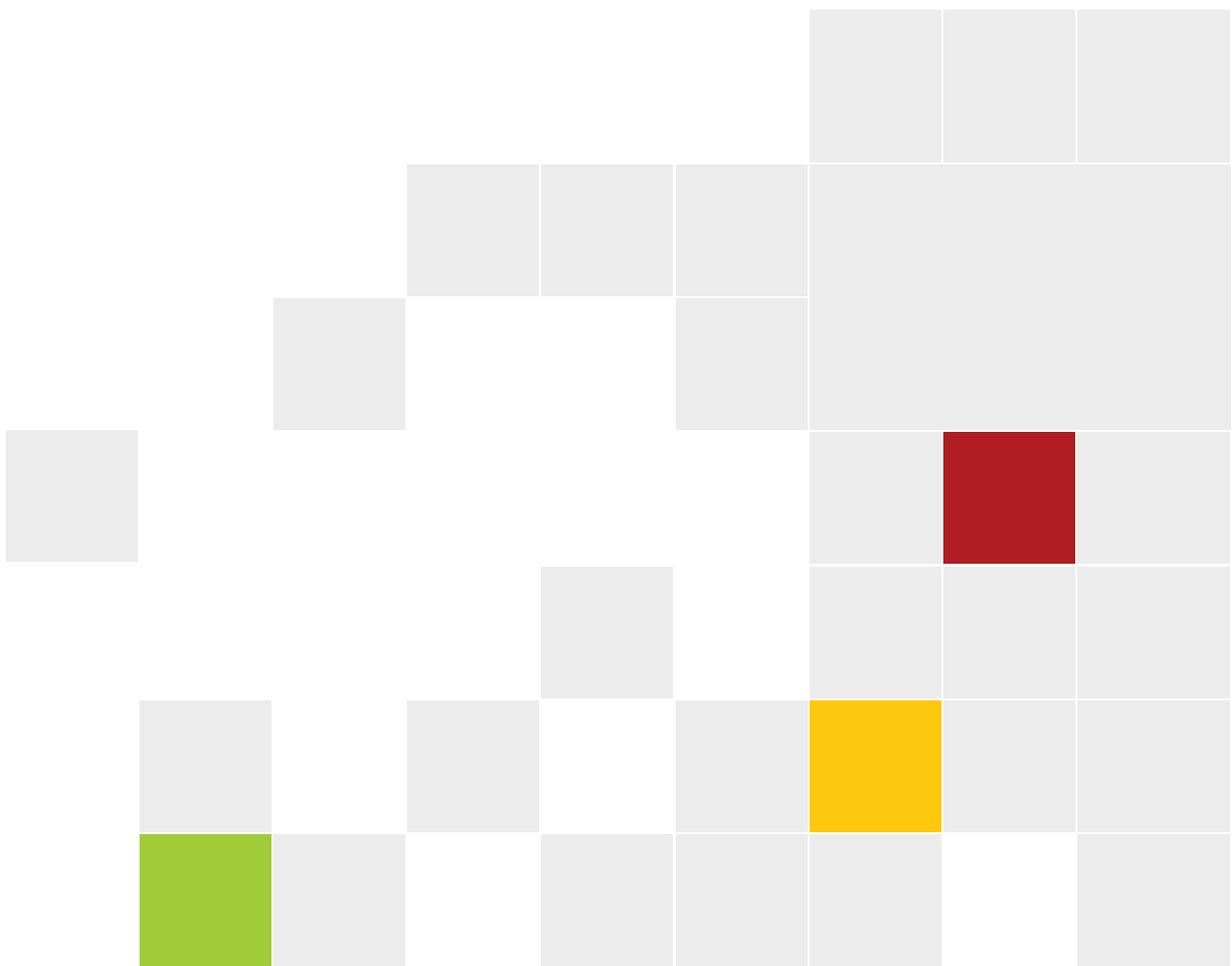
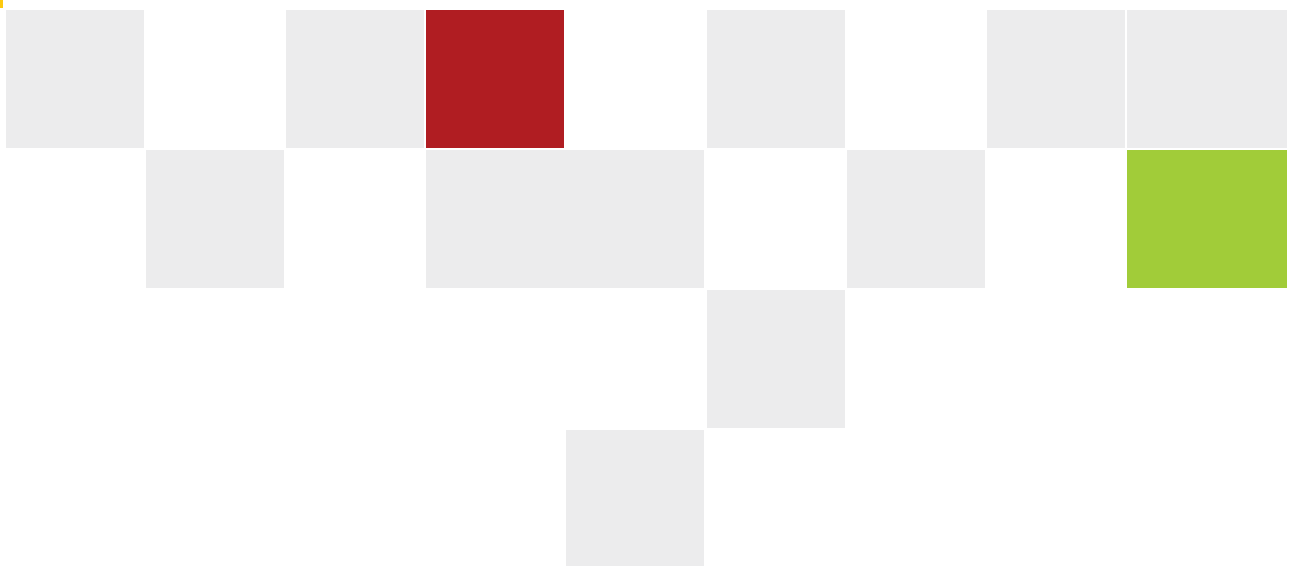


