

Proposed Modifications to the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan

Issue 5: Policy SS3.12 Hounsome
Fields

Statement by James Williams
on behalf of Wates Developments

Introduction

1. This Statement is made on behalf of Wates Developments in respect of land at Hounsome Fields covered by Policy SS3.12 of the Proposed Local Plan Modifications, May 2015.
2. In respect of Greenfield Site Allocations Issue 5, the Inspector has asked to be informed of:

“Are the proposed major new developments for new housing and other uses positively prepared, justified and deliverable? Does the level of detail in the policies and Inset Diagrams meet the requirements in the PPG for Local Plans to make clear what is intended to happen in the area over the life of the plan, where and when this will occur and how it will be delivered? (PPG Ref ID 12-002-20140306.)”
3. **Wates Developments is firmly of the view that proposals for a development of approximately 750 dwellings at Hounsome Fields Basingstoke (Policy SS3.12) have been positively prepared and are fully justified and deliverable. Wates Developments is therefore supportive of Policy SS3.12.**
4. The Statement is to be read in conjunction with the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) agreed with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (the Council), August 2015 (PS/02/50). It provides Wates Developments' views on the detail of Policy SS3.12, as set out in the 17 criteria attached to the policy, and demonstrates Wates Developments' commitment and ability to deliver a quality development early within the plan period.

Background and Changes following earlier Representations

5. Earlier representations were made by Deloitte Real Estate on behalf of Wates Developments in June 2015: and by Deloitte Real Estate on behalf of the Skinners Company (Pellipar Investments) in June 2014. Since the representations made by Deloitte Real Estate in June 2014 on behalf of the Skinners Company, two major changes have occurred.
 - i. Hounsome Fields has been allocated as a Greenfield Site Allocation (Policy SS3.12); and
 - ii. Wates Developments has taken over responsibility for promoting Hounsome Fields.
6. Arising from the allocation of Hounsome Fields, the June 2014 objections to Policies SS1 and SS3 are no longer being pursued.
7. Wates Developments is committed, and contractually obliged, to move forward speedily, and submit an early planning application. The Company has therefore already appointed a new consultant team who are undertaking the relevant technical studies needed to support housing development proposals for the site. Arising from this, some of the previously submitted technical reports listed below will be superseded by new supporting material that will accompany a planning application.
 - i. Landscape Capacity Review, LDA Design, July 2013 – (originally submitted with the representations of October 2013, but also enclosed with the representations of June 2014);
 - ii. Illustrative Master Plan Option, LDA Design – (originally submitted with the representations of October 2013 as Appendix 2, but also enclosed with the representations of June 2014);

- iii. Site Access and Highway Impact Review, Mott MacDonald, February 2014 (enclosed with the representations of June 2014);
 - iv. Utilities Report, Mott MacDonald, February 2014 (enclosed with representations of June 2014);
8. Much of the survey work and analysis in the above reports remains valid and of value, e.g. in the Landscape Capacity Review. However, Wates Developments is not placing reliance on all the findings of the documents, particularly where new matters are being required to be addressed, for example affecting transport and masterplanning, which are addressed further below.

Hounsome Fields Site Features and Context

9. Information on Hounsome Fields and its surroundings are provided in Section 2 of the SoCG, with SoCG Appendix 2 providing a plan showing the principal site features.

Matters addressed In the Statement

10. The SoCG identifies those Policy SS3.12 criteria for which there is a difference in view between Wates Developments and the Council. This Statement explains the reasons for the differences and sets out Wates Developments' recommendations to the Inspector for any changes to the wording of the criteria.
11. The Statement goes on to provide further information on progress being made by Wates Developments in formulating proposals for a housing development at Hounsome Fields and how these proposals will be delivered. The timetable for delivery is set out in Section 3 of the SoCG.
12. Finally the Statement provides a summary response to the principal issues that have been raised by Objectors to Policy SS3.12, Hounsome Fields.

Policy SS3.12 Criterion b)

Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

13. Wates Developments believes that Hounsome Fields is not a suitable location for the provision of accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. Their views are set out more fully in the context of national and local policy guidance in a separate Statement in respect of Issue 4, Policy CN5, Gypsies & Travellers.
14. Hounsome Fields offers the opportunity to provide a quality well designed development at a gateway entry point to the town. Accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople would in our opinion be incompatible with other development on the site and the quality of environment that is proposed to be achieved. In particular there is a need to protect the open areas of the site that provide a setting for the Grade 2 listed Southwood farmhouse, and the buffer zones adjacent to woodland.
15. Furthermore, as described in the Issue 4 Statement, other opportunities within the area for the provision of accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople do not appear to have been considered. Having regard to the above matters and those set out in the Issue 4 Statement, Wates Developments seeks deletion of the words below from Criterion b);

“and also, in conjunction with other sites, a permanent, pitch/plot provision to meet identified accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the borough, such needs being identified in the council’s Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (and any updates)”

The Criterion would then read:

“In addition to the mix of dwelling sizes and types, make provision for a proportion of self-build units.”

