

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

EXAMINATION HEARINGS

Matter 4: The Housing Strategy

The Supply of Land for Housing

Statement by Jed Griffiths MA DipTP FRTPI

For Knebworth Parish Council

November 2017

The Overall Supply of Land for Housing

Knebworth Parish Council's objection to Policy SP8 is set out in their Regulation 19 submissions (Representation ID 288). As indicated in paragraph 4.1 of the Inspector's note, the total number of new dwellings to be delivered within the plan period would be 16,900 units – a supply some 6% above the requirement. The Parish Council notes that in the 2016 SHMA Update that 63 housing sites are to be provided in the Green Belt (12,733 dwellings).

In terms of sustainability, it is accepted that future housing development should be focused on the towns and larger villages. With the exception of Royston, the main towns are surrounded by Green Belt. The District Council argues therefore that Green Belt releases are inevitable but the extent of these releases is unacceptable – this point will be elaborated in the discussion on Matter 7.

The Inspector also notes that 4,340 dwellings are expected from completions, permissions, and "other allowances". Questions are posed as to how many dwellings have been completed since 2011, and how many planning permissions have yet to be implemented? The answers to these questions will have an effect on the overall figure for the supply of housing. The most recent development management suggest that the rate of housing development has been increasing.

The inclusion of windfall sites in the figures is supported. The figures included in the estimates, however, may be too low. There does not appear to have been an assessment by the Council of the likely scale of windfall development.

References to "broad locations" are too imprecise. Are these in the Green Belt? There is no justification for including these in the supply figures. It is suggested that, instead, the assumed contribution from windfall sites should be increased.

The Five Year Housing Land Supply

It is noted that the Council maintain that a five year land supply can be achieved, and that stepped approach to delivery should be adopted. This is a sensible approach, given the time periods necessary to complete developments on sites. The first five years of the Plan post-adoption will be a period of adjustment – there will be no guarantee that house builders will have the capacity to deliver at the higher rates during this early period. There will be a review of the Plan within five years, when there will an opportunity to take stock of completion rates and development activity.