

Land West of Langstone Road, Havant

PLANNING & AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT

Persimmon Homes Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Persimmon Homes Ltd to accompany this application for:

“Outline (all matters reserved except for access) application comprising 65no. dwellings with access from The Mallards together with car parking, landscaping, electrical substation, public open space and associated works.”

1.2 This statement sets out the context for this submission and how the proposal takes into account the relevant national and local planning policy.

1.3 The application follows detail pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority (GEN/19/00287 refers).

1.4 The application site is located within the urban area of Langstone, and is surrounded by development on three sides. Land to the north of the site is comprised of residential streets (the Mallards and Langbrook Close), whilst further north and north west is the major employer of Langstone Technology Park. To the east is the main residential areas of Langstone, whilst there are more homes further south around the Mill Lane conservation area. Immediately west of the site is a water course and relatively dense tree belt, beyond which are more open fields and Southmoor Nature Reserve.

1.5 Langstone is located in the centre of Havant Borough, and is effectively a suburb of Havant Town itself, albeit separated by the A27. Langstone sits immediately north of Hayling Island, with the only route to the Island provided via Langstone Road. Langstone is home to the largest employment area in the Borough, which is centered around Langstone Technology Park, but also includes new developments along Harts Farm Way. To the north of Langstone, on the opposite side of the A27, is the Solent Retail Park, which is a large retail centre which includes a Tesco Extra, M&S, Sports Direct and Next. Within Langstone itself there are also 3 popular pubs/restaurants and a Premier Inn hotel.

1.6 The application site enjoys easy connections to the A27 via Langstone Road. The A27 then offers East-West connections to the city of Portsmouth and other urban areas and employment centres including Fareham, Segensworth, Whiteley and Chichester. Havant train station is located 1 mile north of the site, whilst there are regular bus services that operate along Langstone Road. Immediately opposite the site, to the East, is part of the Hayling Billy Trail, which provides an off-road cycle route directly to both Havant Town Centre and the train station.

2.0 Planning Application

2.1 The following plans and particulars have been submitted for the determination of this application:

Site Plans

- A-02-100-SL Site Location
- A-02-150-EJ Entrance Junction
- A-02-110-BH Building Heights Diagram
- A-02-111-SD Structure Diagram

Technical Reports

- Design & Access Statement – Persimmon Homes
- Transport Assessment - MODE
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment- RPS
- Built Heritage Statement – RPS
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal - RPS
- Flood Risk Assessment – MJA Consulting
- Shadow Habitats Regulation Assessment- Ecosa
- Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan - Ecosa

3.0 Planning Policy Context

3.1 This chapter summarises the relevant national and local planning policy considered relevant to this submission. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the overarching document covering the Government's aim to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote the Government's pro-growth strategy.

3.3 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the approving of development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

3.4 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

3.5 The current Development Plan, which is considered relevant for this application, currently comprises:

- The Local Plan (Core Strategy)
- The Local Plan (Allocations)
- Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan

3.6 In February 2021, a draft Havant Borough Local Plan was submitted for examination. This draft does not include the application site as an allocated site. Persimmon Homes has submitted detailed representations to the Plan which focused on a number of policy specific issues as well as overall housing numbers. The most recent representations to the Plan have set out in detail why the Company feels the Council should reconsider the site for allocation, noting specifically that the site provides a sustainable opportunity to help the Council work towards meeting its housing numbers. Further discussion on this omission is reserved for below.

3.7 The key local policies and guidance considered relevant to the determination of this application are:

The Local Plan (Core Strategy)

- CS9 - Housing
- CS16 - High Quality Design
- CS15 - Flood and Erosion Risk
- CS17 - Concentration and Distribution of Development within the Urban Areas
- CS21 - Developer Requirements
- DM6 - Coordination of Development
- DM8 - Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features
- DM10 - Pollution
- DM13 - Car and Cycle Parking on Residential Development

The Local Plan (Allocations)

- AL2 - Urban Area Boundaries and Undeveloped Gaps between Settlements
- AL1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- AL2 - Urban Area Boundaries and Undeveloped Gaps between Settlements
- DM23 - Sites for Brent Geese and Waders
- DM24 - Recreational Disturbance to Special Protected Areas (SPAs) from Residential Development

Guidance

- Havant Borough Council Housing SPD (July 2011)
- Havant Borough Council Parking SPD (July 2016)
- Havant Borough Council Design Guide SPD (Nov 2011)
- Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan
- Residential Car and Cycle Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document

4.0 Considerations and Assessment

Principle of development

4.1 Being an Outline application that seeks only detailed permission for the site access, the main considerations relevant to the determination of this application are considered to be the principle of the development in this location and the suitability of the access point. Although the remaining Reserved Matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) are to be dealt with at a later stage, they are briefly discussed within this document in order to demonstrate that the quantum of development proposed can be accommodated on this site. A more detailed analysis can be found within the accompanying Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, Built Heritage Assessment and Design & Access Statement.

