

East Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination

Statement for Chapter 8, Policy SAWB5

On behalf of St John's College Cambridge

SAWB5 – Is a sports facility necessary and is there a realistic prospect of delivery?

- 1.1. St John's College, Cambridge, have instructed Savills (UK) Limited to advise them on their land interests to the west of Sawbridgeworth.
- 1.2. A detailed response was submitted to the Regulation 19 Local Plan on the following policies which we consider to be unsound:
 - GBR1
 - SAWB1
 - SAWB2
 - SAWB3
 - SAWB5
- 1.3. Hearing Statements in relation to GBR1, SAWB1, SAWB2 and SAWB3 have not been prepared, as we intend to rely on our submissions to the Regulation 19 Local Plan. Our response to the above question on Policy SAWB5 is set out below.
- 1.4. The majority of allocated site SAWB5 is within the ownership of St John's College Cambridge. As noted in our response to the Regulation 19 Local Plan, this site has not previously been promoted for development of any kind, nor has the Council approached the College for use of the land for sports facilities. We would take this opportunity to confirm that the site identified for sports provision is not available as our client would like to retain flexibility on the future use of this site in the context of any further Local Plan reviews. Accordingly we would contend that there is no realistic prospect of delivery for sports provision within this plan period.
- 1.5. It is not our intention to comment on the need for a new sports facility in the town. However, regardless of delivery and availability constraints of the above site, it is not considered the most appropriate site for sports pitch provision when considering the longer term opportunities for the development of the settlement.
- 1.6. Sawbridgeworth is an established town within the District, with strong links to the neighbouring authorities of Uttlesford and Harlow. It is important that this Plan considers development not only in this plan period but also beyond.
- 1.7. The town is tightly constrained and the only appropriate location for future residential and employment development is to the west. Development for most uses to the east is restricted by the River Stort and its associated floodplain. However, in accordance with the NPPG, outdoor sports and recreation are considered 'water compatible development' and thus can be located in the flood plain. Subject to land to the east of Sawbridgeworth being available, it is considered sports pitch provision in this location would be more appropriate.
- 1.8. In considering the long term development potential of this site, as noted above our client would like to retain flexibility on the future use of the site. The site is well contained by existing infrastructure and this, in addition to other sites within our client's landholdings to the west of the settlement, could provide for essential new development in the future.

- 1.9. In light of the above, the allocation of SAWB5 should be removed as it is not deliverable and, if sports pitch provision is considered necessary, a more appropriate location to the east of the settlement should be considered.