Response from Boyer on behalf of Hallam Land Management



Representations

Stratford-upon-Avon Neighbourhood Plan



Boyer

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Appendix A

1 INTRODUCTION

Stratford upon Avon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2031

- 1.1 Boyer have prepared representations on the Stratford-upon-Avon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-31 Pre-Submission Consultation Draft (May 2015) (SNDP) on behalf of our client, Hallam Land Management Ltd (HLM).
- 1.2 HLM have significant land interests in and around Stratford-upon-Avon (SUA). Our client has actively participated in the preparation of emerging development plan policy pertaining to the town and wider District. The participation has involved engaging with officers at Stratford-upon-Avon District Council over a period of time extending to over 12 months. HLM took part in the Examination in Public into the emerging Stratford-upon-Avon District Core Strategy (SCS) in January 2015.
- 1.3 This involvement in the development plan preparation has centred on the land south of Trinity Way in SUA, on which HLM have a development interest. The land is being promoted as a suitable, sustainable and deliverable location for residential led mixed use development to meet objectively assessed need in SUA.
- 1.4 HLM support the principle of an SNDP for SUA. They welcome the opportunity to participate in the preparation of the SNDP. The document is a positive opportunity to inform high quality development proposals in and around the town. Such development will be required in response to the objectively assessed need in SUA, to be identified by the District Council. In this regard, it is considered vital that the SNDP is positively prepared as an important element of a plan led approach to delivering positive sustainable development in SUA.
- 1.5 The representations are intended to support the process in producing a sound development plan document, consistent with the SCS and Government guidance. The comments on the draft SNP are made in this context.

Structure and Contents

- 1.6 The representations are set out using the following structure:
 - Section 2 – considers the planning policy context, including the requirement for the SNDP to be consistent with the emerging SCS and Government guidance.
 - Section 3 – assesses the content of the draft SNDP in view of the plan-making requirements set out in Government guidance.
 - Section 4 – considers the ability of the plan to accommodate additional growth on top of current allocations, and promotes the land at Trinity Way as a suitable, sustainable development option;
 - Section 5 – provides a summary and overall conclusion.

2 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 2.1 This section sets the SNDP in context, including the requirements it must satisfy to be a sound development plan document.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 Paragraph 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that the purpose of a sound neighbourhood plan is to give communities the direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need.

- 2.3 To be sound, the SNDP must be consistent with the emerging SCS and Government guidance set out in the NPPF. Paragraph 182 of the NPPF is clear that a sound plan is one that is:

- Positively prepared – based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements.
- Justified – the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives.
- Effective – deliverable in its time period and based on effective joint-working.
- Consistent with national policy – enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies of the NPPF.

- 2.4 Paragraph 184 of the NPPF is specific to Neighbourhood Plans and states that:

“...Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies”.

- 2.5 Paragraph 65 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Reference ID: 41-065-20140306PPG) provides basic conditions that a draft neighbourhood plan must meet if it is to proceed to referendum. Even if the SNDP is found to be sound it must also meet the basic conditions in the PPG to proceed to referendum.

- 2.6 The basic conditions are:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).

- Having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.
- Having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.
- The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
- The making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).

2.7 In addition to these conditions, Regulation 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 sets two additional conditions which are:

- the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site
- having regard to all material considerations, it is appropriate that the Neighbourhood Development Order is made, where the development described in an order proposal is EIA development.

The Development Plan

2.8 At present, the statutory development plan for SUA consists of the saved policies in the Adopted Stratford-upon-Avon Local Plan Review (July 2006) (SLP).

2.9 The SLP is in the process of being superseded by a suite of emerging development plan documents. Once adopted, the SNDP will form part of this suite of new documents forming the development for SUA. The emerging documents include:

- The Stratford-upon-Avon District Core Strategy Development Plan Document (SCS).
- The Stratford District Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- The Stratford District Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Development Plan Document.
- The Stratford-upon-Avon Neighbourhood Plan Development Plan Document (SNDP).

