



HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION MATTER 8 – MH1 OVERSTONE PARK

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE OWNERS OF MARKET HARBOROUGH LAND (ID 6134)

Overstone Park, Market Harborough

DLA Ref: 06/188
September 2018

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement expands on representations to the Pre-Submission Local Plan made on behalf of the Owners of Market Harborough Land – the owner of land proposed for allocation at Overstone Park (Policy MH1).
- 1.2 This statement relates to the Inspector’s Matter 8, specifically Questions 8.11 and 8.12, relating to the Overstone Park proposal.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Pre-submission representations were made in November 2017 by DLA Town Planning on behalf of the owners of the Overstone Park site. These representations supported the principle of the proposed allocation but sought a number of detailed changes in order to make the policy sound. A number of third-party representations were also made in relation to this site.
- 2.2 In May 2018, Harborough District Council’s Planning Committee resolved to approve an outline planning application for 600 dwellings and related works at Overstone Park. This resolution to grant permission underlines the suitability and deliverability of the proposed allocation and changes the context for considering representations to it.

3.0 INSPECTOR'S MATTERS AND ISSUES

“Question 8.11 What is the current position regarding planning permission?”

3.1 A planning application (ref 15/02006/OUT) was made in December 2015 for the Overstone Park site. The application was in outline form with all matters reserved (namely layout, scale, appearance and landscaping) except for access which was submitted for approval. The 35.8ha site comprised the following elements.

- the erection of up to 600 dwellings, including a mix of types and sizes and a proportion of affordable housing;
- a primary school (D1 use) up to 2ha;
- a local centre comprising A1 (shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Café), and D1 (Nursery, Community centre and medical centre);
- New roundabout access off Kettering Road, including a new vehicular link from Overstone House, construction of footways and cycle-ways;
- construction of structures to accommodate sustainable urban drainage system;
- Re-grading the site by means of cut and fill; and
- Green Infrastructure including public open space and play provision of 2 x Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and 1 x Neighbourhood equipped play area (NEAP) 11.45ha.

3.2 The illustrative masterplan that formed part of the application is attached at Appendix 1 to this statement. The application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement. It was subject to public consultation on a number of occasions during the lifetime of the application, most recently in April 2018.

3.3 The application was referred to the Council's Planning Committee on 1 May 2018 with officer support. After due consideration, the committee resolved to approve the application subject to conditions and a Section 106 agreement.

3.4 At the time of writing, the Section 106 agreement is still in production although it is likely that during the lifetime of this Examination, and before the Inspector's final report, it will have been signed, if not before.

3.5 Bidwells is the appointed selling agent for Overstone Park, Market Harborough. The site has not yet been launched into the marketplace, however, a number of parties have already expressed an interest in acquiring the site with the benefit of outline planning permission. The site is due to be launched to the market in Autumn 2018. The preference is for the site

to be sold as a whole, however, it is not known at this stage whether the market will dictate the need for it to be sold in phases.

“8.12 What impact would the allocation have on the landscape?”

3.6 As set out above, the outline planning application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement, a section of which dealt with Landscape and Visual impact. An addendum to the ES was submitted in February 2018 and this included a revised LVIA for the site, carried out by Bright and Associates. The Council received advice from The Landscape Partnership on landscape issues.

3.7 The Council’s committee report, at paragraphs 6.19 to 6.40, summarises the position in terms of landscape impact. The site does not lie within any nationally designated landscape areas. In summarising the significance of landscape character effects, the committee report states:

“In conclusion, The Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study (2009), identified the site (Parcel 22, 23, 23A and 24) as having HIGH, MEDIUM/HIGH and MEDIUM landscape capacity for development. The Study concludes that Jordan Valley Slopes North and Clack Hill Ridge character areas are of a MODERATE/LOW sensitivity to development. Therefore overall the site would appear to be a favourable site for residential development in landscape terms subject to mitigation measures.” (01/05/18 Committee report, para 6.31)

