

**RAPLEYS**

Prepared for  
**Bellcross Homes**

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

## HEARING STATEMENT

### MATTER 10 - HITCHIN (SITE HT1)

### LAND AT HIGHOVER FARM HITCHIN

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1 **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

This report has been prepared within the quality system operated at Rapleys LLP according to British Standard ISO 9001:2008.

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## **2 MATTER 10 - HITCHIN (SITE REFERENCE HT1)**

- 2.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Rapleys on behalf of Bellcross Homes (the site owner) in relation to the Emerging Local Plan 2011-2031.
- 2.2 Land at Highover Farm, Hitchin, herein referred to as “the site”, has been identified by North Hertfordshire District Council within their 2016 Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19 Publication) as strategic housing allocation for the provision of approximately 700 new homes (Site HT1). Both the Council and Bellcross Homes consider the site to be suitable and available for development within the first 10 years of the Plan period.
- 2.3 The Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) will set out those matters which have been agreed between Bellcross Homes and the Council.
- 2.4 Since 2012, Bellcross Homes has proactively engaged and participated in the preparation of North Hertfordshire’s Local Plan which has through detailed assessment, resulted in the site being favourably considered as a strategic housing site in the Council’s 2016 Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19 Publication).
- 2.5 Since February 2016, Bellcross Homes has undertaken pre-application engagement with Council Planning Officers and other statutory/utility bodies, held two public exhibition events in June 2017 and engaged with the Design Review Panel to inform an outline planning application (with all matters reserved aside from access) for approximately 700 new homes. The final application submission to the Council is due by Easter 2018.
- 2.6 On this basis, at the time of writing, a draft SoCG is currently with the Council to assist in the forthcoming Examination in Public with the details of the site, a review of relevant surveys and reports that have been undertaken, phasing, build-out rates and details of infrastructure provision. A final SoCG is due to be submitted in advance of the Hearing Session on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018.
- 2.7 Although it is hoped that the SoCG with the Council will confirm that there are no substantial differences between the Council and Bellcross Homes, in the interim, Rapleys reserve the right to attend the Hearing Session on Matter 10 - Hitchin in respect of proposed site allocation HT1 in order to expand as necessary on our representations made to the Regulation 19 consultation and SoCG.