

GNLP – REGULATION 18(C) CONSULTATION RESPONSE

GNLP0135 – WOOD HALL, HETHERSETT

On behalf of the UEA, we strongly propose the allocation of GNLP0135, Wood Hall, Hethersett. The site is entirely deliverable, and capable of making a significant contribution towards satisfying the Councils' housing needs during the period to 2038.

GNLP0135 has been assessed as being an unreasonable residential site in the draft GNLP, due to not having acceptable access onto the B1172. Furthermore, it is recognised that the site is constrained due to onsite trees and the setting of Wood Hall.

The following Representation outlines the suitability of the site for residential development, recommending that the site is re-considered and allocated for residential development. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) definition of 'deliverable', the proposed allocation represents a suitable location for development now, is available immediately, is achievable with a realistic prospect of housing being delivered on the site, and is viable. This is considered in further detail below.

Assessment of Delivery

Suitable

The site falls within Hethersett, which is identified in the draft GNLP as a Key Service Centre, as it provides a location which has a good range of services and amenities to support day to day life. whilst also providing access to public transport and employment opportunities. These services include an infant and nursery school, primary school, high school, library, Tesco supermarket, alongside a range of employment and retail opportunities. In addition, the draft GNLP recognises how Hethersett falls within the main Cambridge Norwich Tech corridor area, helping to focus most of the housing, employment and infrastructure growth.

Furthermore, the suitability of Hethersett for growth has been demonstrated through the urban extension to the north of Hethersett, including the development of up to 1196 dwellings and associated land uses (reference: 2011/1804).

Given the suitability of Hethersett, it is surprising that no new allocations are proposed in Hethersett; instead, existing commitments of 1,369 dwellings for the period up to 2038 will be carried forward. It is, therefore, recommended that GNLP0135 is allocated for residential development, to further provide deliverable supply, given the uncertainties of other sites delivering. It is noted that there is concern regarding the deliverability of other sites across the GNLP area, such as Carrow Works, which is a preferred allocation for 1,200 dwellings.

The following commentary demonstrates the suitability of the site having regard to technical matters, whilst responding to the points raised in the justification for assessment of the site as an unreasonable alternative in the draft GNLP.

Access

The main justification for the site being identified as an unreasonable alternative in the draft GNLP is due to access. However, as outlined in previous Representations, there is existing access to the site from the B1172. Subject to improvements, this access could facilitate development on the site. It is also noted that the B1172 is relatively straight, helping to achieve visibility for vehicles leaving the site.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)

The site is covered by a Group Tree Preservation Order (reference: SN125), which includes various species. Notwithstanding this, development on the site could be designed in a manner to mitigate impacts on the TPO.

Heritage Assets

The site falls within the grounds of Wood Hall, a Grade II Listed Building. However, development on the site could be designed in a manner to minimise any adverse impact on the setting of the heritage asset.

Available

The site, in its entirety, is owned by the UEA. However, there is an existing covenant on the site, in respect of the future sale of Wood Hall.

Achievable

Based on the suitability assessment above, there are no site-specific constraints which could preclude the delivery of residential development on the site. Residential development on the site is deemed to be entirely achievable.

Viable

The UEA are confident that the delivery of the site is viable having regard to the policy requirements of the draft GNLP and there are no factors that we are aware of, at this moment in time, that could prevent the delivery of the site.

Further discussions are required with the GNLP Team on these matters in order to confirm that the various policy objectives, such as affordable housing and community infrastructure, can be delivered on site without prejudicing the viability of the site. The UEA are keen to continue discussions with the GNLP Team on this matter.

Summary

Hethersett is a high sustainable location for growth, benefitting from an infant and nursery school, primary school, high school, library, Tesco supermarket, alongside a range of employment and retail opportunities.

As has been demonstrated, the site is suitable, available, achievable and viable, and is deliverable within the plan period. As previously recognised, there are no constraints which would affect the suitability of the site for residential development. The foregoing text demonstrates that this site is a suitable location for development, and therefore, GNLP0135 should be allocated for residential development.