

**Examination into the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan**

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Matter 8 – Allocations (Cheadle)

On behalf of Persimmon Homes (North West) Ltd



September 2018

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#### **Introduction**

1. This hearing statement is prepared on behalf of Persimmon Homes (North West) Ltd [‘the Company’] and supplements representations made to previous stages of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.
2. This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Examination Guidance Note (EL1.002b) and specifically responds to those matters set out by the Inspector in the Schedule of Matters, Issues and Questions [EL1.004a].
3. This statement predominantly refers to proposed Site Allocation DSC 1 (CH001 and CH132) of the Submission Version Local Plan [SD6.5] referred as Cheadle North Strategic Development Area.
4. The Company have submitted a hybrid planning application (SMD/2018/0180) for Site Allocation DSC1 on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018 seeking:-

**1) Full permission** for 125 dwellings and access to proposed primary school, and

**2) Outline permission** for up to 175 dwellings and primary school with multi-use games area, with all matters reserved.

5. The Site has been subject to various pre-application and post-submission meetings and discussions with Staffordshire Moorlands Borough Council [‘the Council’] to ensure a comprehensive development scheme, and is supported by a full suite of technical reports (listed at **Appendix B**), which demonstrate that there are no technical constraints preventing the site from coming forward for residential development. These technical documents can be made available at the examination if required.
6. The Company are currently seeking to satisfy matters raised by statutory consultees to the planning application and are also seeking agreement of viability assessment and

planning obligations; it is presently expected that the application will go to the 25<sup>th</sup> October planning committee.

**Q2.1 *Is the development in a location that is or can be made sustainable?***

7. It is considered that the location of the site is sustainable having regard to Cheadle's position within the settlement hierarchy as a 'tier-1' settlement alongside Leek and Biddulph, these settlements being those which accommodate much of Staffordshire Moorland's existing resident population and services and facilities. It is considered that the allocation of the site for housing reflects Cheadle's role within Staffordshire Moorlands and supports Policy's SS2 and SS3 of the Submission Local Plan.
8. The Site is considered to be sustainable having regard to the Council's Sustainability Appraisal Report Submission Version Local Plan [SD 6.5] which identifies the site being located within close proximity of Cheadle Town Centre, which provides access to a wide range of service and facilities and also being accessible to areas of existing employment; the Sustainability Appraisal identifying the proposed delivery of 320 homes and the site's accessibility to such services and facilities as having a potential 'significantly positive' sustainability effect.
9. The Transport Assessment prepared by Croft Transport Solutions accompanying the planning application demonstrates the sustainability of the Site in locational terms and its ability to accommodate the development proposed in Policy DSC1. The Assessment notes that the site is sustainably located to Cheadle Town Centre to enable access by a variety of non-car modes, and connects to a range of local services and amenities, including the town centre via existing pedestrian footways either side of the A521 Froghall Road; such distances to key facilities being well within the suggested distances for desirable, acceptable and preferred maximum walks as defined within the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) document '*Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot*'.
10. The site is further served by alternative sustainable modes of transport, being located a suitable proximity to support travel by cycle; also being located approximately 300m from the nearest bus stop on the A531 Froghall Road.

11. In addressing the economic aspects of sustainable development, the Economic Benefits Assessment prepared by Lichfields in support of the planning application identifies that the scheme will provide a significant number of economic benefits including:-
- *Creating of the equivalent of 41 construction jobs in each year of construction and 62 indirect jobs in services and other businesses from the wage spending of construction workers and supplier sourcing;*
  - *Generating £6.3 million of direct and indirect GVA per annum during the construction phase;*
  - *Generating £9.1 million of additional resident expenditure in shops and services, of which £2.7 million will be net to local businesses within Staffordshire Moorlands. This increased expenditure will also support 32 permanent FTE jobs in the local area;*
  - *Delivering £434,000 of Council tax receipts per annum and around £1.4 million of New Homes Bonus payments over a four year period*
12. In addressing the environmental aspects of sustainable development, the eastern extent of the site falls within flood zone 3. As referred in our response to question 2.2 below; the scheme seeks to exclude development of these parts of the site, although seeks their inclusion with the allocation for the purposes of biodiversity enhancement or surface water mitigation.
13. Ecological assessment undertaken as part of the planning application does not anticipate any significant direct or indirect impacts designated sites in the locality.
14. The Visual Impact Assessment submitted as part of the planning application concludes that the grade II listed Broad Haye Farm will not be unduly affected by the development; the Council's Sustainability Appraisal assessing this having a 'positive effect...'
15. It is therefore concluded that the Site is located within a sustainable location.

