

Dacorum Borough Council

Local Planning Framework

DACORUM CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

Statement of Common Ground as agreed between

Dacorum Borough Council and Cala Homes (Representor Number 494131)

in respect of Local Allocation LA5 Land at Icknield Way, West of Tring and:

Representations 771 - 779 from Cala Homes

August 2012

Purpose of this statement

The purpose of this statement is to inform the Inspector and other parties about the areas of agreement between Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) and land owning interests expressed by Cala Homes in relation to matters relating to the Pre-Submission Core Strategy.

Background

The Council and Cala Homes have met several times to discuss how Local Allocation LA5 can and should be delivered. Joint discussion and agreement has covered technical work and future consultation concerning the Core Strategy and planning process. The evidence base has been extended where appropriate.

The first statement which follows relates to Local Allocation LA5. It is in two parts:

- (A) A joint statement explains the local allocation and discusses its deliverability.
- (B) Representations from Cala Homes are then discussed: i.e. Representation 778 to Local Allocation LA5 and related Representations 776 and 777.

The second statement refers to representations on other matters.

Agreed Matters: (1) Local Allocation LA5

(A) Joint Statement

JOINT STATEMENT Introduction

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Joint Statement has been prepared by CALA Homes Ltd and Dacorum Borough Council. It provides a short summary to assist the Inspector and members of the public in understanding how Local Allocation (LA5) at Tring is an appropriate and deliverable proposal.

JOINT STATEMENT Site Description

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Local Allocation LA5 lies immediately to the west of Tring, within the administrative district of Dacorum Borough Council. The area is bounded by Icknield Way (B488) to the north; Aylesbury Road (B4635) to the south; and housing to the east. This area is referred to as 'the site' in this statement.

- 2.2 The western side of the site is predominantly arable land and the eastern side is grassland.
- 2.3 Tring cemetery is located on the edge of the site's south-eastern boundary.
- 2.4 The site measures 17.6 ha in size and comprises six fields, including one large paddock (Field F1), two small paddocks (Fields F2 and F6) and three medium sized arable fields (Fields F3, F4 and F5). Fields 1 to 5 have no built structures within them. Field F6 contains a small single storey storage building and a series of sheds and shelters associated with its paddock use. The fields are divided by hedgerows and tree belts of varying condition.
- 2.5 The western part of the site (fields F4 & F5) (7.9 ha) fall within the Chilterns AONB, which it is accepted will remain open and undeveloped. The remainder of the site is considered to have development potential (9.7 ha).
- 2.6 The site slopes southward towards Aylesbury Road, and westward, and is dissected by 2 public footpaths running towards Beeches Farm.

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JOINT STATEMENT Land Control

3.0 LAND CONTROL

3.1 The site is sub-divided into four ownerships. CALA Homes currently owns 9.9 ha, with the remainder being secured under option agreements with the Sallery Will Trust, Drayton Beauchamp Parochial Charities and the Rowe Family.

3.2 Consequently, CALA Homes have control over all the land between Icknield Way and Aylesbury Road.

JOINT STATEMENT Proposal LA5

4.0 PROPOSAL LA5

4.1 The Council's emerging Core Strategy (June 2009) suggested a number of potential locations for growth as part of the draft '*Place Strategies'*. Further consultation on potential sites has followed through the draft Core Strategy in November 2010 and through the Pre-Submission Core Strategy in October 2011.

- 4.2 The Council have prepared an 'Assessment of Potential Local Allocations and Strategic Sites' (June 2012) (Examination Document HG15), which considers various sites outside of existing urban areas, referred to as 'Local Allocations'. The role of the assessment is to consider the relative merits of a range of site options, focussing on the locational traits of these sites and indicating broad locations, or directions of growth.
- 4.3 The results of the assessment have been used by the Council to inform the Core Strategy, in particular the choice of Local Allocations. It was concluded that, if development was properly planned, the impact on the compact character of the town and the Green Belt would be limited (ref pp 104/5 HG15).
- 4.4 The land to the west of Tring was assessed during the emerging Core Strategy consultation (June 2009) and the land was subsequently allocated under Policy LA5 in Pre-Submission Core Strategy (Oct, 2011), which states:

"Around 150 new homes. Playing fields and open space. Extension to the employment area in Icknield Way Industrial Estate. Potential extension to the cemetery."