3.8 Turning to the significance of visual effects the report states:

“The Landscape Partnership concludes that as the site occupies a relatively open and steeply sloping ground rising up to the Clack Hill ridge, it represents a significant visual intrusion that is out of character with the existing rural character from some viewpoints. However, there are areas of residential development in close proximity to the edge of Market Harborough which moderates the level of effect. The change in the scheme to reduce the heights of the local centre from 18metres to 8metres and housing areas from 9-12metres to max. two storey/9metres, is a positive change in reducing the visual effects on the wider landscape. The wide range of illustrative proposal helps to demonstrates that the housing development would limit effects on the local skyline.” (01/05/18 Committee report, para 6.38)

- 3.9 Concluding on landscape issues, paragraph 6.40 of the committee report provides the balanced judgement:

“Officer comment: It is considered that given the scale of the development and its position on sloping land, the proposal can not easily be mitigated, such that impact is removed, there is only the raised part of the railway line and only a few internal landscape features that would reduce the dominance of the dwellings. However, the mitigation measures have been very carefully considered and developed, and the whole design approach has been landscape orientated, and responded to the mitigation measures set out in the Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment and Land Capacity Study (2009), given independent advice, it is considered that on balance the landscape and visual impact is considered acceptable” (01/05/18 Committee report, para 6.40)

4.0 ISSUES RAISED IN PRE-SUBMISSION REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 On behalf of the landowner, DLA Town Planning made a number of detailed representations to Policy MH1 that, while generally supportive of the policy, sought a number of changes to make the policy sound. In order to update the Inspector now that planning permission has been granted, the position is summarised below:

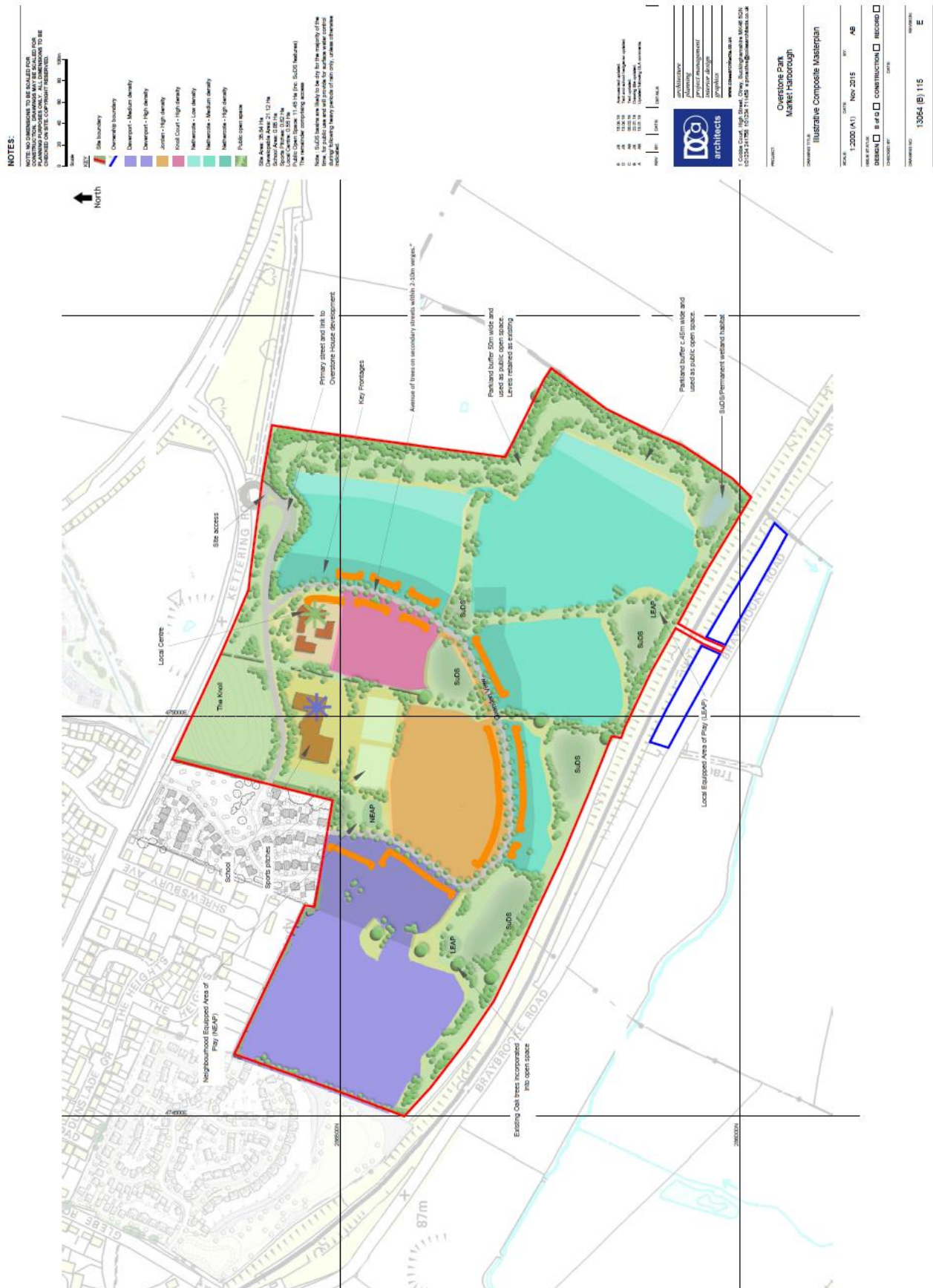
- MH1 (1a) – Comments on the requirement for a masterplan prior to a planning application – in response to this representation the Council accepted that if planning permission was granted prior to the Examination then this criterion could be deleted. The Council has resolved to grant planning permission and a Section 106 is expected to be concluded shortly.
- MH1 (1b) – Objection to the requirement for a pedestrian access to development to the west and for two points of access from Kettering Road – as above, the Council noted the comments, stating that they were only relevant if the application were not approved prior to the Examination. As stated in the pre-submission representations, while the application proposes a pedestrian link through the Overstone House site to the north, the proposed requirement in the Local Plan for a link through the adjacent housing development at Rockingham View lies outside the Overstone Park site and cannot be delivered by the Overstone Park development.
- MH1 (1g) – Comments on the requirement for contaminated land work – this issue has been investigated as part of the planning application work and concluded with the Council’s relevant officer offering no objection to the scheme, subject to a condition requiring a further report. Further investigation has been undertaken and a report will be submitted to the Council in due course. Given this background, criterion 1g to Policy MH1 could be deleted at this stage.