- 2.10 It is noted that the SNDP is one of a number of neighbourhood plans being prepared in the District, each of which will form part of the statutory development plan once adopted.
- 2.11 Each of the emerging development plan documents are at different stages in their production, with none adopted to date.
- 2.12 The emerging SCS is the lead strategic document in the emerging development plan. It will set strategic policies and proposals for the District to 2031.
- 2.13 As noted above, the independent examination into the draft SCS was held in January 2015. The subsequent Interim Report issued by the Inspector in March 2015 finds the draft SCS unsound. The examination has been suspended until the following matters are addressed:
- The Council need to reconsider objectively assessed need for housing – the Council's failure to take into account economic and demographic growth trends is likely to underestimate objectively assessed need, contrary to policy guidance.
 - Draft allocation SUA3 East of Birmingham Road, SUA– Green Belt release not justified.
 - Sustainability Appraisal – to be updated with an assessment of potential strategic sites.
 - Housing land supply – the Council can demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply but this rests on the current level of housing proposed in the SCS not the objectively assessed need being researched.
 - Housing trajectory – the housing trajectory needs more flexibility, particularly given the likely increase in objectively assessed need and reliance on a new community.
- 2.14 As a result, the District Council are reconsidering and reanalysing the objectively assessed need. This includes an assessment of reasonable alternative housing sites in the District to meet the revised objectively assessed need. Officers at the Council presented the findings of this assessment and their proposed way forward in a Cabinet Paper that went to Council Cabinet on Monday 20 July 2015.
- 2.15 In summary, the proposal is to increase the District wide housing requirement from 11,320 dwellings (566 per annum) to 14,480 (724 per annum). 610 of the housing increase is to be accommodated in SUA. A further 2,100 are to be included in a new community at Long Marston Airfield to the south of SUA. Promoting the increased growth in and around SUA is in line with the settlement hierarchy for the District and findings of the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 2.16 Council Cabinet approved the increase and further modifications to the emerging SCS, which will undergo public consultation in late summer 2015, with the examination re-opening at the end of October 2015.

- 2.17 On this basis, it is evident that the District wide housing target has increased. Moreover, additional development allocations are required to deliver this housing. The Council have identified draft allocations, which are yet to be tested at examination. Ensuring the appropriate and robust selection of suitable and deliverable sites in revising the SCS and taking the document through to adoption will be essential in producing an effective plan led system to meet local need in the period to 2031.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 2.18 It is established that a sound SNDP must be consistent with national policy. Moreover, the document must be consistent with SCS, once adopted. This includes the fundamental presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 2.19 In this regard, the first substantive comment on the structure of the SNDP is that it must respond to the further proposed modifications to the SCS and any findings the Inspector may publish subsequently. This must be achieved through consistent timescales and/or having the in-built flexibility to deliver the revised growth requirements prescribed in the SCS.
- 2.20 The second point is that the findings of the SCS Inspector are also fundamental to the preparation of the SNDP. The Inspector's Interim Report requires the Council to plan positively to meet objectively assessed need. He finds that the conservative estimate for District wide growth fails to meet the true objectively assessed need. The Council's chosen balance between growth and protecting the character of existing settlements has been adjusted upwards in response to the Inspector's views that the original selection was incorrect and unsound. The flexibility in the housing strategy and delivery trajectory was found to be deficient and the District Council must rectify this appropriately.
- 2.21 SUA fulfils a primary role and function as the main town in the District settlement hierarchy. In light of this role, it is reasonable to conclude that the findings of the Inspector apply particularly in the town. The preparation of the SNDP must recognise this link. The document itself must focus on the need to plan positively for higher growth than that set out in current draft SCS. It must ensure flexibility in housing supply and strike an appropriate pro-sustainable development agenda balanced with the need to safeguard and enhance local character in SUA.
- 2.22 The preparation of the SNDP must take full account of the lessons to be learned from the preparation and examination of the SCS. Doing so is the only means of ensuring a sound plan that is consistent with the NPPF and the SCS itself, once adopted.
- 2.23 The third point is that, at present, the SNDP does not include a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is a structural flaw that undermines the soundness of the draft plan.
- 2.24 Moreover, the extent to which the document in-stills the emphasis on brownfield development first is not justified, effective or consistent with the NPPF. The strength of the theme (which runs through the entire document) results in the plan failing to be positively prepared. It fails to plan proactively to meet growth in a flexible and/or sustainable manner.

- 2.25 The emphasis is captured best in draft Policy H4: Prioritising the Use of Brownfield Land. The policy introduces a 'general presumption against the development of greenfield land'. The policy goes on to state that 'proposals for development on greenfield land must clearly demonstrate exceptional circumstances before proposal will be looked upon favourably'. This clearly contradicts NPPF policy. It is consistent with Green Belt policy, but it must be recognised that all greenfield land (including some of that surrounding SUA) is not Green Belt. The approach is unsound.
- 2.26 Our client fully acknowledges the emphasis on brownfield first. However, there is a significant difference between a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the emphasis on brownfield first. This is recognised in the NPPF. Whilst brownfield sites can (without doubt) deliver development assessed as sustainable in terms of the NPPF, the same is very much true of sustainably located greenfield sites.
- 2.27 In addition, an over-reliance on brownfield development in the housing trajectory undermines the flexibility of the identified housing supply. This results from the increase in potential risk and site specific constraints that need to be overcome on brownfield sites. It is also a result of having all irons (in housing supply terms) in one fire: a lack of variety breeds greater risk and inflexibility. The SNDP would benefit from a greater variety of sites in a more flexible housing supply/trajectory.