JOINT STATEMENT Access and Movement

5.0 ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

5.1 The development of the site has been discussed between Transport Planning Associates (TPA) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), as the highway authority for the borough.

- 5.2 Following an initial site visit by TPA, and liaison with HCC, it is considered that access to the site can be taken from either Aylesbury Road or Icknield Way, to serve future development.
- 5.3 Two access options are feasible and deliverable:
 - Access via Aylesbury Road; or
 - Access via Icknield Way (see Map 1).
- 5.4 Each, or either, access would involve a ghost island right-turn lane priority junction.
- 5.5 A further possibility is a vehicular route through the site, either for vehicles, or buses only (if the existing services were re-routed).
- 5.6 An access strategy will be developed to encourage more sustainable travel patterns and will be designed with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users ahead of the private car.
- 5.7 Key pedestrian/cycle routes can be provided north-south and east-west through the site in the form of three metre wide combined footway/cycleways. The north-south link would follow the route of the existing public right of way. An east-west link can be provided along the Icknield Way frontage and would link to the existing facilities at the Tring Hill roundabout and Icknield Way industrial estate, as suggested in the Dacorum Cycling Strategy (Examination Document TR3 p11). An additional pedestrian/cycle route would provide a connection to Highfield Road from the north-south link.
- 5.8 The site is approximately 1.6 km west of the town centre (a 20 minute walk or 5 minute cycle). Bus stops are located on the Aylesbury Road frontage and are served by the No.50, 61, 164, 500 and 501 services providing access to Tring town centre and further afield Luton, Luton Airport, Leighton Buzzard, Ivinghoe and Hemel Hempstead, providing approximately four services per hour. Easy access by cycle or on foot will be available to the Icknield Way General Employment Area.

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JOINT STATEMENT Access and Movement

5.9 It is suggested that the local highway authority review existing speed limits to reflect the potential residential frontage and extension of the urban area. This could involve extending the 30 mph speed limit on Aylesbury Road and the 40 mph speed limit on Icknield Way further east towards the Tring Hill roundabout.

JOINT STATEMENT Archaeology

6.0 ARCHAEOLOGY

6.1 Advice has been taken from Hertfordshire County Council's Archaeology Team on the potential for the presence of archaeology on the site. The County Archaeologist has advised that there is a potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, which may be worthy of preservation.

6.2 Given the proximity of the southern section of the site to Aylesbury Road, which is a Roman Road, an archaeological assessment would be undertaken as a prerequisite to a Master Plan and future planning application on the site. Assessment would evaluate whether there was any constraint on layout and whether any specific mitigation measures would be required to be undertaken before development can commence on site.

JOINT STATEMENT Ecology

7.0 ECOLOGY

7.1 Ecology Solutions Ltd undertook a walkover survey of the site in June, 2012, to identify any potential ecological constraints to future development on the land.

- 7.2 The majority of the site (60-70%) is arable land and of limited ecological value. Eastern areas are improved grasslands, some of which are intensively grazed by horses. This area also offers little botanical interest.
- 7.3 Of most value are the hedgerows, many of which are species-rich. Some could qualify as being ecologically important under the Hedgerow Regulations on account of their botanical diversity.
- 7.4 The Tring Vision Diagram and Urban Nature Conservation Study, 2006 (UNCS) identifies a number of wildlife corridors and spaces and green gateways throughout the settlement, including land to the west of Tring, within the AONB.
- 7.5 Investigation will be undertaken for species including:
 - Hazel Dormouse surveys to identify whether they are present within the site; and
 - A series of bat activity surveys to identify the level of any activity and any features within the site, which are of importance to bats.
- 7.6 No obvious activity of badgers was recorded, indicating that the site is not likely to be important for this species.
- 7.7 If protected species are found to be utilising the site, appropriate mitigation would be incorporated into any forthcoming planning application such that there would be no adverse impacts.
- 7.8 The creation of new habitats would be sought where possible: for example, areas of open space could be over-seeded with a wild flower seed mix and any drainage attenuation pond could also be designed to provide wetland habitats currently not present within the site.

