

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Examination in Public

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

As agreed between North Hertfordshire District Council
And Bellcross Homes
Concerning Strategic Allocation HT1 – Highover Farm,
Hitchin

November 2017

1. This is an agreed statement of common ground in relation to the identification of HT1 – Highover Farm Hitchin as a proposed strategic allocation within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan at Policy SP17. The purpose of this statement is to provide the Inspector with a summary of the areas of agreement for the matters to be examined during the Stage One hearing sessions scheduled for November and December 2017. It is anticipated that a further statement will be prepared to address the more detailed issues in relation to Matter 10, scheduled to be examined during February 2018.
2. This statement of Common Ground (SOCG) has been prepared by North Hertfordshire District Council and is submitted jointly with Rapleys on behalf of Bellcross Homes. Bellcross Homes own the site. This SOCG is the result of collaboration between the landowner and the Council. Both are committed to the implementation of the Highover Farm proposed strategic allocation. This statement is made without prejudice to the submission and determination of any planning application made for the allocation.

Policy SP17: HT1 – Highover Farm, Hitchin

3. All parties agree that the land identified within the proposed strategic allocation at HT1 on the proposals map is 'suitable, available and achievable' for development, meeting the criterion of effectiveness set out in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The site is able to deliver housing development in accordance with the aims of the Local Plan.
4. Highover Farm, along with all other proposed strategic allocations, has been the subject of a full planning assessment and Sustainability Appraisal process. This is set out in the Local Plan evidence base, and is summarised in the Housing and Green Belt Background Paper (HOU1) as updated by the Partial Update on Housing Monitoring and 5 Year Supply (ED3).
5. All parties consider that the allocation of Strategic Allocation HT1 Highover Farm for housing is an appropriate land use. The capacity of the site is approximately 700 dwellings, a neighbourhood retail centre and a primary school. All parties are committed to working together to bring forward an appropriate scheme.
6. The extent of the land in the control of the applicant is detailed at Appendix 1: Site Location Plan.

Masterplan

7. Bellcross Homes will provide a comprehensive masterplan to demonstrate the delivery of approximately 700 dwellings, neighbourhood retail centre and primary school across the strategic allocation in accordance with Policy SP17.

Timetable

8. All parties are in agreement with the indicative trajectory for housing delivery set out in ED3.
9. A planning application is expected to be submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council in early 2018. The indicative trajectory set out in ED3 assumes that the strategic allocation will start delivery dwellings in 2020.
10. As with any of the sites proposed to be removed from the Green Belt through the Local Plan, the trajectory will depend on the date of the adoption of the Plan. Based on the adoption of the Local Plan in 2018 it is anticipated that completions will commence in 2020 at 50 dwellings per annum. It is then anticipated that completions will increase to 100 dwellings per annum by 2021 and thereafter average 100 dwellings per annum until the site has been completed.
11. Retail facilities would be provided (serviced) within approximately 18 months of commencement of housebuilding with the primary school to be provided approximately two years later or as agreed by the education authority at the planning application stage.

Infrastructure

12. The provision of community and education facilities, where required, will be constructed as an integral part of the residential development. It is agreed that the key social infrastructure of neighbourhood level retail facilities providing approximately 500m² of A class floorspace and a primary school will be provided.

Utilities

13. Utility company plans show that the site is adjacent to strategic infrastructure and that all services (water, gas, electricity and telecommunications) are available. Utility capacity assessments show that any upgrades that are required to service the site can be achieved through reinforcement works commensurate with a scheme of this scale. It is not anticipated that utility provision will place a constraint upon delivery of the site.

Key Objectives and Principles

14. The objective is to deliver a sustainable, comprehensive urban extension to Hitchin which links with and complements the existing settlement pattern and provides for housing, social and recreational needs.

15. All parties support the provision of high quality and well thought out design within the strategic allocation to produce attractive places to live that strengthens the connection to the countryside through a network of green corridors and parks. Green infrastructure will be integral to the design of the scheme with the retention of the existing pond on site providing a focal point for green open space and connecting to green corridors which will permeate the development and link to the open countryside.
16. All parties are committed to providing an urban extension which provides strong connections to existing communities making use of existing connections via Highover Way and High Dane roads while respecting that principal access to the site will be achieved from Stotfold Road subject to suitable integration with the local highway network.

Affordable Housing

17. All parties are supportive of the provision of affordable housing as part of the development in accordance with Policy HS2: Affordable Housing.

Issues for Further Discussion

18. Bellway Homes contend that the provision of plots for self-build development should a consideration rather than a requirement of Policy SP17.
19. Bellway Homes would like to further discuss the phasing of the range of neighbourhood-level facilities and the phasing/delivery strategy for the development at the planning application stage.

