan SPD. This engagement has already commenced with a site visit in November 2021 attended by FBC and Historic England to review and discuss the potential building heights and impact upon the Conservation Areas. The Council have also shared the Heritage Sensitivity Plan which forms part of the Position Statement (appendix A of FBC042) with Historic England. Historic England view the Heritage Sensitivity Plan as a broadly acceptable basis for use at the start of the masterplan process.