8.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken by Barton Willmore (Examination Document JS12). This is a systematic appraisal which considers the site's contribution to the landscape and potential effects of development. The appraisal will be extended as development proposals become more detailed, for example, with a Night-time Lighting Assessment. There will also be further consultation as the landscape strategy develops.

Site Appraisal

- 8.2 Existing hedgerows and trees positively contribute to landscape character, and provide an established field pattern. The landscape character of the site is, however, adversely affected by detracting elements, including the roundabout, traffic and urban edge of Tring. The LVIA recommends measures to benefit the landscape: i.e. to
 - Retain and enhance all field boundary hedgerows and provide additional native tree planting to hedgerows along the B488 and the B4635;
 - Enhance hedgerows with additional native hedgerow shrub and tree species
 - Improve the landscape in the vicinity of the B488 / B4009 roundabout (through native tree and wildflower planting): this will filter views towards the roundabout and improve the wildlife links across the Site;
 - Enhance the sense of enclosure along the B4635 by retaining existing tree belts and providing additional native hedgerow planting with trees.
- 8.3 The LVIA also responds to the Green Infrastructure aspirations of the Tring Place Strategy by proposing to enhance the setting of the Green Gateway to the west (at the junction of the B488 and the B4009) and improve the existing wildlife corridors on the Site.

Visual Appraisals

8.4 Open and partial near distance views of the site are possible from the urban edge of Tring and from the public rights of ways and roads which abut the site boundaries and pass through the site. The overall visual sensitivity of the site is assessed as being

'moderate' due to the extent of its visibility in the context of the wider undulating wooded landscape associated with the AONB; the number of places that the site can be seen; and the scope for mitigating the potential visual impacts on these places.

- 8.5 Development will affect landscape character and various recommendations are put forward to help assimilate change and ensure that the significance of effects on site features, character and visual receptors is reduced:
 - Respond to the opportunity to re-define the western urban edge of Tring by extending the existing settlement boundary into Fields F1, F2 and F3 whilst providing an appropriate open space buffer to existing residential properties immediately adjacent to the Site.
 - Enhance hedgerow(s) to provide a new boundary to the Green Belt.
 - Provide an appropriate open space buffer and positive frontage onto the hedgerows from the extended urban edge.
 - Retain and manage existing tree belts and which provide the basis for a strong field pattern and Green Infrastructure network within the Site.
 - Provide native tree planting along the Site's boundaries with the B488 and B4635 within the existing graded verges and within the western most corner of Field F5 so as to enhance the character of the local minor roads and to screen views towards the detracting transport elements associated with the A41.
 - Strengthen the sense of arrival in approaching the site from the west; and
 - Identify opportunities to provide additional multi-functional green corridors with native planting for wildlife benefit through the site.

JOINT STATEMENT Utilities and Services

9.0 UTILITIES AND SERVICES

9.1 There is no known utilities infrastructure on, under or over the site that might otherwise constrain development. All utilities are available in the vicinity of the site and can be extended to serve the proposed development. The current position is summarised below.