5.0 ISSUES RAISED IN THIRD PARTY PRE-SUBMISSION REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 To help with the Inspector's consideration of the Overstone Park proposed allocation, a brief summary is set out below of the issues raised to the proposal in representations and a brief factual response, based on information submitted in support of the planning application. It should be noted that the representations made in November 2017 predated the final planning application being reported to Committee and the Council's resolution to approve (May 2018). While the planning application was in the public domain when the Local Plan representations were made (in November 2017), the latest masterplan and accompanying evidence were not available at that time.

- Dwelling capacity – while some general concern was expressed about the ability of this site to deliver the proposed 600 homes, based on the Council's 2016 SHLAA, these concerns have now been overtaken by events in that the Council has resolved to grant outline planning permission for a scheme of up to 600 dwellings;
- Landscape impact – see above
- Transport impact – the planning application sought approval for access issues at outline stage, rather than reserving for future determination. The report to committee on 1 May 2018 notes that the Local Highway Authority did not object to the scheme and concludes that the transport impact was acceptable, subject to the mitigation measures described.
- Foul sewage network – comments from Anglian Water at pre-submission stage were based on an initial assessment of the site. The response from Anglian Water to the planning application was based on a more detailed, site-specific assessment and concluded that sufficient foul capacity was available to serve the proposed development, as noted in the committee report at paragraph 6.138. A condition proposed by the Council requires a detailed foul water drainage strategy to be submitted and approved.

5.0 APPENDIX 1 – ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN



6.0 APPENDIX 2 – SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

The planning application documentation is available here:

<https://pa2.harborough.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=NZKCMEHWGJ000>

The report to the Council's Planning Committee is available here:

<https://cmis.harborough.gov.uk/cm5/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/5322/Committee/817/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>