

Question 1 – “Are the Plan’s requirements for Strategic Masterplans, Concept Frameworks, Design Codes and Panel Review necessary and proportionate ...”?

Introduction

This short statement has been prepared by Phase 2 Planning & Development on behalf of Mrs Louise Barr, the owner of draft allocation site WAL.R2 to the north of Waltham Abbey, and also on behalf of Manor Oak Homes, who have acquired an interest in draft allocation sites WAL.R1 and WAL.R3.

Together, Mrs Barr and Manor Oak Homes therefore control the land which will be covered by the Waltham Abbey North Masterplan. Mrs Barr and Manor Oak Homes are currently in the process of agreeing a Planning Performance Agreement with a view to jointly progressing that Masterplan with the Council.

Response to the Inspector’s Matter 7/Issue 2 Questions

As noted above, both parties for the Waltham Abbey North Masterplan are working collaboratively and both are supportive of preparing a Strategic Masterplan for the site.

In terms of the potential concerns raised by the Inspector regarding the proportionality of the work involved, the resources available to the Council, and ultimately any impacts on delivery timescale, the landowners have taken comfort from the wording in paragraph 2.92 of the Plan which notes that the level of detail in each Strategic Masterplan will vary according to context, and also that those Strategic Masterplans which cover land in multiple ownership (as is the case for the two parties involved at Waltham Abbey North) are likely to provide less detail in favour of a more high level over-arching framework.

On the basis of the flexibility referred to in paragraph 2.92 as to the format and level of detail of Strategic Masterplans, no objection has been raised to Policy S3 or its supporting text by either of the Waltham Abbey North parties.

Having said that, it will now be important for the Council to apply that flexibility when progressing with Strategic Masterplans, to ensure for example that:

- (a) the level of consultation undertaken is proportionate to the content of the Strategic Masterplan (para 2.97);
- (b) that Design Codes are not overly prescriptive and contain only the minimum information necessary to ensure a cohesive design approach (para 2.98), and
- (c) that the input from the Quality Review Panel is proportionate and limited to that which is necessary (Para 2.101).

In respect of these matters, it is considered that the text of the Plan is not unsound, but the flexible approach envisaged by paragraph 2.92 needs to be put in to practice. We envisage being able to give a brief update to the Inspector on the progress of the Waltham Abbey North Masterplan as part of our Matter 15/Issue 2/Policy P3 (Waltham Abbey) Hearing statement in April.