Summary

- 2.28 In summary, the foregoing analysis demonstrates that the SNDP is unsound on the basis that its overall approach fails to meet the tests set out in paragraph 182 of the NPPF. The document must learn the lessons set out in the Inspector's Interim Report (March 2015) into the SCS. It must also ensure it is consistent with the SCS, which is not and cannot be the case given the progress of the document to date.
- 2.29 The required quantum of housing development in the District and SUA as the main town has increased. The approach adopted and timescales for the progression of the SNDP must ensure that the document takes into account the changes in the SCS. Both documents must be positively prepared to meet the objectively assessed need in the town.
- 2.30 There is no presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is unsound. The structural presumption against greenfield development is unsound. The emphasis on brownfield development is overly restrictive, resulting in an inflexible housing supply. This inflexibility is likely to be particularly exposed should the District Council increase the housing requirement in SUA, which is likely to be the case.

3 Comments on Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies

Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the representations sets out detailed comments on the draft policies and proposals in the SNDP that our client considers need to be amended to be considered sound. Draft policies and proposals not listed below are considered sound.

Sections 1-4 of the SNDP

- 3.2 Sections 1 – 4 of the NDP set the context of the plan, the challenges and opportunities in SUA, and vision. In general terms, our client supports the principles set out in this section of the document. The opportunity presented by a sound neighbourhood plan working in conjunction with other development plan documents to influence the type, quality and location of development that brings about local benefits is consistent with the intended outcome of the Localism Act 2012.
- 3.3 In turn, HLM support the aim to address matters of local importance (listed as Future Development Issues in the SNDP) through siting development in appropriate locations, ensuring good design and an integrated approach to investment in infrastructure. The vision for the neighbourhood area to 2031 is supported. This includes high quality development and liveable spaces that deliver an attractive and green environment, strong local economy and housing choice.
- 3.4 There is scope to deliver this vision and address the matters of importance for future development in SUA, whilst balancing the need to protect the character and individuality of the town.
- 3.5 The key matters to be addressed in delivering this vision include ensuring the positive, varied and flexible nature of the individual policies and proposals in the SNDP. The policies and proposals need to balance the social, economic and environmental dimensions of delivering sustainable development. It is this approach that is essential in delivering high quality development in collaboration with the development sector and all stakeholders locally. Our comments on individual policies and proposals reflect this approach.

Section 5 Housing

- 3.6 Section 5 (Housing) of the SNDP highlights important challenges facing the housing sector in SUA over the plan period. These include an ageing population and noticeably fewer residents in the 18-35 age range, relative to the District and wider County. The resulting in-commuting and shortage of a labour force are linked issues. Equally, the need to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing is an equal challenge in SUA to 2031.

- 3.7 The SNDP is right to highlight these challenges. As noted above, they are the challenges resulting in the delayed examination into the SCS. On the advice of the Inspector, they are the challenges the District Council have addressed through increasing the housing need in the area over the plan period. This increase is required to ensure the SCS and SNDP are sound in planning for future development over the plan period to 2031.
- 3.8 The SNDP must acknowledge this increase in the housing need in the SCS, with subsequent versions planning positively to demonstrate a deliverable supply of suitable sites capable of meeting that need. As noted above, it is reasonable to expect that this supply of suitable sites will need to be varied and flexible (in terms of type, size and land ownership) to ensure deliverability.
- 3.9 We comment on the individual housing objectives and policies below.

Policy H1 – Built Up Area Boundaries

- 3.10 It is unrealistic not to plan for an increased level of housing provision in SUA. It is also unrealistic to preclude development outside of the current built up area boundaries and/or on greenfield sites. To do so is unsound in that it presents a conservative and overly constrained housing land supply that fails to meet objectively assessed need in a flexible manner.
- 3.11 It is not the case that brownfield land is considered sustainable and suitable by definition. Such land may have constraints and challenges that render it unsuitable for housing development of the type and mix required in SUA. The policy should be flexible enough to recognise this consideration.
- 3.12 Equally, the policy should include criteria for the sustainable development of greenfield sites, including allocations. The built-up area boundary should be drawn around the strategic site allocations in Section 12, together with any new sites considered necessary for allocation to meet the revised housing demand in the Proposed Modifications to the SCS and/or any other sites identified in the adopted version of the SCS once tested at examination.
- 3.13 The explanatory text includes some information on such criteria (accessibility and planned infrastructure) for assessing the suitability of the greenfield sites. These criteria should be expanded to allow a full assessment of the suitability of individual sites (as allocations or windfall sites) to be developed in line with identified need.
- 3.14 This approach would be consistent with the SCS and NPPF, which recognise that suitable greenfield sites can often deliver sustainable benefits not achievable on some brownfield sites. Doing so would still resist residential development in a piecemeal and uncoordinated manner on the outskirts of town, whilst introducing much needed variety and flexibility in the housing land supply. Each of these outcomes are consistent with the need to tackle the specific challenges facing the housing sector in SUA, as set out above and recognised in the SNDP and by the SCS local plan Inspector.

