Latton Priory - Technical Note on Site Capacity

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Broadway Malyan (BM) is commissioned by both Hallam Land Management (HLM) and Commercial Estates Group (CEG) to provide masterplanning and urban design technical advice on delivery of the proposed allocation site at Latton Priory, south Harlow. BM has been involved with this project since 2014 and has undertaken a range of technical and infrastructure-based studies in support of the proposals.

1.2 At the Epping Forest Local Plan EiP hearing for Matter 4 "The Spatial Strategy / Distribution of Development" on 25 February 2019, the following question was posed by the Inspector for examination*: "Whether the capacity of the Latton Priory allocation has been underestimated and, if it has, whether there are any implications for the distribution elsewhere"*.

1.3 During the Hearing, Tom Hill QC, acting for CEG and Hallam land Management, set out information in support of the conclusion that the capacity of the Latton Priory allocation had indeed been underestimated and summarised the key facts that supported the conclusion that Latton Priory could support circa 1,500 dwellings. At that stage, the Council indicated that they did not dispute this proposition in principle, but were still considering the issue and reviewing material from the promoters.

1.4 This technical note is intended to provide the detailed information necessary to support the proposition that the Plan should allow for a greater housing capacity at the Latton Priory allocation, ideally by way of a Modification to the Plan. This has now been shared with the Council in order to allow it to raise any technical issues with the methodology. It has now helpfully confirmed that it does not wish to raise any such technical or methodological issues and it now submitted to the Inspector for her consideration in the context of the Hearing for Matter 8 on Thursday 21 March 2019.

2.0 Methodology for Assessment

2.1 The methodology for assessment being demonstrated in this technical note has been devised to broadly follow the methodology undertaken by Arup (on behalf of EFDC) in the Site Deliverability Assessment (Rev 1 March 2018). In essence the methodology involves:

- Subtracting known constraints from the total site area to calculate an 'Unconstrained site area'
- Establishing an appropriate baseline density for residential development
- Adjusting for mixed use development and converting from gross to net density

2.2 The above Arup methodology uses a number of 'rule of thumbs' and assumptions to justify the capacity of the site. As masterplanning design work has been ongoing on the site (in one form or another) since 2012, along with additional survey work, a more detailed understanding of the constraints and opportunities of the site allows the site promoters to replace these assumptions with a more accurate assessment of the unconstrained site area as well as the conversion from gross to net developable area.

3.0 Notes and Assumptions

3.1 For the purposes of this technical note, it is assumed that the Dorrington Farm site does not form part of the masterplan and therefore the calculations for the site capacity assessment. It is assumed that 2.0 hectares of employment provision (1.0 hectare of existing plus 1.0 hectare of new employment provision as now clarified by the Council in their recent Policy wording amendment) will be located within the Dorrington Farm area, which totals 2.3 hectares

3.2 However, discussions are ongoing with the owners of Dorrington Farm regarding incorporating their land holding into the overall masterplan design. Therefore the current preferred masterplan (Appendix B) is prepared on that basis with 2.0 hectares of employment provision relocated in the masterplan and Dorrington Farm re-developed and incorporated into the overall design.

3.3 It is important to recognise that this note, and the land-use calculations within, do not cover all of the allocation area. As shown on Appendix A, to the north of the site there are two further parcels of land out-with the control of HLM / CEG. It is not known what the landowners' intentions are for these parcels of land but any development capacity they deliver would be in addition to the figures covered in this note.

3.4 We also recognise the requirement in Policy SP5 F(iii) of the Local Plan Submission Version (LPSV) for the Latton Priory site to provide 0.5 hectares for up to 5 traveller pitches. This requirement will be

addressed positively through the Strategic Masterplanning process for the site. It is not currently factored into the assessment that follows in Section 4.0 below but will be readily accommodated and there is the opportunity to designate part of the land area current proposed for open space for this purpose as the quantum of open space proposed within the Masterplan is well is in excess of policy requirements.

4.0 Site Constraints Affecting Extent of Developable Area & Net Developable Area

4.1 The following Table is based on the Developable Area drawing (Ref 30422-BM-02-301 (Appendix C):

Site Area (ha):	**116.4**	**Note: This Site Area does not include Dorrington Farm and for the purposes of this land budget the required 2Ha of employment provision is located within that area.**
(1) On-site constraints (ha):		
Green belt buffer	47.7	To contain SANG (29ha), School sports pitches (6.7ha) and park/ amenity green space (12ha)
Green wedge	7.8	To be public amenity green space
Ecology corridors & buffers	2.3	Includes 20m set back from ancient woodland (eastern boundary), 20m setback from SSSI (western boundary) and wildlife corridor reserved for GCN
Primary Road	3.3	Based on Essex Design Guide Type A Local Distributor (19m ROW)
	61.1	
(2) Deductibles for Gross to Net (ha):		
(a) Infrastructure and Green Infrastructure		
Secondary roads	2	Based on Essex Design Guide Type B Link Road (18.5m ROW)
Green Corridors	1.1	To be public amenity green space
SuDS Zone	3.3	20m setback along northern boundary reserved for SuDS and protection of high quality hedgerows
Setbacks from neighbouring boundaries	0.7	5m setback from surrounding boundaries (Dorrington Farm and Riddings House)
	7.1	
Net Developable Area – All Uses (ha):	**48.2**	
(b) Non-residential Uses (ha):		
Primary school	2.3	Includes early years facility
Secondary school (buildings only)	3.3	Assumes 6.7ha provision for sports pitches within green belt buffer to provide 10ha school site
Mixed use local centre	3.75	Local centre to provide provision for residential apartment units as well as STC microhub, community facilities for local residents, small business units and local retail
	9.35	
Net Developable Area - Residential (ha)	**38.9**	
Net developable of site (excluding SANG)	**55.1%**	
Net developable of site (including SANG)	**41.4%**	