**Q2.2 *Should the site allocation be adjusted to incorporate land to be used for open space/surface water mitigation and/or land covered by the planning application?***

16. It is considered entirely appropriate that the site allocation boundary be adjusted to incorporate additional land to the south east of the proposed site allocation boundary and would ensure consistency with the boundary of the current planning application (**Appendix A** attached).
17. Adjustment of the allocation boundary to Cecily Brook would provide a clear and logical boundary to the site and provide a defined eastern settlement edge to Cheadle marked by clear physical features which can be further reinforced through effective and comprehensive masterplanning as part of a future Reserved Matters planning application to provide a permanent and robust settlement edge.
18. The Council's Sustainability Appraisal Report Submission Version Local Plan [SD 6.5] confirms that the exclusion of this land from the allocation is due to it being located within an area of flood risk. It should not be considered that the area's inclusion within the allocation site would be a precursor to its development for housing, rather the defining of a logical settlement boundary in accordance with sound planning principles would enable the land to be incorporated into the comprehensive development of the site.
19. Inclusion of the land within the allocation site enables its long term management as part of a future development site for open space, biodiversity enhancement or surface water mitigation in accordance within paragraph 9.73 of the Submission Local Plan [SD 1.1]; and its exclusion from the allocation site would appear to be inconsistent to this paragraph.
20. Progressing the allocation boundary as defined within the Submission Local Plan [SD 1.1] would effectively create a thin and illogical strip of Open Countryside to the south east of Site Allocation DSC1 to the west of Cecily Brook, which fails to utilise existing field boundaries or physical features.

**Q2.3 *Are all the policy requirements necessary and clear to the decision maker?***

16. Persimmon Homes does not have any comments in response to this question.

***Q2.4 Should the policy include a requirement for the phasing of the school site?***

17. The Company does not consider it necessary to make provision within the policy for the phasing of the school site, with it being considered that ensuring delivery of the school site is better secured via a s106 agreement attached to any planning permission.

18. Such a position is consistent with similar schemes that Persimmon Homes have progressed elsewhere with Staffordshire County Council.

19. Further, the Company would not be supportive of the phasing of Site DSC1 interlinked to the delivery of the school given any new primary school would serve the wider needs of Cheadle and not solely the education needs of those homes on Site DSC1. To place any phasing mechanism on the Site, whilst allowing other sites to come forward would be unsound and only serve to constrain housing delivery on a deliverable housing site in Staffordshire Moorlands.

20. The Company supports the Council's position within the IDP which states that in recognising that new school places will likely be required prior to the build out of development, the intention is to front load funding by borrowing finances which would be recouped from developers once contributions are received. Such a position is considered to be proactive in seeking to ensure housing delivery and also the necessary infrastructure needed to support an increasing population.

21. It is therefore not considered appropriate, having regard to the NPPF's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing to place further barriers to the delivery of the Site for housing.

***Q2.5 Is the site deliverable taking into account the lack of progress since its allocation in the Core Strategy and the requirement to deliver a primary school?***

22. The Company support the Cheadle North Strategic Development Area as a deliverable site having regard to the terms of footnotes 11 and 12 of the NPPF.
23. The site is subject to a pending hybrid planning application for up to 300 homes, a 1 form entry primary school with artificial grass sports pitch, local equipped area of play and associated open space (Application Ref: SMD/2018/0180); this application covering the full extent of the allocation site. It is presently expected that the application will be determined at the 25<sup>th</sup> October planning committee.
24. Having regard to the site's suitability for development, technical investigations undertaken as part of the above planning application have not identified any significant technical constraints which would encumber its ability to be developed in the Plan period.
25. It is considered that the lack of progress of the site since its allocation in the Core Strategy can be attributed in part to the lack of involvement of a developer with the financial capacity and experience of delivering schemes of such scale. The site is now controlled and being progressed by Persimmon Homes, who are committed and intend to develop the site for housing; as such it should be considered that the site is available.
26. Concerning the viability of the site and to support its delivery, we note that the Local Plan and Site Allocations Viability Study (SD 24.1) assumes that the developer will be compensated for the land identified for education by a commensurate reduction in the level of planning obligations and/or policy requirements from the site. This approach is supported and considered appropriate by the Company and both parties are presently in discussions to seek to agree an appropriate package of planning obligations as part of the pending planning application to ensure the viability of the site.
27. It is therefore considered that the site is deliverable and will achieve development early in the Plan period. The Company is supportive of the Council's housing trajectory for the site, as set out in SD 19.2b and are confident that the site will deliver new homes in accordance with this trajectory.