Policy H4 – Prioritising the Use of Brownfield Land

- 3.15 In general terms, we concur with the emphasis on the development of brownfield land. However, we strongly object to the draft approach to greenfield development. It is not consistent with the SCS or NPPF, is unsound and should be deleted.
- 3.16 Whilst the NPPF encourages effective use of land it does not exclude the use of greenfield land except for in exceptional circumstances. The introduction of a sequential test excluding or delaying the development of suitable and appropriate greenfield sites in the event that previously development sites existing is not consistent with the SCS or NPPF. The appliance of the exceptional circumstances test is relevant only to Green Belt land. It cannot soundly be applied to all greenfield land.
- 3.17 Deleting the final 2 sentences from the policy would still support development on brownfield sites. It would link well with the suggested changes to Policy H1 above. Together, the changes would provide a more suitable consideration of development proposals on greenfield land, in line with the SCS and NPPF. Equally, it would assist in ensuring variety and deliverability in the housing land supply to meet objectively assessed need. This would be achieved without compromising the ability to protect SUA from inappropriate development.

Section 8 Built Environment and Design

Policy BE6 – Design Standards

- 3.18 The Ministerial Statement published in March 2015 is clear that Housing Standards incorporated into new consolidated Building Regulations will replace Code for Sustainable Homes and other construction standards for new housing. The initiative is being brought in to simplify the planning process. Once the new Building Regulations are introduced, Councils will not be able to prescribe design standards in development plan policy.
- 3.19 The policy should be amended to remove reference to the Code for Sustainable Homes and the related requirements of new development.
- 3.20 This same comment applies to draft Policy BE14 in this section.

Section 9 Natural Environment

Policy NE1 – Local Nature Reserves

- 3.21 We do not object to the designation of Local Nature Reserves (LNR). However, it is important that the SNDP is correctly defined and deliverable in this regard.
- 3.22 To justify designation, it must be demonstrated that the site itself is locally important for: wildlife; geology; education; and enjoyment (without disturbing wildlife).

- 3.23 In considering the deliverability of the proposals, it must be noted that LNR designations must be made with the permission of the District Council, who must control the LNR land through ownership, lease or agreement with the landowner. As a manager of an LNR, the authority (or the body given their permission to declare the LNR) must manage and protect the land and its natural features over an extended period of time (21 years is the preferred timescale) and seek to ensure accessibility (at least in part) to the public.
- 3.24 As facilitator of the SNDP, the SUA Town Council must be able to evidence that the above environmental and land ownership criteria are met, and a management plan in place to ensure the policy is deliverable. The draft SNDP does not provide this evidence.
- 3.25 We understand that the mound forming part of the Bridgewater Calcaerous Mound forming part of the site is under lease to Stratford District Council. This reflects ecological enhancement works (known as Bridgetown Woodland and Meadowland) carried out between 2003 and 2005 as part of the development at Trinity Mead to the north. The area is now a maturing woodland area, providing suitable wildlife habitat. It is publicly accessible.
- 3.26 Other the land being in private ownership, an area of land to the south of the mound has also been planted with broadleaved woodland species. The area has been fenced off for its protection during the early years following plantation. It is maturing woodland.
- 3.27 Alongside the corridor running alongside Rush Brook, both areas of land are notable local wildlife sites and potential local wildlife sites. It is clear that these areas are worthy of designation.
- 3.28 However, it is vital to note that they are not the same areas as that in the SNDP as being the subject of the proposed LNR designation under draft Policy NE1. I. Indeed, the SNDP proposal is far larger, covering a greater proportion of land to the south of Trinity Way.
- 3.29 This larger area of land is of considerably lower interest and significance in terms of ecology and biodiversity. The land is peripheral grassland. It is not in public ownership or control. It is not publicly accessible. It does not meet the requirements of a deliverable LNR.
- 3.30 The location and extent of the LNR designations should be carefully reconsidered. Moreover, this reconsideration should be undertaken in consultation with our client and the landowner. That way, the LNR can be robustly planned and deliverable. It can also take into account any planned housing growth in and around SUA, which will be informed by Proposed Modifications to the SCS. As noted above, the existing and potential local wildlife sites on the mound and the land to the south were put in place as a material benefit of development on land to the north. Considering their future management alongside any additional growth required in SCS to meet housing need is a sound approach to spatial planning, in line with the SCS and NPPF.

- 3.31 Doing so will allow a comprehensive approach to the SNDP, increasing the scope to deliver high quality development in suitable locations that contributes positively to public access to local facilities and protected environments. For example, the provision of LNR's and other green spaces can be successfully integrated alongside housing development. Indeed, doing so in a carefully considered and appropriate manner can result in clear benefits in terms of spatial planning and the quality and character of the local environment.
- 3.32 Particularly given the greater housing growth be prescribed in the SCS, comprehensively developed, residential-schemes are likely to be of significant benefit in contributing towards the successful formation and, crucially, long-term management of the Local Nature Reserves and other green spaces. It is considered that this approach would be a more justified, positively prepared and effective approach to plan-making in the SNDP. In turn, this aligns directly with NPPF guidance.

