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# Representations in Relation to the Examination of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan: Issue 4

Prepared on behalf of SEGRO Properties Limited

September 2015



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) have been commissioned by SEGRO Properties Limited (SEGRO) to provide representations in relation to the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan Examination; specifically Issue 4: Other Housing Matters - 7 Landscape and other constraints on development. Issue 4 forms one of a number of Issues identified by the Inspector in the form of questions, which will form the basis of the Examination Hearings to commence in October 2015, as part of the consultation process on the 'pre-submission' draft version of the new Local Plan for the Borough.
- 1.2 SEGRO are involved with owning and leasing large employment sites within the Basingstoke and Deane Borough and have a thorough understanding of the market conditions. SEGRO consider that the Basingstoke and Deane Borough is a key opportunity area for Class B8 Storage and Distribution, given the M3 corridor and strategic position between London and Southampton. Therefore, the Local Plan should allow for B8 industry and identify the opportunities for large employment sites, with motorway access. This is also pertinent with regards to the '2029 Vision and Objectives' to:

***"Maintain and enhance the borough's position as a prosperous economic centre with a diverse economy by supporting a range of employment sectors through the availability of employment land and premises of the right quality, type, location and size. This will be delivered through the... the allocation of new employment sites through a future DPD." (Prosperous and thriving)***

- 1.3 Therefore, we consider that the questions posed for Issue 4: Other Housing Matters, equally apply to any type of development, and that this is eluded to in Issue 4 - 7.3 with reference to 'other development'.
- 1.4 The reference material in response to Issue 4 is derived from the Examination Library (2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2015)<sup>i</sup>. The following definitions are included from paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>ii</sup> relating to the examination of Local Plans:

### ***Sound***

- 1.5 Namely that it is:
- ***"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;***

- ***Justified - the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;***
- ***Effective - the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and***
- ***Consistent with national policy - the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the framework."***

## 2.0 RESPONSE TO ISSUE 4 - SECTION 7

**7.1 Are the Plan's landscape protection policies (EM1-3) sound and how much weight should be given to them as constraints to new development? How important are the proposed strategic gaps and how should they be designated.**

Policy EM1 - Landscape

2.1 Policy EM1 - Landscape states that:

***"development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated...that the proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area" [and that] "Development proposals must respect, enhance and not be detrimental to the landscape..."***

2.2 Policy EM1 - Landscape requires development proposals to pay particular regard to the qualities identified within the council's landscape character assessment (LCA), undertaken in June 2001, and any subsequent updates. Therefore, whilst it is recognised good and commendable practice to draw on the existing landscape and visual context surrounding a site to inform the design of a proposed development, with particular reference to the relevant landscape character assessments; currently none of the Borough's landscape character assessments or the Living Landscape (2010) provide any detail of the relative capacity of the various landscape character areas to positively accommodate required development within the landscape. Neither do they set out any positive strategies for accommodating required development. Therefore, any development is unlikely to be wholly sympathetic to, or not detrimental to the character and visual quality of an area. As a result, this landscape policy is not sound, in accordance with the definition set out in the NPPF.

2.3 Furthermore, the wording of Policy EM1 - Landscape does not make any differentiation between varying scales of development; including generic statements covering 'development'. However, at Paragraph 6.11 of the supporting text to Policy EM1 - Landscape, it states that:

***"A proportionate approach shall be applied to development proposals so that the requirements of Policy EM1 will be applied flexibly depending on the nature and scale of the proposals"***

2.4 This is particularly relevant when considering the provision of Class B8 development, which would require a more flexible application of Policy EM1 - Landscape, considering the inherent scale and massing of such development, and the likelihood that such development would be located in the vicinity of major transport routes and existing infrastructure which would, in any event, already have an urbanising or detrimental effect on landscape character.

- 2.5 It is acknowledged that Policy EM1- Landscape refers to proportionately in the context that *"the assessment of character and visual quality and the provision of a landscaping scheme should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed."* However, with the current form of wording, that suggests that the scope and extent of an assessment of character and visual quality should be proportionate to the scale and nature of a proposed development, and that landscape proposals should be commensurate with the scale and nature of the development proposed. The current form of wording does **not** reflect that supporting text (6.11) for the *"requirements of Policy EM1 will be applied flexibly depending on the nature and scale of the proposals"*.
- 2.6 As currently worded, it is possible that Policy EM1 - Landscape would preclude Class B8 development, and to ensure that this is not the case, and that opportunities to deliver Class B8 development, to meet the 2029 Vision and Objectives of the Borough, the flexibility stated in Paragraph 6.11 of the supporting text should be adequately reflected within the wording of the Policy.
- 2.7 Therefore, as currently drafted, Policy EM1 - Landscape should be given limited weight to as a constraint to Class B8 development.
- 2.8 As part of the evidence base to Policy EM1 - Landscape, 'SP05 Landscape and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2008) Part 2: Larger Developments', paragraph 11.8.1 refers to BS 5837:2005, and the need to survey trees within 30m of a site. This guidance has now been withdrawn, and replaced by BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations, which states that root protection areas should be capped at 707m<sup>2</sup>, which is the equivalent to a circle with a radius of 15m. Therefore, it is considered that the requirement to survey trees within 30m of a site is not justified as the most appropriate strategy, being overly excessive in the arboricultural survey requirements.
- 2.9 Therefore, it is considered that in part, Policy EM1 - Landscape is not based on a positively prepared strategy to identify Class B8 requirements, is in part unsound, and therefore should be given limited weight as a constraint to Class B8 development.

## **7.2 Should a review of any of the landscape policies be undertaken as part of the plan?**

- 2.10 With regard to the limited soundness of Policy EM1 - Landscape, it should be reviewed to reflect the clear flexibility required in its application, depending on the nature and scale of the potential development required.

i Basingstoke and Deane District Council, Examination Library,  
<http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/rte.aspx?id=1215>

ii Department of Communities, National Planning Policy Framework, 2012,  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>