Electric - UKPN (EPN):

- 9.2 Aylesbury Road LV cables (some on overhead poles), there are notes that there are private LV cables in the verge areas, these are assumed to be highway lighting. If vehicular access is from Aylesbury Road then it is likely the existing LV will need diverting/ undergrounding.
- 9.3 Tring Hill Roundabout HV cable across roundabout there is also some LV underground. There is also a Pad mounted transformer just to the north of the roundabout (probably just serving street lighting and any local properties). Diversions are not anticipated.
- 9.4 Icknield Way some local overhead LV around the back of the farm buildings (might also be some LV for street lighting along the highway).
- 9.5 East of site HV and 2 substations on the boundary serving the industrial units (there are also other substations within the industrial site). The proposed layout will need to be mindful of the location of housing to the existing substations. If they are open air type substations new development need to be at least 9m away.

Water - Thames Water:

- 9.6 **Aylesbury Road** A 4" main stops short to the east of the site, hence diversions not anticipated.
- 9.7 **Tring Hill Roundabout** 150mm main crosses the north section of the roundabout, hence diversions not anticipated.
- 9.8 **Icknield Way** -6" main located in the verge and carriageway. This main may be affected if access is proposed where the main is in the verge area.

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JOINT STATEMENT Utilities and Services

9.9 **East of site** – a 6" main is routed through the industrial estate and Okeley Lane. Diversions not anticipated.

Gas - SGN:

- 9.10 **Aylesbury Road** A 3" low pressure (LP) main stops short to the east of the site, hence diversions not anticipated.
- 9.11 **Tring Hill Roundabout** no plant in the area.
- 9.12 **Icknield Way** 180mm PE Medium Pressure (MP) main located in the verge on the opposite side of the road. Diversion of this is not anticipated as long as proposed development does not extend to the area of the main (i.e. new roundabout).
- 9.13 **East of site** the MP main extends into the industrial estate and there is a 4" SI LP main in Okeley Lane. Diversions not anticipated.

Telecommunications - BT:

- 9.14 **Aylesbury Road** There is a duct and chamber route in the verge and carriageway on the opposite side of the road. There are some ducts on the site side of the road which may require some alteration depending on the proposals for this area.
- 9.15 Tring Hill Roundabout There are various ducts and chambers crossing the roundabout so any works in this area may involve significant diversions although this is not anticipated.
- 9.16 **Icknield Way** ducts and overhead plant on the opposite side of the road to the site, diversion would be dependent on the access arrangements.
- 9.17 **Existing broadband** speeds in the adjacent residential area are around 8.0 mb. There is no fibre at present but this may be investigated in due course.

Foul drainage:

9.18 Tring is served by its own waste water treatment works, to which upgrading works were carried out in 2011, with further improvements underway. Sewers are available in all

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JOINT STATEMENT Utilities and Services

adjoining roads, although it is expected that the network capacity will need some upgrading. Due to topography, drainage is likely to be taken to the south (Aylesbury Road). Further capacity investigations will be required prior to development.

Surface water:

9.19 Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) will be incorporated into the development so that no off site drainage should be required.

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10.0 MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

- 10.1 The starting point for a masterplan framework is:
 - The recommendations of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; and
 - The Core Strategy's development principles for the site, to include the provision of a mix of two-storey housing, which is designed to create a soft edge with the AONB, and to secure a defendable long-term Green Belt boundary; and
- 10.2 The following design principles are suggested:
 - Extend the existing settlement boundary into Fields F1, F2 and F3 to re-define the western urban edge of Tring;
 - Create a defensible boundary to the Green Belt by enhancing existing hedgerows;
 - Maintain a Green Gateway into the settlement.
 - Retain and manage existing tree belts and which provide the basis for a strong field pattern and Green Infrastructure network within the site.
 - Provide native tree planting along the site's boundaries with the B488 and B4635 within the existing graded verges and within the western most corner of Field F5 so as to enhance the character of the local roads and to screen views towards the detracting transport elements associated with the A41.
 - Provide a range of habitats throughout the open space areas and appropriate wildlife buffers adjacent to existing retained landscape features;
 - Maintain and enhance existing wildlife corridors within the site and create new habitats;
 - Provide a sensitive relationship with surrounding farms and residential properties.
 - Mitigate the impact on the local road networks through the promotion of sustainable travel options, including good pedestrian links with Highfield Road and Akeman Street.