Section 10 Infrastructure

- 3.33 We concur with the infrastructure objectives set out in this section of the SNDP, particularly those relating to reducing congestion, promoting alternative means of transport (including park and ride), improving access to learning opportunities and enhancing education facilities. The latter includes the provision of a new education facility to the south of the river, and in the area of Trinity Mead.
- 3.34 In line with the representations above, it is considered that there is somewhat of a disparity in the draft policies and proposals in the plan when considered alongside these infrastructure requirements. The changes recommended above will ensure the plan has sufficient flexibility to promote high quality mixed use development that could deliver these aspirations in SUA. Comprehensively planned residential led mixed use development and the associated provision of on and off-site facilities and infrastructure could well unlock the solutions desired in the SNDP. These benefits may not be possible through smaller scale development of brownfield land within the current built up area.
- 3.35 The land controlled by our client at Trinity Way is a clear example of a suitable and deliverable site with potential to make significant positive contributions to the facilities, services and infrastructure requirements set out in the plan. We assess the attributes and potential benefits of the site in the next section.

Section 11 Community, Leisure and Wellbeing

Policy CLW4 – Protecting and Enhancing Existing Open Spaces

- 3.36 Similarly to the representations in relation to Policy NE1 above, there is no evidence that the extensive area of land subject to the proposed Local Green Space is worthy of designation. The draft SNDP does not demonstrate that the entire area of land and space is demonstrably special to the local community. Therefore, the draft proposal is unsound.

- 3.37 As noted above, it accepted that the area of land at the mound leased to the District Council and the planted woodland to the south provide local green space worthy of designation. Critically, the same cannot be said of the arable and grasslands (other than the habitats of potential interest in the Rush Brook corridor) on the remainder of the site. These areas should not be designated as LGS.
- 3.38 The NPPF and PPG guidance is clear that LGS designations should only be made in a manner consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. Indeed, the PPG (Paragraph 007, Reference ID: 37-007-20140306) states that plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs. The LGS designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making.
- 3.39 As is the case in relation to the proposed LNR designation under draft Policy NE1 above, a sound and positive approach to spatial planning in SUA would be for LGS designations to be considered alongside sites required to deliver planned housing growth in and around the town. This process cannot be comprehensively delivered until informed by Proposed Modifications (and ultimately the adopted draft) to the SCS.
- 3.40 Doing so will allow a comprehensive approach to the SNDP, delivering the spatial planning and local benefits in SUA in the same manner as suggested in relation to the LNR proposals above. There are clear and sound reasons for the land other than that worth of designation as LGS to come forward for development (as set out in detail below). Achieving an appropriate and deliverable balance between LGS and developable land should be the subject of a detailed master planning and consultation exercise involving the landowner, our client and local stakeholders. Such an exercise provides a significant opportunity to deliver the co-ordinated, sustainable and plan led growth of SUA in line with the principles established in the remainder of the SNDP. This approach is the most sound in line with the NPPF and in terms of delivering sustainable development to meet identified local need. It is likely to delivery significant social, economic and environmental benefits locally.

3.41 Summary

- 3.42 The representations above identify areas of the SNDP that are currently unsound. The suggested amendments will correct these deficiencies, resulting in a more positively prepared, balanced, justified and effective SNDP. They will ensure a document that continues the presumption in favour of sustainable development. They will ensure a flexible approach to a varied housing land supply capable of meeting local need in a manner that balances growth with the need to protect the character and individuality of SUA.

4 Accommodating Additional Growth

Introduction

- 4.1 It is established throughout these representations that the level of housing growth in the emerging SCS has increased significantly. Additional housing land is required to accommodate additional growth. This significant increase in the District wide housing need is replicated in SUA as (in line with the SCS Inspector's findings) a highly sustainable location capable of accommodating additional housing allocation.
- 4.2 This requirement for additional housing growth in the SCS must be reflected in the SNDP.
- 4.3 This section sets out how the increase impacts on the need to plan for greater housing growth in SUA. It then goes on to assess how land at Trinity Way controlled by HLM presents an excellent opportunity to deliver positive sustainable development in meeting this greater housing need.
- 4.4 It is important to note at the outset that our client would welcome the opportunity to discuss the opportunity with the Neighbourhood Plan team. Doing so would help inform the positive benefits and balanced nature of any development proposed on the site.

Stratford-upon-Avon

- 4.5 Stratford-upon-Avon is the main town in the District and has a pre-eminent role in providing a wide range of facilities, services and amenities for its own population and its rural hinterland. Successive Sustainability Appraisals prepared by the District Council have identified the positive advantage of locating development at Stratford-upon-Avon. This view is reflected in SCS, with the greatest level of housing apportioned to SUA. Moreover, the SCS Inspector (in requesting the Council re-visit objectively assessed need for housing) consolidates this view in concluding in his Interim Report (March 2015) that there is scope to increase the housing allocation to SUA because the town is a highly sustainable location for further housing. This has subsequently been recognised by the District Council, in increasing the level of housing growth in the District and including a large proportion of that proposed increase in and around SUA.
- 4.6 Two qualifications are afforded to the extent to which additional housing can be directed to the town; firstly retaining its character and secondly traffic problems. These themes are reflected in the SNDP, as noted above.