Criterion m)

Avoid Development and Points of Access within Flood Zone 2

16. Flood Zone 2 affects a very small area of Hounsme Fields in the extreme southern part of the site adjacent to the junction of the A30 and minor road to Oakley. The area is so small as to be barely visible on the SoCG Appendix 3 Constraints Map.

17. The justification for restricting ‘development’ within Flood Zone 2 is accepted.

18. The Council believes that restricting ‘points of access’ within Flood Zone 2 is justified by Paragraph ID: 7-019 of the National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG).

19. Paragraph ID: 7-018 explains the general approach which is:

“to ensure that areas at little or no risk of flooding from any source are developed in preference to areas at higher risk. The aim should be to keep development out of medium and high flood risk areas (Flood Zones 2 and 3) and other areas affected by other sources of flooding where possible.”

20. Paragraph ID: 7-066 sets out a Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification. A new access crossing the Flood Plain Zone 2 area at the A30 junction would be classified as

‘Essential transport infrastructure including mass evacuation routes which has to cross the area at risk.’

21. The Flood Zone and Flood Risk Tables set out in Paragraph 067 ID: 7-067 identify “Essential Infrastructure” as being “appropriate” in Flood Zone 2. Were an access crossing the Flood Zone 2 area necessary or desirable to provide a southern access into the site, there would therefore be no justification for this being dismissed on the grounds of it being within Flood Zone 2. Furthermore suitable flood zone mitigation measures could be included within any road design.

22. From the transport and masterplanning work undertaken to date, it now appears highly unlikely that an access will be sought through Flood Zone 2 see ‘Masterplanning’ below. Nevertheless, the Inspector is invited to consider amending Criterion m) by deletion of the words

“and points of access”

The Criterion would then read:

“Avoid development and points in the vicinity of the part of the site falling within flood zone 2;”

Masterplanning

23. Section 6 of the SoCG and Appendix 2 describes an agreed Inset Plan covering Kennel Farm, Basingstoke Golf Course, and Hounsome Fields. In so far as Hounsome Fields is concerned the Inset Plan is based upon masterplanning work being undertaken by Wates Developments for a Hounsome Fields planning application,
24. In order to assist the Inspector, we are providing in Appendix 1 a Draft Illustrative Zoning Plan, based on work being undertaken and available at the time of writing (second week of September). An Illustrative Masterplan will accompany the planning application and will have been formulated following community consultation. The Plan in Appendix 1 is based on work in progress and will not pre-empt consideration of other options through community consultation.
25. The Zoning Plan shows how approximately 750 houses can be accommodated on the site at a net density of approximately 35 dwellings per hectare, providing:
 - significant areas of open space,
 - Community, infrastructure and primary school facilities (in part to serve the Golf Course site);
 - satisfactory highway and servicing arrangements;
 - safeguarding of a route for access to future development to the north-west.
 - Protection for existing natural and heritage assets within and close to the site.
26. The Zoning Plan shows significant areas of open space running through the whole site, as opposed to a concentration of open space in the southern part of the site as was shown on the LDA illustrative Master Plan Option, referred to in paragraph 7 above.
27. The social and physical infrastructure required by Criterion c) of the policy (as proposed to be amended, see paragraph 7.11 of the SoCG), including the provision of a community centre, local shopping facilities, indoor sports facilities, a three form entry primary school, and early years facilities, are shown centrally located within Hounsome Fields on a site close to the principal vehicular junction onto the A30 Winchester Road. In so far as facilities shared with the Golf Course site are concerned, this maximises accessibility to the facilities by all forms of transport for Golf Course residents. This is particularly important for primary school children.
28. The masterplan shows a principal access point on the A30 Winchester Road that will jointly serve both Hounsome Fields and the Golf Course site. The highway layout is also being designed to facilitate the extension of existing bus routes so that they run to the new Critical Hospital looping through Hounsome Fields and the Golf Course site. A secondary access is provided in the south onto the minor road to Oakley. Details of the transport strategy are set out in the SoCG paragraphs 7.24-7.29 and in the Transport Statement August 2015, prepared in conjunction with the transport consultants to the Golf Course, Appendix 6 of the SoCG.
29. The masterplan makes provision for future development to the north-west through the safeguarding of land alongside the proposed main access, additional to that which would be required to serve Hounsome Fields alone. Information on this is provided in Section 4.3 of the Transport Statement August 2015, SoCG Appendix 6.

30. Buffer Zones of at least 20m have been provided between existing woodland areas and built development. An open buffer zone of at least 100m has been preserved to maintain the setting of the Grade 2 listed Southwood farmhouse.