• Seek opportunities to create views outward from the site when designing the layout.

- 10.3 A Landscape Development Principles Plan has been produced (Figure 4 of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and attached as Map 2). This identifies the main landscape opportunities and constraints which will inform the master plan as part of the iterative process of assessing the effects of the Proposed Development.
- 10.4 The master plan will take forward and respond to the relevant issues (e.g. access, integration with the town, landscape assimilation and layout principles). There will be engagement with local people and other appropriate stakeholders, such as the local highway authorities, Aylesbury Vale District Council and parish councils.

JOINT STATEMENT Delivery

11.0 DELIVERY

11.1 The site is under the control of CALA Homes who are willing to make the site available for development immediately.

11.2 There are no known technical constraints that would delay the start of development. CALA Homes estimate that the first house completions could be achieved within 12 - 18 months of the grant of planning permission, and could deliver over a 3 year period from then.

JOINT STATEMENT Conclusion

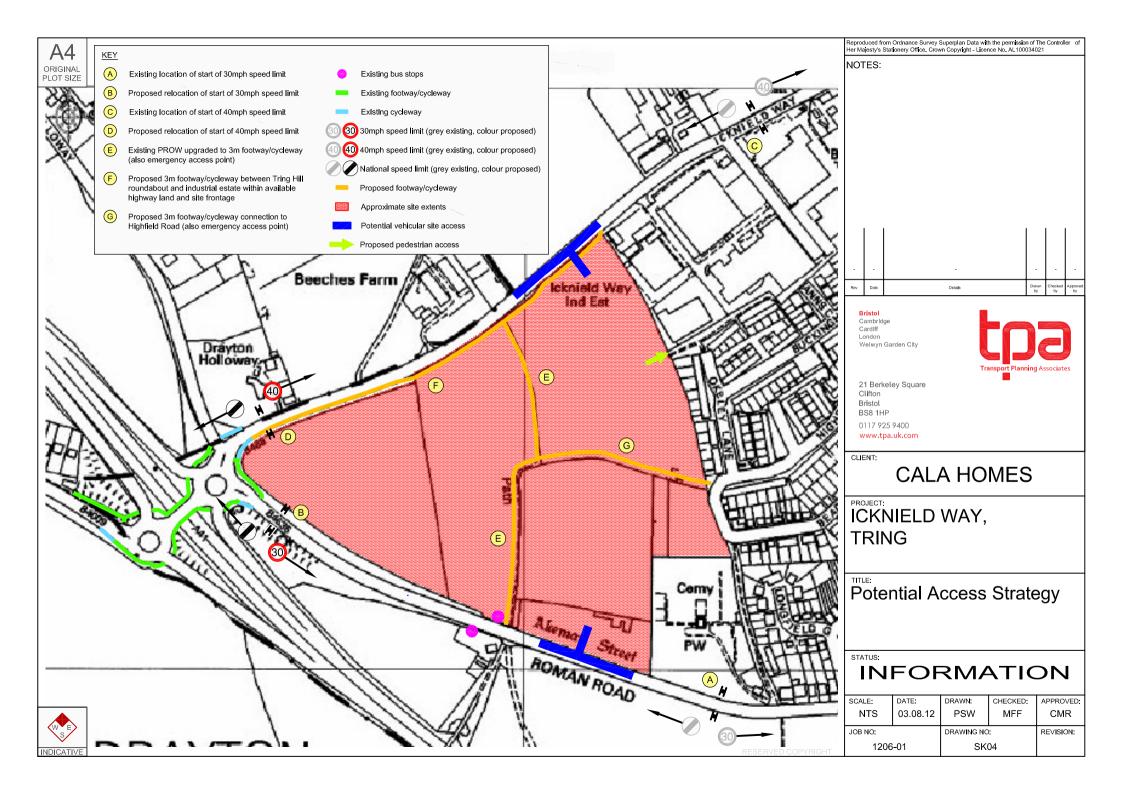
12.0 CONCLUSION

12.1 The allocation of the site would provide for an appropriate extension of Tring, respecting the compact character of the town and its environment. Development would relate well to the existing settlement and the site is close to the main employment area and local centre. The effect on the Green Belt would be limited.

