

EFDC: Local Plan Examination

Hearing Statement

**Matter 7: Place-Shaping & General
Masterplan Approach**

Wednesday 13th February 2019

Participant No. 19AD0113

Introduction:

David Lock Associates (DLA) act for the Fairfield Partnership (TFP) who control land within the South Epping Masterplan Area (SEMPA). This is designated as ***EPP.R2 Land South of Epping East – approximately 500 homes*** in *Policy P1 Epping* in the Epping Forest Local Plan Submission Version 2017. DLA & TFP have actively participated in meetings with District Council officers and other stakeholders to progress the South Epping Masterplan.

1.0 ISSUE 1

Is the application of Policy SP3 to all allocated sites justified; and is otherwise effective and is it otherwise effective and consistent with national policy?

- 1.1 TFP consider that Policy SP3 should be applied to larger sites only. The Policy should be reworded to clarify to which sites it applies. TFP supports, in principle, the production of a Strategic Masterplan for the SEMPA subject to ensuring that the scope of the Masterplans remain flexible.
- 1.2 Appropriate density ranges will be an expected and normal output of the technical analysis underpinning the various Masterplans. In general terms it is sound to encourage higher densities in town and village centres. It is sufficient for policy to include these general principles without the need to define specific density ranges in the Plan.
- 1.3 Inclusion of a specific reference to the need to conserve or enhance the historic environment is seen as a positive and appropriate policy addition to Policy SP3.
- 1.4 An overarching strategic policy on health and well-being would provide a proper context for the preparation of the various masterplans. These in turn should demonstrate how these objectives can be physically addressed in each area.

2.0 ISSUE 2:

Are the Plan's requirements for master-planning (as explained in paragraphs 2.89 – 2.102 and set out in Policies SP4, SP5 and certain Place policies) justified; and will they be effective in securing the timely delivery of comprehensively planned schemes?

2.1 TFP have already expressed, in principle support, for the preparation of appropriate Strategic Masterplans. In particular, the preparation of the SEMPA is supported in principle. However, the arrangements as proposed are complex, lengthy and resource intensive. These factors, taken together, will inevitably result in a delay to housing delivery and could delay the Local Plan. In particular (responding in turn to the specific questions raised at 1a-d):

- a) The proposed thresholds for requiring Panel Review are much too low and are unlikely to add anything to conventional development management processes. In addition, the administration of the Panels will stretch EFDC resources and there must be serious doubt about the resource and capacity available to deliver on this proposal.
- b) The requirement for Strategic Masterplans to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents before the determination of planning applications will delay the construction of housing on large sites. TFP consider that Strategic Masterplans can be effectively produced in a collaborative manner between EFDC and promoters/developers. Strategic Masterplans should be prepared as expeditiously as possible and approved as informal planning guidance against which planning applications in the Strategic Masterplan area should be evaluated. Any requirement for them to be formally adopted as Supplementary Documents will inevitably be a lengthy process because of the extensive consultation requirements, introducing yet further delays into the system. Therefore, it is noted that Strategic Masterplans have simply to be capable of approval.
- c) No further comment
- d) In order to mitigate against cases where landowners cannot agree it is essential that masterplan areas are carefully considered. This requires that such areas are spatially divided and, where possible, capable of independent development by separate land owners. In particular, this demands that appropriate physical development sectors are capable of independent access, servicing and drainage

arrangements. However, the Masterplans have a vital role to play in ensuring that any independent planning applications comply with an overall framework for development. This strategy will ensure that the opportunity for early development is optimised.

- 2.2 The SEMPA is also included within the Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan as Policy 5. There are some minor inconsistencies in the policy requirements. In addition, there are a series of community aspirations set out in terms of accessibility and connectivity aspirations. In our view, Epping Town Council will be an important stakeholder into the Masterplan process that TFP will undertake with EFDC.