Land at Trinity Way, Stratford-upon-Avon

- 4.7 The National Planning Policy Framework acknowledges that the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as extensions to towns.
- 4.8 HLM control a parcel of land south of Trinity Way in SUA. The land parcel is shown on the plan attached at **Appendix A**.

4.9 As you may be aware, strategic development to the South East of Stratford was considered as an option prior to the submission version of the SCS. The area of land considered extended from Trinity Way, north to encompass Tiddington. It included the site controlled by our client.

4.10 The South East Stratford Option was not taken forward by the District Council who proposed a new settlement at Lighthorne Heath / Gaydon rather than enlarging an existing sustainable settlement. That said, the Sustainability Appraisal accompanying that stage of the SCS concluded that the South East Stratford Option performs at a similar level of sustainability to the chosen allocation. Indeed, the April 2014 District Council Cabinet Paper records the position in the following manner:

'The consultation has not revealed any evidence that, should the Council identify South East Stratford as its preferred strategic development location, and subject to the resolution of issues concerning traffic impact and secondary school places, the development cannot be achieved in a sustainable manner consistent with the overall purpose of the planning system'.

4.11 On this basis, it is evident that development to the south east of SUA and on the land controlled by HLM is a sound proposition. It is a sustainable, viable and deliverable option should, as expected, the SCS be amended to increase housing growth over the plan period.

4.12 This contention is made on the basis that:

- SUA is a Main Town in the District settlement hierarchy and focus for sustainable growth.
- The land itself is controlled by HLM, ensuring the site is deliverable in meeting housing need.
- It is very well related to the existing urban area, town centre and an established sustainable neighbourhood centre including a range of everyday facilities to serve the local population.
- The site is accessible and conveniently related to the public transport network, with significant potential to improve accessibility by a range of modes of transport through the development.
- The site would contribute towards the Stratford Transport Package, as essential infrastructure.

4.13 The site is in an area which has evolved and developed since the late 1990's and as such is a sustainable neighbourhood with a recently constructed neighbourhood centre (Rosebird), shops (Waitrose and Co-op), a doctors surgery within the recently constructed pharmacy, employment and a transport hub in the form of the newly constructed park and ride.

- 4.14 It is reasonable to conclude that the site's inclusion as part of the South East Stratford Option (having initially not formed part of this broad location) demonstrates its suitability for development. Critically, the site can be brought forward independently of or as an early phase to any wider and strategic proposal in this location. Indeed none of the reasons why the strategic growth option was not taken forward by the District Council act as a restraint on the development of this more modest proposal.
- 4.15 The site is an opportunity for the SNDP to deliver the increased housing growth in manner consistent with the principles and vision set out in Sections 1-4 of the draft plan. It can be delivered in a carefully considered manner that ensures comprehensive sustainable development. That is, development that delivers social, environmental and economic benefits (including the co-ordinated delivery of relevant identified infrastructure requirements) to the whole of SUA and its resident population without any significant adverse impacts.
- 4.16 In particular, the proposed development on HLM land south of Trinity Way informed by an allocation in the SNDP could provide extensive benefits in terms of the formation and long-term management of the Local Green Space and Local Nature Reserve proposals in this area. Providing functional open space and well managed nature areas co-ordinated with new development from the outset is considered a positive and sustainable plan led approach to spatial planning. Taking this opportunity to manage growth alongside the protection and enhancement of the environment would strengthen the SNDP, to the benefit of SUA as a whole.