Conclusion

20. The proposed Local Plan strategic allocation at HT1 Highover Farm constitutes an appropriate and deliverable urban extension to Hitchin which supports the vision and objectives of the plan. It would extend Hitchin to the north east and provide a significant contribution towards the housing needs of North Hertfordshire.

Declaration

The content of this document is agreed for the purposes of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination.

Signed on behalf of Bellway Homes:

Rapleys LLP

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Position:

Date: 15.11.2017

And

Signed on behalf of North Hertfordshire District Council

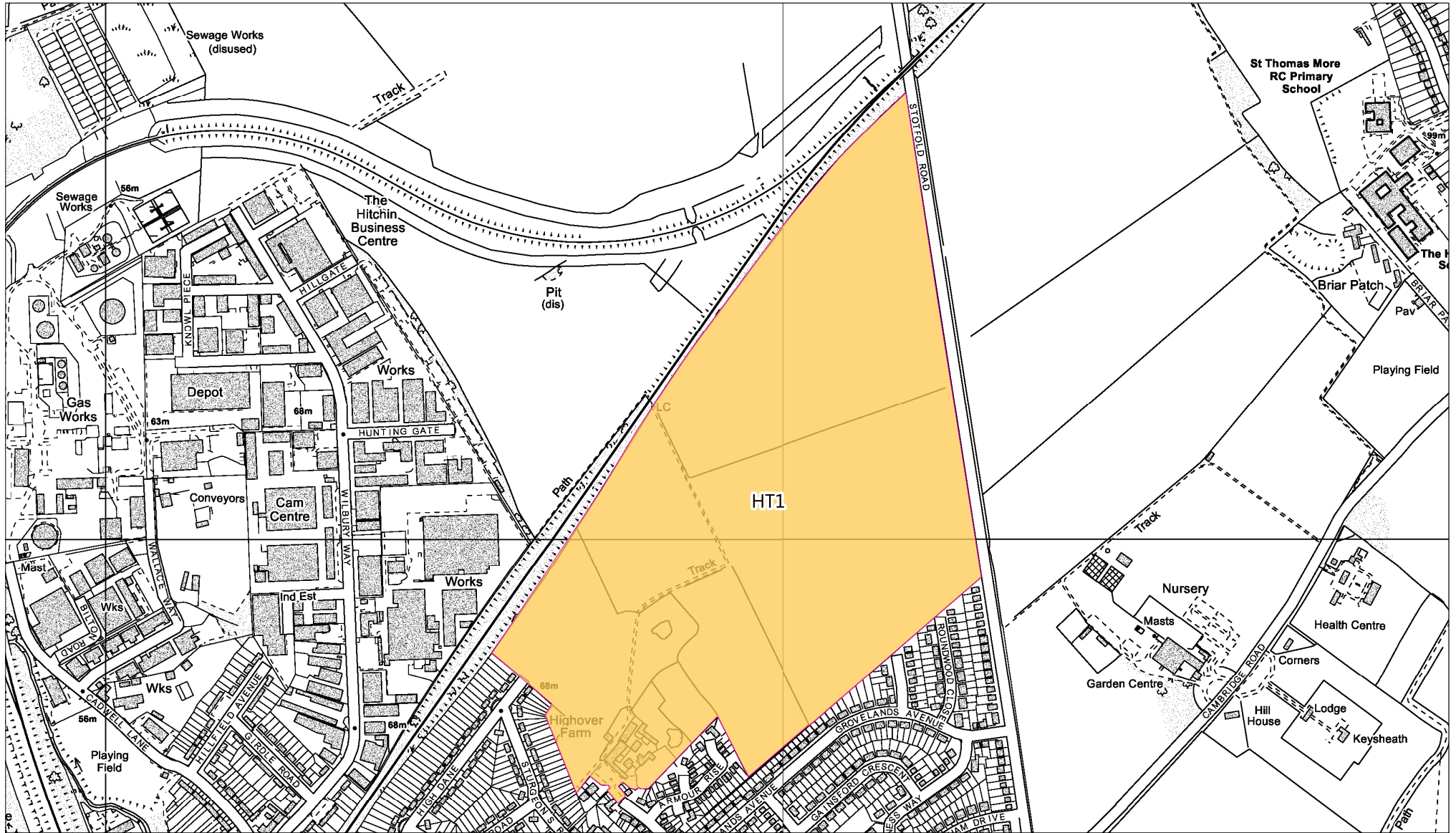
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. H. H.', written in a cursive style.

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Position: Executive Member for Planning and Enterprise

Date: 15.11.2017



Appendix 1 – Extent of Strategic Allocation HT1



Scale: 1:8000
Date: 14:11:17