- 12.2 The allocation would support the emerging strategy for Tring and is suitable for the range of uses suggested in Proposal LA5: i.e.
 - New homes of mixed types and tenure, and the potential for a small extension to General Employment Area.
 - New open space and cemetery extension.
 - The retention of the green gateway to the west and
 - Ecological enhancement
- 12.3 There would be an impact on the landscape, but the combined effect of the mitigation measures and benefits of the development would outweigh that. Built development would not extend into the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

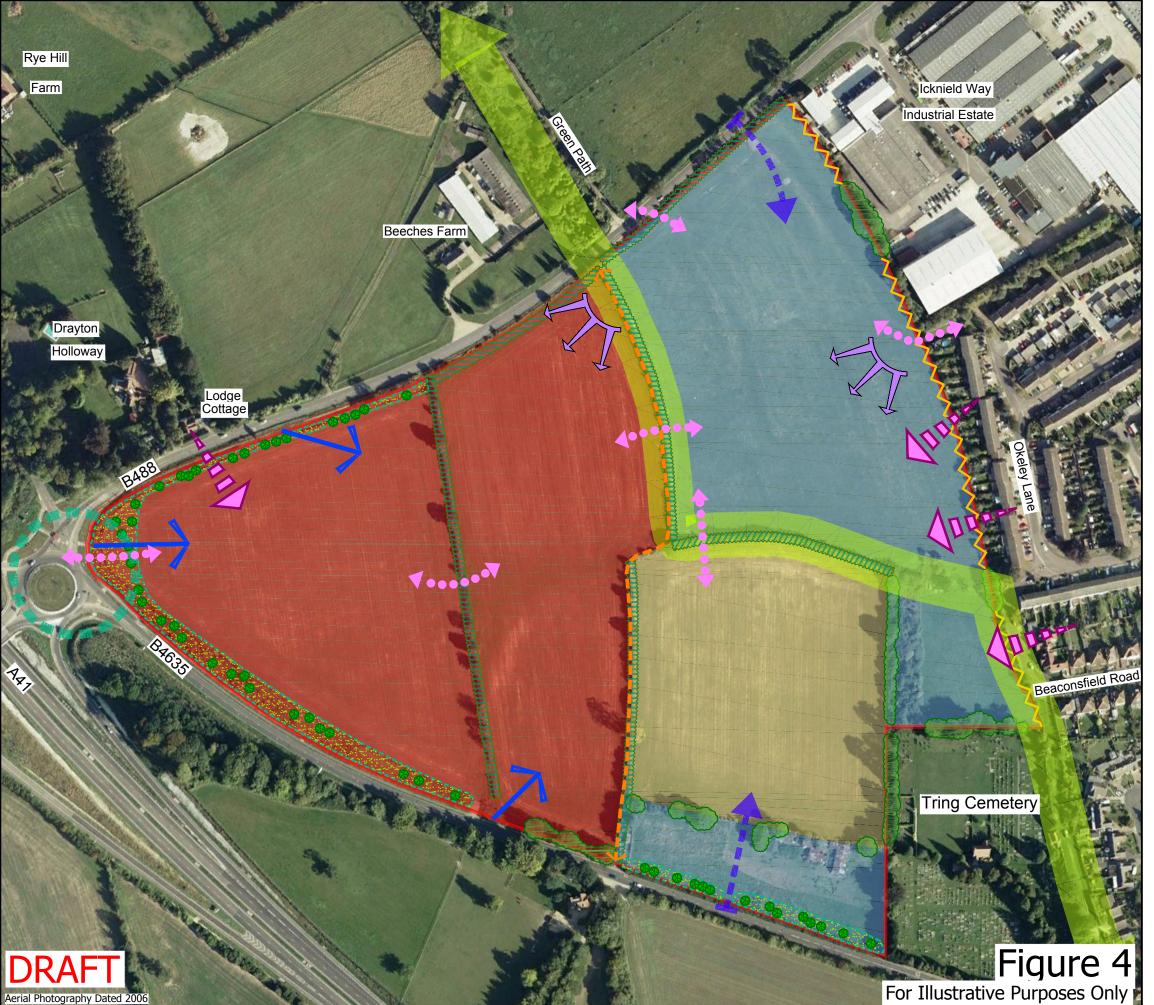
JOINT STATEMENT Appendices

MAP 1 Potential Access Strategy



JOINT STATEMENT Appendices

MAP 2 Landscape Development Principles Plan



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured Revision Date Drn Ckd **LEGEND** Site Boundary Landscape Character Sensitivity Low landscape character sensitivity Medium landscape character sensitivity High landscape character sensitivity Green Infrastructure Opportunities Urban wildlife corridor identified in Spatial Diagram of Tring Place Strategy Green Gateway identified in Spatial Diagram of Tring Place Strategy Access Opportunities Potential vehicular access (subject to highways advice) Existing Public Rights of Way Potential links/improvements to existing Public Rights of Way network Visual Opportunities and Constraints Maintain views towards Chilterns escarpment

Open views into the site

IIIn»

Opportunities for key views across the AONB towards the urban edge

Site Features

Maintain and enhance existing good condition landscape features

Retain existing individual trees and tree

Enhance poor to moderate condition landscape features with native planting

Opportunities to improve existing urban

Land West of Tring

Landscape Development Principles Plan

Drawn by Check by 1:2,500@A3 06.08.2012 CRH Project No Drawing No 21156



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Future Discussion Point: Travellers

