

EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN 2011-2033: EIP – PART 1

MATTER 4: THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - INFRASTRUCTURE

REPRESENTATIONS PREPARED BY VECTOS ON BEHALF OF ST WILLIAM HOMES

Infrastructure Requirements – Policy DPS4

1. Would the distribution of development in the Plan have proper regard to the quality and capacity of the road network, the quality and capacity of public transport and wider aims to promote sustainable development?

- 1 The overall approach taken within the Local Plan to manage future transport demand and the provision of transport infrastructure when identifying new development sites is considered to be consistent with national policies and guidance and is supported. New developments should be located where the demand for transport can be minimised and there is a choice of sustainable transport modes which can be enhanced in association with the development. An over reliance on new housing sites that are in Green Belt or large greenfield locations which need to be supported by new and often significant, costly infrastructure can place the delivery of much needed housing at risk.
- 2 Locating development in the most sustainable locations to achieve these objectives and maximising the use of sites that meet these criteria without the need for significant infrastructure projects should be a key objective of the Local Plan. The fact that there may be some existing peak hour congestion on weekdays that means short delays at certain junctions is not a reason for a site not to be allocated and developed providing mitigation is provided. If this approach is taken then there would not be any development in any town in the country, especially across the south east.
- 3 For example, maximising the level of development on sites such as HERT2 which is a highly accessible, brownfield site close to Hertford Town Centre, the bus station and Hertford East railway station will minimise the need for travel, make best use of public transport and would include sustainable transport improvements without the need for major new transport infrastructure. This is a site that can come forward in the early stages of the Plan to ensure housing delivery. Developing highly accessible sites first enables transport demand to be minimised and the sustainable transport improvements have benefits for existing residents and road users. For example, new or improved bus services can be used by anyone travelling to/from locations close to the site.

2. What are the principal transport improvements and projects that are required for the implementation of the Plan?

- 4 Policy DPS4 identifies the main transport improvements and projects that are required for the Plan to be implemented. These requirements have been identified through extensive strategic modelling which as we understand from Hertford County Council (HCC) is, to date, not yet completed. We reserve our position to review any further modelling undertaken by HCC prior to the EiP. The identified requirements are not being questioned, but consideration needs to be given to both the likelihood of these identified projects being delivered in a timely programme within the Plan Period and in some cases whether there is any reasonable likelihood of the proposed improvement ever being delivered. If it is accepted that the transport infrastructure needed to support the level of development proposed within the Local Plan has been correctly identified then the questions to consider are the deliverability of this infrastructure and the timing of delivery. This is considered further below.

3. How has the Council assessed the effect of the possible delay/failure of key infrastructure coming forward within the desired timescale? How would this affect the housing land supply and the overall housing targets? What measures are in place to cope with delays?

- 5 There are questions about whether some of the transport related infrastructure requirements identified within the Local Plan are deliverable both within the Plan Period or whether that can be delivered at all.
- 6 With respect to transport the Statement of Common Ground (Appendix E to SOC/001) between East Herts DC and Hertfordshire CC shows that there remains uncertainty about whether a number of key elements of transport infrastructure identified in policy DPS4 can be implemented within the Plan Period or indeed at all. There include a new motorway junction on the M11 and improvements to the A414 in Hertford through the implementation of a Southern Bypass. While for the first of these may just be a matter of timing the Hertford Southern Bypass is a greater matter of uncertainty.
- 7 As an outcome of the work undertaken by HCC to date a Hertford Southern Bypass is the option that is proposed to accommodate the level of development identified in the Plan beyond 2024. The SOCG between EHDC and HCC refers to a proposed delivery timescale of 2021 onwards, yet it is acknowledged that this scheme is not part of HCC's Local Transport Plan and a decision on whether it features will not be made until 2018. The SOCG also acknowledges that there are currently no identified funding sources for this scheme.
- 8 The identified approach to addressing the delivery of this scheme is for EHDC to continue to work with HCC to identify a solution for the transport issues in Hertford and if the Southern Bypass is not pursued then it is stated that this will be considered in the light of a future review of the Local Plan. There is no certainty on the delivery of the bypass or any indication given in terms of what will happen if the bypass cannot be delivered. Therefore this is a clearly a risk to the future delivery of the identified housing need.
- 9 To mitigate against this risk and to ensure that the identified housing needs can be met there is clearly a need to maximise the level of development on sites within Hertford that could be more intensively developed and where transport impacts, especially on the A414, can be minimised. Developing highly accessible urban sites that do not rely on major new transport infrastructure which often have long lead in times in the early stages of the Local Plan period gives more certainty on housing delivery in the early years.
- 10 HERT2 is identified for the development of 200 residential units and 3,000 sq m of employment uses. This has been taken into account within the various modelling assessment work undertaken by both EHDC and HCC. It has been concluded that this the level of impact associated with this level of development can be accommodated, including on the A414.
- 11 A more intensive development on this site for a greater number of housing units and potentially a reduced level of employment could be achieved as this is a highly accessible site where transport demand can be managed through the implantation of a robust Travel Plan that would for example include measures such as car club membership for residents on the site and spaces for a car club operator to use and the impact on the surrounding roads including the A414 can be mitigated without the need to rely on large infrastructure projects.
- 12 This would provide a lesser reliance on strategic transport infrastructure improvements to meet future housing needs and would give more certainty on housing delivery while such strategic improvements are taken forward.