

Addendum to Agenda Item 6 – Land adjacent to Oaklea and South of Cowards Lane, Codicote, SG4 8UN Planning ref. 17/01464/1

On 8 September 2022, the Council received the Inspector's Final Report on the Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031. Receipt of the Inspector's Report marks the end of the examination.

The Inspector's Report concludes that subject to a number of main modifications, set out in the Appendix to the report, the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031 is sound, legally compliant and capable of adoption.

The Inspector's Report can be viewed on the Council's website.

With regards to decision making and determining planning applications this now means that the policies and site allocations within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (Emerging Local Plan) can be given very significant weight.

Please find highlighted below some of the paragraphs within the Inspector's Final Report which are particularly relevant to the above application.

- Paragraphs 58-69 refer to the housing requirement identified for meeting North Hertfordshire's housing need.
- Paragraphs 124 to 133 refer to the settlement hierarchy including "Settlements for Growth" of which there are five villages, including Codicote.
- Paragraphs 164 to 496 cover Issue 4: Whether the proposed housing allocations are justified, effective, consistent with national policy and positively prepared.
- Paragraphs 281 to 292 refer specifically to Codicote.

The application site is identified in the NHDC Submission Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (ELP) as an allocated housing site under Policy CD1 and the Emerging Local Plan proposes the whole site be removed from the Green Belt for development and incorporated within the settlement boundary of Codicote. Paragraph 281 refers specifically to the above site and reads as follows:

"281. Four allocations are proposed in Codicote, all of which are currently in the Green Belt. To the south of the village, Site CD1 is a field earmarked to deliver 73 dwellings. It is not large compared to many allocations proposed in the Plan, and while the homes on it will extend the village southwards, they would not run beyond the collection of buildings at Hollard's Farm. The Green Belt Review Update puts the harm to the Green Belt at moderate. In my view, given the size of the site and the relationship with the existing buildings here, it would be moderate at most. Indeed, it seems to me that the presence of Hollard's Farm would visually contain the new homes within the existing visual envelope of the village. This effect will help to ameliorate their impact on the Green Belt."

- Paragraphs 482 to 496 refer to exceptional circumstances.

Paragraph 486 to 487 refer to the consequences for sustainable development without impinging on the Green Belt and read as follows:

***“486. This Plan sets out to meet North Hertfordshire’s housing need in North Hertfordshire and provides new homes within the Luton HMA to help address Luton’s unmet need. It seeks to deliver the new homes needed on sites that are, for a rural district such as this, well located for shops, services and public transport. In short, the selected sites would provide desperately needed new homes in the places they are needed, and which are, overall, the most sustainable of the locations that have been shown to be deliverable/developable in relation to the number of houses required.*”**

487. Without impinging on the Green Belt, the consequences for sustainable development would be significant. This would involve either building new homes in considerably less sustainable locations – in all probability away from the areas where they are most needed – or not delivering them at all. The former would most likely lead to a significantly greater increase in use of the private car and could lead to the creation of communities that would be relatively isolated, particularly in terms of access to shops and services. The latter would deny many the opportunity to live in their own home close to their family, friends and work, and could stifle the local economy. To my mind, neither proposition would best, or even adequately, serve the achievement of sustainable development, particularly in respect of its economic and social dimensions.”

Paragraph 494 reads as follows:

“494. In my judgement, on balance, the latter considerations outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt. Consequently, I consider that the exceptional circumstances necessary to alter the Green Belt boundaries to facilitate the allocation of the housing sites concerned do exist both in principle and in each individual case. This aspect, therefore, should not stand in the way of their allocation.”

A verbal update will be provided at the committee meeting, as part of the officer’s presentation.