



Historic England

Examination of the Braintree Local Plan

Main Matter 6: A Prosperous District – Homes – Strategic Growth Location 1

Policy LPP 18 Strategic Growth Location - Land East of Great Notley, south of Braintree

- Are the above policies and site allocations justified by appropriate available evidence, having regard to national guidance, and local context, including the meeting the requirements of the BLP SECTION 1?
- Do policies LPP 18 to LPP 20 provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal in relation to these allocations?

Historic England, Hearing Statement

June 2021

Historic England is the principal Government adviser on the historic environment, advising it on planning and listed building consent applications, appeals and other matters generally affecting the historic environment. Historic England is consulted on Local Development Plans under the provisions of the duty to co-operate and provides advice to ensure that legislation and national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework are thereby reflected in local planning policy and practice.

The tests of soundness require that Local Development Plans should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Historic England's representations on the Publication Draft Local Plan are made in the context of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") in relation to the historic environment as a component of sustainable development.

Introduction

1.1. This statement addresses the Inspector's questions with regards Main Matter 6: A Prosperous District – Homes – Strategic Growth Location 1 as they relate to Policy LPP 18 Strategic Growth Location - Land East of Great Notley, south of Braintree, and should be read alongside Historic England's comments submitted at previous consultation stages of the Local Plan.

Main Matter 6

A Prosperous District – Homes – Strategic Growth Locations 1

Policy LPP 18 Strategic Growth Location - Land East of Great Notley, south of Braintree

- **Are the above policies and site allocations justified by appropriate available evidence, having regard to national guidance, and local context, including the meeting the requirements of the BLP SECTION 1?**
- **Do policies LPP 18 to LPP 20 provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal in relation to these allocations?**

2.1. Historic England (HE) considers that the allocation of LPP 18 (as currently drafted) is not justified, is not consistent with national policy, is not effective, and is therefore not sound.

2.2. This allocation affects a number of designated heritage assets. The site contains seven designated heritage assets, including the Grade II Hayeswood Farm complex and the Grade II* Card's Farmhouse, and is surrounded by eighteen other designated heritage assets (all Grade II listed).

2.3. Given the sensitive nature of the site, Historic England advised that a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) would be required prior to allocation to assess its suitability, and to inform its extent and capacity. We are therefore pleased that a final draft HIA has now been shared with us.

2.4. The study concluded that while development of the site has the potential to cause substantial harm to the settings of a number of listed buildings, particularly the Grade II Hayeswood Farm complex and the Grade II* Card's Farmhouse, that that these issues may be capable of being addressed via the provision of green open space and amenity space within the eastern section of the development site, serving the new development, especially along the southern boundary with Baker's Lane and around Hayeswood Farm. Parkland and green open space would mimic the existing open agrarian setting of the listed buildings and would preserve their settings. This could maintain and improve upon the existing hedgerows and pockets of woodland. More formal recreational space such as sports pitches would be not suitable as they would be overly municipal in character.

2.5. This would substantially reduce the potential adverse impacts of the Site and would help to avoid the most serious harm to the settings of the majority of the listed buildings forming the wider historic settlement of Black Notley.

2.6. Although development of LPP 18 *could* be acceptable, our acceptance of the principle of development is predicated on the provision of appropriate mitigation as outlined in the Council's HIA. At the time of writing (15th June 2021) the Council has yet to commit to these recommendations. Indeed, following a review of an earlier draft of the HIA which recommended the deletion of the eastern section of the site HE asked the Council whether it would be willing to amend the development boundary to accommodate the recommendations of the HIA. The Council responded that it would be unlikely to make any changes as the site pre-application is 'fairly well advanced'. Following receipt of this latest HIA HE again asked whether the Council would be willing to commit to the recommended mitigation, but the Council has yet to respond. This gives little confidence that the site will be developed in a way that conserves and enhances the historic environment as required by NPPF paragraph 185. On this basis we find that LPP 18 is not (currently) consistent with National policy.

2.7. Moreover, as currently drafted we consider that LPP 18 is not effective as it is not clear how would-be developers should respond to the heritage issues identified by the HIA. Planning Practice Guidance states 'Where sites are proposed for allocation, sufficient detail should be given to provide clarity to developers, local communities and other interested parties about the nature and scale of development' (PPG Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 61-002-20190315 Revision date: 15 03 2019).

2.8. Therefore, if a site is allocated which affects heritage assets (as is the case with LPP 18), we would expect to see reference in the ensuing policies and supporting text on the need to conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the on-site or nearby heritage assets and their setting, the need for high quality design and any other factors relevant to the historic environment and the site in question. Such development criteria will assist decision makers and developers, as well as ensuring appropriate protection for heritage assets.

2.9. In order that this allocation can be considered sound we would expect a commitment from the Council that they are willing to accept and take on board the conclusions and recommendations of their HIA, and that LPP 18 be amended to include a specific criterion relating to these in order that the allocation is consistent with national planning policy, and is effective.