

## **Examination of the North Essex Authorities' Section 1 Plan**

### **Andrewsfield New Settlement Consortium**

#### **Matter 8: The Proposed New Garden Communities – specific matters**

##### **(Policy SP10)**

**Question 30: What evidence is there to demonstrate that the West of Braintree proposed garden community is capable of delivering a total of 7,000 to 10,000 dwellings ?**

**Answer 30:** An extensive and robust evidence base has been prepared by Braintree District Council (BDC) to identify suitable, available and achievable land to deliver a total of 7,000 to 10,000 dwellings at the WBGC. The BDC evidence base is supplemented by the detailed site specific technical evidence base, development vision and master plan prepared and submitted by GL Hearn on behalf of the Andrewsfield New Settlement Consortium (ANSC) identifying land for development for at least 7,500 new dwellings. Additional land controlled by Galliard Homes, immediately to the west of the ANSC land, can also deliver new homes such that the total of 7,000 to 10,000 dwellings is achievable and deliverable.

The West of Braintree concept framework prepared by AECOM (EB/012) on behalf of the North Essex Authorities provides a comprehensive assessment of opportunities and constraints to development at the WBGC. The concept framework provides three options providing for between 7,900 and 9,300 dwellings, and also sets out the extent of infrastructure that will be required to support the development. Whilst there are some constraints to development of land to the west of Braintree, the constraints are relatively limited and can be mitigated through the master planning process, for example to retain landscape buffers and woodland and by maintaining separation between new development and heritage assets.

The development vision and master plan prepared by GL Hearn on behalf of ANSC identifies potential development land parcels, together with a network of green and blue infrastructure. The master plan identifies potential for at least 7,500 dwellings (at 35 dwellings per hectares) within land controlled by ANSC, and which could be exceeded depending on a number of factors including potential inclusions of the south-eastern and eastern parts of the site for housing and/ or increased net site densities within parts of the site.

**Question 31: Why were those figures reduced from the earlier figures of 10,000 to 13,000 dwellings which appeared in the Preferred Options Plan (June 2016) ?**

**Answer 31:** BDC has refined the number of dwellings to be provided at the WBGC following an extensive evidence base and concept framework plan option testing. The provision of 7,000 to 10,000 dwellings would be achievable and deliverable within Braintree District alone, without the WBGC being extended in to Uttlesford. Should Uttlesford District Council reach a decision to include land within Uttlesford as an additional component of the WBGC then this will clearly increase the number of dwellings at the WBGC across the two Districts above 10,000 dwellings. As stated in our response to Question 30, a total of 7,000 to 10,000 dwellings represents a robust basis for the strategic allocation of land at the WBGC within Braintree District.

**Question 32: Should the West of Braintree proposed garden community be extended to include adjacent land in the Uttlesford District Council area ?**

**Answer A32:** It would be logical and would represent a sustainable approach to planning to extend the WBGC to include adjacent land in Uttlesford District. Notably, national planning policy is particularly supportive of the inclusion of the previously developed land at Andrewsfield (a former World War II airfield) as part of the WBGC.

The development vision and master plan submitted by GL Hearn on behalf of ANSC towards both the Braintree and Uttlesford call for sites and Local Plan consultations (and towards the Reg. 19 Braintree Local Plan) has consistently identified land within Uttlesford District that could suitably also be allocated as part of the WBGC. Nevertheless, ANSC submits that the WBGC could quite reasonably proceed within Braintree District alone.

**Question 33: If so, what arrangements have been made for joint working between Braintree and Uttlesford District Councils to deliver the proposed garden community ?**

**Answer 33:** There has been a longstanding and ongoing dialogue and co-operation between Braintree and Uttlesford District relating to the WBGC. Most recently, the two authorities have jointly published for consultation the WBGC Issues and Options document, which identifies Option 1 as a combined area of search for the WBGC in both Braintree and Uttlesford Districts.

ANSC, together with GL Hearn and Capita Land Planning, have attended a series of meetings with Uttlesford District Council, including with parish councils local to the WBGC, and also with Officers from both Uttlesford and Braintree in attendance.

It is understood that Officers from Braintree and Uttlesford Councils have been continuing to work jointly to consider and progress the potential delivery of the WBGC within both Districts.

**Question 34: What are the implications of any requirement for prior mineral extraction on the timescale for development at the West of Braintree proposed garden community ?**

**Answer 34:** The extraction of minerals at Broadfield Farm, Dunmow Road, Rayne, will not impact on the timescales for development at the WBGC. The minerals extraction scheme is scheduled to conclude within a 12 year time period, with a current planning application due for determination shortly. It is envisaged that development of new homes within the south-eastern part of the WBGC (within the minerals extraction site), will represent the final phase of development of the WBGC, and as such will be delivered way beyond the Plan period of 2033. It is expected that a flagship restoration scheme will be implemented at the minerals extraction site, designed to facilitate and deliver the latter stages of the WBGC which may include residential, and / or conservation assets, recreation areas and water based activities.

**Question 35: What are the implications of the West of Braintree proposed garden community for the future of Saling Airfield (Andrewsfield) ?**

**Answer 35:** The implications of the WBGC for the future of Saling Airfield are dependent on the further master planning to be carried out as part of the WBGC strategic growth Development Plan Document, as well as the decision to be taken by Uttlesford Council whether or not to include land within Uttlesford District as part of the WBGC.

The development vision and master plan for the WBGC prepared by GL Hearn on behalf of ANSC identifies potential for development at Saling Airfield within both Braintree and Uttlesford Districts, and land is available, suitable and achievable for development in this area. Similarly, concept plans prepared by AECOM on behalf of the North Essex Authorities have shown options that include development at the airfield.

Should development proceed at Saling Airfield then the Saling Airfield would close. The current lease to Saling Airfield would not be renewed, and there are break clauses in the lease that could be triggered to allow for development of the land.

**Question 36: How have any impacts from flight paths to and from Stansted airport on the West of Braintree proposed garden community been considered ?**

**Answer 36:** The flight paths to and from Stansted do not impact on the WBGC and BDC has fully considered this matter through the evidence base.

**Question 37: Should policy SP10 refer to the need for an all-directions junction between the A120 and B1256/B1417 ?**

**Answer 37:** It is submitted that, for the purpose of the Joint Strategic (Section 1) Plan, policy SP10 should refer only to the WBGC being accessible via the A120 and B1256. The potential need for all-direction access from the site, via the B1256, to the A120 can be appropriately tested and defined through the master planning and the WBGC Strategic Growth Development Plan Document. It is clear at this stage that there is land available to secure new means of access to the A120 from the B1256 in both easterly and westerly directions serving the WBGC.