

HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

HEARING STATEMENT

MATTER 7 PROPOSED SITE ALLOCATIONS: ST NEOTS SPATIAL PLANNING AREA

ON BEHALF OF LINDEN HOMES STRATEGIC LAND

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Hearing Statement is prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Linden Homes Strategic Land, which is promoting land at Lodge Farm, Huntingdon, for development.

1.2 In previous representations Linden Homes Strategic Land has raised concerns about the projected delivery rates for the largest Strategic Expansion Locations. As such, **the comments in this hearing statement relates to allocations SEL.2 at St Neots East.**

2. Q11: What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

2.1 Linden Homes Strategic Land does not consider that the projected rate or timescale of development at the SEL is reliable and as such, the Local Plan is **not effective** and **not positively prepared**.

2.2 The Housing Trajectory projects completions at the St Neots East SEL commencing in monitoring year 2018/2019. The site is subject to a pending planning application (reference 17/02308/OUT) which benefits from a Resolution to Grant planning permission however is awaiting successful completion of the Section 106 agreement. Although the application is made in hybrid form, no housing is included within the full element of any eventual permission, meaning that a separate Reserved Matters application will be needed in due course. Taking into account the likely time needed to conclude the S106 agreement, undertake any necessary land transactions (such as sale to a housebuilder) secure Reserved Matters approval, discharge all necessary pre-commencement conditions (including comprehensive archaeological investigation), start on site and complete the first unit, it is improbable that 25 units will be completed during 2018/19. At best, one might expect a start on site in 2019/20 however given the size and complexity of the site, commencement could yet be further delayed into 2020/21.

2.3 Furthermore, the delivery assumptions set out within the Trajectory are considered highly optimistic. For St Neots SEL, the Housing Trajectory projects up to 250 completions per annum from 2021/22. Given that there is a strong

possibility that development will not get underway until 2020/21, it is unlikely that completions could reach this kind of pace from a 'standing start'.

2.4 As set out in our Regulation 19 representations, experience shows that large development sites simply do not deliver at this kind of rate over any sustained period. Three local examples include:

- Cambourne in South Cambs will, upon completion in 2019/20, have achieved an average delivery of 206 dwellings per annum over 21 years;
- Hamptons in Peterborough has achieved an average delivery of 228 dwellings per annum over 19 years;
- Loves Farm in St Neots has achieved an average delivery of 143 dwellings per annum over ten years.

2.5 Furthermore, an extensive study undertaken by Lichfields in November 2016 covering a significant number of sites across the country, has found that average delivery rates on large sites are generally around 170 dwellings per annum.

2.6 In light of these observed delivery rates, and the approaches taken in other recent Local Plans (such as the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan), it is considered that a maximum of **200 dwellings per annum** should be allowed for at St Neots East SEL within the Housing Trajectory. Even this figure is considered optimistic and further flexibility in the Plan should be provided, in order to minimise the potential impact of any shortfall in delivery.

2.7 This figure of 200 dwellings per annum is lower than the maximum we have suggested is likely at Alconbury SEL (see Matter 6 statement). This is in light of the delivery rates observed at the nearby Loves Farm, and the projected delivery rates of 185 dwellings per annum at Loves Farm East. Given the potential for market saturation combined with Loves Farm East, it is considered that a more conservative approach should be taken.