The Council's position is that the local allocation may need to accommodate a small number of pitches for travellers, in addition to housing. The area was identified as a potential location, together with others, in the Scott Wilson Report (Examination Document HG5). The Council expects any decision to be taken in the light of an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and further consideration and examination through the Site Allocations DPD.

Cala Homes has consistently maintained that the site will not be made available for such purposes.

(B) Representations relating to LA5

Cala Homes made a number of objections, i.e. representations, to the Pre-Submission Core Strategy. The following are relevant to LA5, i.e.:

- 776 Table 8 (Prospective Distribution of New Housing 2006-2031): increase the number of homes at Tring
- 777 Table 9 (Strategic Sites and Local Allocations): increase the number of homes at LA5 to 300
- 778 Local Allocation LA5: increase the number of homes to 300

The Council has provided responses in the Report of Representations Annex B Table 2 (Examination Document SUB5). The level of homes (for LA5) was set at a level the Council considered reasonable in all the circumstances. The Council has said it wished to collaborate with the landowners (Cala Homes) on more detailed investigations. This is happening. The Council has said that assuming a density of 30-40 dwellings across the built area would be insensitive. While it is appropriate to seek the effective use of land, the location lies in an attractive landscape next to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Further consideration should be given to the height of development and its density, together with sensitive landscape design and assimilation into the landscape. The type of accommodation will also be relevant. Cala Homes has prepared a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to assist, and further work will be needed to progress a master plan.

Agreed Matters: (2) Other Matters

Cala Homes has no objection to the minor changes put forward by the Council in its Report of Representations Annex B Table 2 (Examination Document SUB5), including MC 93 which amends the development principles for LA5.