4.2 The above land-use budget delivers a fully policy compliant scheme, with the following key points to note:

- No built development beyond the Council's proposed Green Belt Boundary;
- 1.0 hectare of existing plus 1.0 hectare of new employment provision as now clarified by the Council in their recent Policy wording amendment;
- 0.5 hectares for up to 5 traveller pitches to be accommodated within areas devoted to open space as these areas currently exceed policy requirements (as explained in paragraph 3.4 above);
- A significant new Mixed-Use Local Centre totalling 3.75 hectares
- A new two form entry Primary School on a 2.3 hectare site, which would also accommodate early years provision
- 10.0 hectares of land for secondary school provision, with the pitch area only located in the retained Green Belt, but within the allocation area;
- 29.0 hectares of SANG; and
- Significant areas of strategic open space providing for parks, amenity space, setbacks and SUDs.

4.3 With regards to open space FPCR Landscape Architects have undertaken a review of EFDC policy and emerging Harlow Garden Town strategy documents in relation to provision. The extensive landscape framework proposed in Appendix B provides the required areas in provision for children and young people and allotments, and above the requirement for all other types of open space, comprising amenity greenspace, parks and gardens and natural/semi-natural greenspace. With regards to pitches the current GI strategy takes a precautionary approach, by assuming that none of the Secondary School pitches will be available for community use. The additional proposed pitch provision was determined using the Sport England 'Playing Pitch New Development Calculator' (Appendix F of the EFDC Playing Pitch Strategy 2018).

4.4 The proposed net to gross whether considered with or without SANG is therefore exceptionally low at 44% or 55% respectively. This is clearly significantly below general rules of thumb and illustrates the landscape led nature of the proposals and the Garden Town principles that have been engendered into its overall layout.

5.0 Establishing an Appropriate Baseline Density

5.1 The Arup Site Deliverability Assessment indicates that the Latton Priory site is considered to be within a 'town' setting which would equate to a baseline density of 45dph. They go on to further refine this to 36dph (a 20% reduction) due to 'Garden Town guidance' suggesting 30 to 40dph being appropriate. It is unclear where the 'Garden Town guidance' referenced in the Arup report is from as there is no citation.

5.2 Previous advice on site specific guidance was provided in the draft Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Design Charter (June 2018) which stated an appropriate density range of 25-40dph. This guidance has been replaced in the latest version of the Design Charter with:

"Densities to support place-making, modal shift and viability by quality design"

5.3 We strongly support the principle of a range of densities across the site. Given the provision of a Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) and a substantial Mixed-Use Local Centre within the site, the site promoters believe that there should be scope to consider higher densities (up to 50dph) within limited parts of the site. This will help ensure that the STC and Local Centre are sustainable, providing both critical mass for public transport ridership as well as supporting a vibrant mixed use centre. It also enables a variation in character across the site assisting legibility and a transition towards the Mixed-Use centre and education facilities.

5.4 Therefore, the site promotors are proposing a density range of 25dph to 50dph, with an average baseline density of around 37.5dph. This has been calculated by applying a density band within the above range to each block appropriate to its location on site and intended character.

5.5 We consider that this is a sensible average density for the site taking into consideration factors including location, future connectivity and context. It will enable higher/ sustainable densities to be achieved near to the key facilities and transport nodes, whilst also allowing areas of lower density along the edges and to

provide for a full choice of housing including larger family dwellings. It also reflects densities that are being delivered and achieved on similar sites in the region.

6.0 Site Capacity Calculation

6.1 Using the above baseline average density, the assessed capacity of the Latton Priory Site is:

Net Developable Area – Residential (ha)		Baseline Density (dph)		Net Site Capacity (units)
38.9	x	37.5	=	1459

6.2 It should also be noted that the local centre also has the potential to also contain residential units. It is considered essential that it does to enhance its character, ensure a genuine mix of uses, to facilitate uses above ground floor and to provide a variety of apartments at this location next to the sustainable transport corridor. The current design in the preferred masterplan (Appendix B) provides for 50 apartment units, which is extremely conservative given the overall Local Centre area and therefore the final assessed site capacity is around:

1,509 units

7.0 Impact on Transport and Accessibility

7.1 A report by Brookbanks Consulting Ltd forms Appendix D of this Technical Note and demonstrates that the number of homes proposed by Policy SP5 F(i) can be increased to 1,500 without significant adverse transport impacts and with some beneficial effects including greater internalisation of trips, improved viability of public transport and potentially an increased developer contribution to the STCs.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 The above assessment has been based on more robust and up to date information, prepared by the HLM and CEG team following a process of: a) calculating the on-site constraints; b) deducting infrastructure/ green infrastructure to arrive at a net area; and then c) netting out all non-residential land uses to arrive at a residential area figure. A sensible residential density figure of 37.5 dph was then applied (plus a cautious figure of 50 apartments within the local centre) to arrive at a development capacity of 1,509 units. Again, it should be noted that this does not include the land within the allocation but outside of CEG/ HLM's control. It is this figure that we believe to be the more realistic site capacity for Latton Priory and, therefore, the capacity that CEG and HLM seek for the site.