Delivery and Timetable

31. Paragraphs 3.1–3.4 of the SoCG describe the role of Wates Developments in bringing forward Hounsome Fields through the planning process and ensuring its delivery for new housing development.
32. A target date has been set for submission of a planning application by the end of January 2016. To achieve this a considerable amount of work is necessary, which has recently been undertaken or is currently underway. This includes topographic surveys, ground condition surveys, environmental assessment (embracing a wide range of topics), transport and highways studies, utilities appraisal, masterplanning, etc. Wates Developments is also engaging in pre-application discussions with the Development Management arm of the Council.
33. Community consultation is programmed for the autumn and is likely to be taking place at the same time as the Local Plan Examination. It will take the form of direct consultation via letter/leaflet with Ward Councillors, Parish Councils and Interest Groups; and a public exhibition to be held at a local Community Centre.
34. The SoCG (Section 3) indicates a target start date for development in the financial year 2017/2018, based upon receipt of planning permission by 31 August 2016. This allows time for approval of reserved matters and other agreements in respect of the provision and funding of infrastructure.
35. Paragraphs 7.5-7.18 of the SoCG describe the need for a comprehensive approach towards the delivery of infrastructure. This is supported by Wates Developments. This will entail the delivery of some infrastructure on one site that would serve the needs of both sites (Hounsome Fields and the Golf Club). Such comprehensive planning for a wider area can place additional burdens and risk on those developments coming forward in advance of others. For example, when there is no guarantee of future delivery across another site, some statutory consultees may require individual sites to meet their own needs.
36. Wates Developments does not construe it being the intention of the Policy to prevent the early delivery of one site (e.g. Hounsome Fields), because another site coming forward later has a responsibility to contribute to the delivery of infrastructure for the wider area (e.g. Basingstoke Golf Club). However, to ensure that they are not unfairly penalised for early delivery, Wates Developments intends agreeing mechanisms with the Council, to reflect the additional cost of delivering any infrastructure at Hounsome Fields beyond what is needed to meet the impacts generated by the development at Hounsome Fields alone.
37. The intent and ability of Wates Developments to bring forward housing development speedily is demonstrated by progress at Kennel Farm, where rapid progress is being made. Reserved matters were approved on 9th September 2015 and a start on site is imminent.

Summary Response to Objections

38. We provide a summary response below to objections made to Policy SS3.12 Hounsome Fields.

Spatial strategy

39. A number of objectors comment on the distance of Hounsome Fields from facilities in the town centre and employment areas on the eastern side of the town.

40. Development to the east of Basingstoke is less geographically extensive. This is caused by the Loddon Valley, the environmental quality of which acts as a barrier to significant further development on that side of the town. Further development to the west is therefore inevitable if Basingstoke is to provide the new housing that is required. The proposed Critical Care Hospital (planning application 15/01225/OUT, submitted in April 2015) will, if approved, further consolidate development in the south-west, as well as introducing new uses and activities including employment.

41. In addition major expansion is proposed at Manydown that will bring about a further change in the east-west balance of development within the town.

Landscape impact / biodiversity

42. Concerns have been expressed about the impact of development at Hounsome Fields on the landscape and biodiversity.

43. In our view such concerns are unfounded. The adjacent Kennel Farm has similar landscape characteristics and has been found suitable on appeal for housing development. There is sufficient space within Hounsome Fields to protect and maintain the setting of specific landscape features, such as woodland, as is demonstrated in the Draft Illustrative Zoning Plan. On site ecological surveys are being undertaken. Should it be necessary to do so, measures will be put in place to protect any species as required by the relevant regulations.

Transport

44. A number of objectors comment on road congestion and related issues in the A30 corridor.

45. Wates Developments has commissioned Transport Consultants to assess the circumstances in the South-west corridor with Kennel Farm and the Golf Course developments in place. Their initial assessment has been undertaken in consultation with the Council and County Council Highway Authority. They have found that development at Hounsome Fields and the Golf Club has the potential to be acceptable in transport sustainability terms, SoCG Section 7. A full Transport Assessment, scoped with the local Highway Authority and Highways England will be produced in support of any planning application.

Utilities

46. A number of objectors comment on the Utility capacity constraints in the south-west corridor. This is dealt with paragraphs 7.30-7.32 of the SoCG.

47. It is agreed that sewage capacity is not a constraint. The Utilities assessment being undertaken will provide the details of what upgrading is required, for example to pipelines, that will be the responsibility of the developer.

Education

48. A number of objectors comment on the school capacity constraints.
49. Development at Hounsome Fields will provide new primary school capacity to serve the Golf Club as well as Hounsome Fields developments. Secondary school capacity is not an issue.

Viability

50. Some objectors raise issues of the viability of a housing development in this location having regard to the costs of additional infrastructure and upgraded transport facilities. Although some of the details of utility upgrading are still subject of consultation with the Utility Companies, Wates Developments has considerable experience of housing development in this area and is confident of the viability of a housing development at Hounsome Fields based on the principles and requirements identified in the Draft Illustrative Zoning Plan in Appendix 1.

**James Williams
JWPlanning
September 2015**



KEY

- Site boundary 
- Residential 
- Local centre 
- Primary school 
- Public open space to include buffer zones, new tree planting, SUDs, footpaths, cycleways and children's play. 
- Spine Road 
- Existing trees/hedgerow/woodland to retain 

nlp Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners
 Planning, Design, Economics

Project Hounsme Fields, SW Basingstoke

Title **Illustrative Zoning Plan**
DRAFT

Client Wates Development

Date September 2015

Scale 1:5000 @ A3

Drawn by JC

Dwg No PS 14604-010



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