Cala Homes made the following objections to the Pre-Submission Core Strategy, i.e. Representations:

- 771 and 772: 771 Policy CS1 (Distribution of Development) and 772 -Table 1 (Settlement Hierarchy): to seek greater differentiation between market towns, such as Tring, and large villages, allowing more development at market towns
- 773 Policy CS2 (Selection of Development Sites): to prevent any sequencing or prioritisation of sites, except perhaps at Hemel Hempstead (where there is more than one local allocation), and to seek deletion of Policy CS3 (Managing Selected Development Sites)
- 774 and 775: 774 Policy CS5 (Green Belt) and 775 Map 1 (Key Diagram): to define all locations now and remove them from the Green Belt
- 779 Policy CS17 (New Housing): to seek a higher housing target of 500 dwellings p.a. and to delete the second paragraph of the policy (or explain the link to Policy CS3 better.

The Council has given responses to the representations in Annex B Table 2 Report of Representations. Briefly these are as follows:

- 771 and 772 Berkhamsted and Tring are both (market) towns, located within the Green Belt and adjoined by the Chilterns AONB. They are of different sizes, and will naturally accommodate different levels of development. The large villages are surrounded by Green Belt and/or the Chilterns AONB. The large villages are different in size to the market towns, and will naturally accommodate different levels of development to them. There are constraints on outward expansion of all these settlements because of local infrastructure, their character and their surroundings. In terms of a broad hierarchy the difference in scale between the large villages and market towns is not that large. The opportunity for general development is more limited in all these places compared to Hemel Hempstead, and given the clear focus on Hemel Hempstead there is no reason why the general approach to the market towns and large villages should not be similar.
- 773 The policy provides a logical approach for selection of development sites in accordance with sustainability principles. The current Local Plan includes a similar approach for a lower annual housing target. The supply of development sites includes greenfield land within settlements. It is only the local allocations hitherto Green Belt land that are being held back to help manage the housing supply and ensure housing is provided together with relevant infrastructure. Local allocations defined through the Site Allocations DPD are not needed to come forward at present.

- 774 and 775 All local allocations will be released from the Green Belt and development permitted. The key diagram cannot delineate sites. The Council has made clear its intention to delineate sites and provide detailed policy in the Site Allocations DPD. This will complete public consultation (before any planning application). The collaborative work being done with Cala Homes is helping to delineate LA5. Phasing of development in conjunction with infrastructure needs and maintenance of a sensible housing land supply is an important consideration. The housing land supply is varied: there is some greenfield land already identified, which can come forward now.
- 779 The housing target has been set to ensure objectively assessed demand and local need are met as fully as possible taking a balanced view of competing factors, including environmental matters. The Council has separately published Background Paper Selecting the Core Strategy Housing Target (Examination Document HG16) to explain its position more fully. Policy CS17 also covers the management of the housing supply. If housing supply falls short, the Council will take remedial action. There may be much the Council can do to stimulate the local housing market in terms of its own land ownership, working closely with developers, landowners and other partners, to be more flexible in relation to viability/contributions and to help overcome blockages. Releasing local allocations is another option, not necessarily the first choice. Policy CS3 provides specific considerations for land release, the primary one being the intended release date to be set in the Site Allocations DPD.

Outstanding Matters

Six representations from Cala Homes - 771, 772, 773, 774, 775 and 779 - remain outstanding: they relate to Policy CS17, Table 1, Policy CS2 (and Policy CS3), Policy CS5, Map 1 and Policy CS17 respectively. Cala Homes considers that the housing target for Dacorum is too low; market towns should be prioritised for development ahead of large villages; Green Belt boundaries should be reviewed now; and local allocations should not be held in reserve but brought forward for development now.

While Cala Homes generally accepts the Council's responses to Representations 776 – 778, it thinks there may be more capacity than 150 homes on LA5 if needed. This therefore means Representations 776 – 778 remain: they relate to Table 8, Table 9 and LA5 respectively.

AGREEMENT

Signed by:	
	on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council
Dated 24 August 2012	
Dated Ry Mugust 2012.	on behalf of Cala Homes