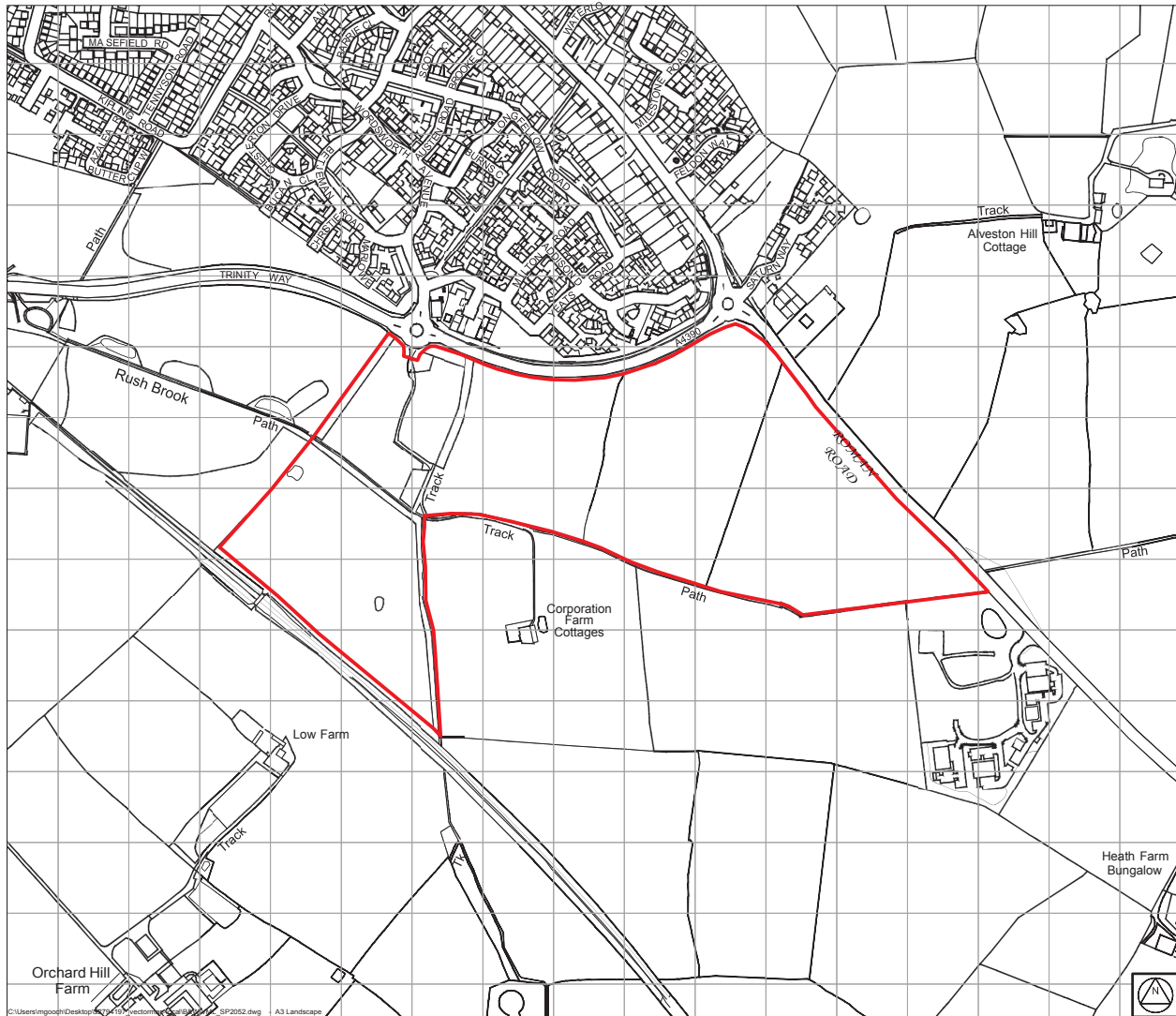
Summary

- 4.17 HLM controlled land offers a clear opportunity for comprehensively planned mixed use development, well-integrated with the existing settlement and meet the increased housing need set out in the SCS. , The SNDP (as well as the SCS and any subsequent Site Allocations Development Plan Document progressed by the District Council) provide the correct vehicle to realise this opportunity. Taking the proposed allocation forward in the manner set out will ensure a sound approach to plan making, in line with the NPPF.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 It is considered that the foregoing analysis demonstrates that the draft SNDP is unsound and inconsistent with both the SCS (which is proposed to be modified) and the NPPF.
- 5.2 It is imperative that the SNDP is progressed in accordance with the SCS. It must have the flexibility to deliver the increased housing growth requirement for SUA (as the main town and preferred location for sustainable growth) at suitable and deliverable sites in a timely manner throughout the plan period to 2031. Failure to be consistent with the SCS or not having the flexibility to respond to the likely increase in housing growth provision cannot be considered.
- 5.3 The SNDP does not include a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This presumption goes to the heart of the planning system in England, as set out in the NPPF. Its absence in the draft plan is a fundamental flaw.
- 5.4 The proposed approach in the SNDP introduces a sequential approach in favour of brownfield development. Indeed, greenfield development is ruled out unless any proposal can demonstrate exceptional circumstances. This approach is inconsistent with the NPPF. Whilst the emphasis on effective use of previously developed land is an established planning principle, the SNDP is overly restrictive and this element of Policy BE6 should be deleted.
- 5.5 In contrast to the pro-growth and positive plan led approach to delivering sustainable development, the over-emphasis on brownfield land only dominates the SNDP policies and proposals. It results in a one dimensional housing land supply/trajectory. This increases the risk of supply, undermining the likely effectiveness of the proposed strategy.
- 5.6 Greater consideration needs to be given to what makes a site sustainable, rather than adopting the assumption that brownfield sites are automatically more suitable and sustainable. Equally, greater consideration should be given to the potential to deliver the co-ordinated investment in infrastructure to deliver sustainable growth through carefully planned and comprehensive residential led development on strategic sites.
- 5.7 Our suggested alterations to the plan allow scope for the SNDP to be amended to this effect. The land south of Trinity Way is promoted as a sound proposition for a strategic residential development south east of SUA. The positive benefits of the site/scheme weigh heavily in its favour as a possible strategic allocation. This is particularly the case given they can be achieved without any adverse impacts that significant and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

APPENDIX A - PLAN



LEGEND
— Site Boundary

Rev	Date	Description	By	Drawn
24/09/14		First Issue		

Client:
Hallam Land Management

Project Title:
**Stratford-On-Avon SHLAA
 Call for Sites Consultation**

Drawing Title:
**Land South of Trinity Way
 Stratford-Upon-Avon**

Date	Drawn	Checked	Authorised
24 Sep 2014	MG	RB	OJ

Number: 14.843/001
 Rev: -
 Scale: 1:5,000 @ A3

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