4.2 The site currently lies outside the urban area, as defined by Policy AL2 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) and Policy CS17 (Core Strategy) and, as mentioned above, and does not benefit from a housing allocation at this time.

4.3 The Council's most recently published Five Year Housing Land Supply Update (February 2021) (5YHLSU) sets out that the Council has a supply position of 4.8 years or 4.2 years, depending on whether a 5% or a 10% buffer is applied to the requirement. In both circumstances, under the terms of Paragraph 11d of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council is required to apply the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development when deciding planning applications.

4.4 It is clear, however, from the most recent 2020 housing delivery test results that the Council should apply a 20% buffer (not a 5% buffer) when calculating its five year supply (alongside applying the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development). Notwithstanding the concerns regarding some of the sites comprising the Council's supply (see further commentary below), in light of the above, the Council can only claim a supply of 4.2 years at most.

4.5 It is further noted that the five year requirement (2020/21 to 2024/25) set out in the 5YHLSU is based on Local Housing Need as calculated using the Standard Methodology (i.e. 504 dwellings per annum (dpa), not the higher housing requirement being progressed in the emerging Local Plan (511 dpa). While the approach taken by the Council is not incorrect, were it to apply the Local Plan requirement figure, its housing land supply position would deteriorate.

4.6 With regards to the robustness of emerging housing requirement, the Local Plan provides a 'buffer' of 340 homes 'to ensure that the Plan is sufficiently flexible to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan and to allow a rapid response to economic changes in accordance with the NPPF'. The Plan does not, however, appear to make any specific provision to addressing the unmet housing needs of neighbouring Local Planning Authorities, particularly those in the Portsmouth Housing Market Area. In the context of unmet sub-region housing needs being around 11,000 new homes, it is considered likely that the housing requirement in the Plan will need to be increased thereby reducing the Council's five year position further still.

4.7 In terms of supply, the Council has included a number of draft allocations within its land supply statement. The Council will be aware that, for sites to be included in the five year supply, there should be clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years. In the absence of publishing evidence on site delivery, there are a number of sites included in the 5YHLSU where it could be argued that they should be removed from the supply, particularly those sites that have no current planning status (i.e. sites that are not allocated or do not have a planning permission).

4.8 The Council has identified Havant Town Centre and Waterlooville Town Centre in the emerging Local Plan for regeneration which includes provision for 750 and 600 new homes, respectively. These sites do not currently form part of the Council's five year supply, but together they constitute a significant proportion of the Council overall housing supply across the latter stages of the Plan period.

4.9 Whilst a wide area of Havant Town Centre is earmarked for regeneration, only two sites are considered as being suitable for housing: The Civic Campus and Market Parade. The Town Centre area was previously identified in the adopted Site Allocations as having potential for only 225 dwellings. More recently, in 2016, outline approval was granted on the Market Parade site for 130 apartments. Despite the limited residential capacity evidenced above, Policy KP1 of the emerging Local Plan identifies the Town Centre area as being capable of delivering 750 new homes with the plan period. There is little by way of evidence to justify the significantly increase in residential capacity of the Town Centre sites. Indeed the emerging Local Plan highlights a number of delivery constraints including land acquisition and existing uses, alongside the delivery of a 'regeneration framework' plan to facilitate the implementation of this policy. With regards to Waterlooville Town Centre, given the fragmented ownership, existing uses and the potential for lengthy CPO processes, there are doubts as to the deliverability of the Council's vision for this site.

4.10 The submitted reports conclude that there are no overriding development impacts, such as flood risk, highways ecology, archaeology and landscape/visual impact, that would prevent the site from coming forward for residential uses.

4.11 Given the concerns regarding the deliverability of a number of the housing sites comprising the Council's supply, therefore, it should take a proactive approach to identifying alternatives for development. Indeed, in light of the Housing Delivery Test and five year supply evidence, national planning policy requires that the Council ought to apply a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development when deciding planning applications. The application site is capable of delivering housing within the next five years. Not only does the site represent a genuine opportunity to bolster the Council's land supply position, it could also make a meaningful contribution towards addressing the unmet housing needs in the wider sub-region.

4.12 In light of the above it is considered that the principle of residential development on this site is, therefore, acceptable.

Proposed housing mix, including level of affordable housing

4.13 The application proposes 30% of its housing as affordable at a split of 30% shared ownership (7 units) and 70% rent (12). Any detailed layout will ensure that the affordable housing will be appropriately spread around the site and take into account the deliverability requirements of the Registered Providers. Affordable housing will be indistinguishable from market dwellings in terms of their materials, layout and form.

4.14 The proposal will provide the required amount of affordable housing through a mix of tenure and dwelling types and it is considered the proposal accords with Policy CS9 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy).

Visual & Landscape Impacts

4.15 Policy CS16 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy) requires all development to be of a high quality design and that proposals will need to demonstrate the adherence to the principles of urban design. Policy CS9 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy) goes on to state that planning permission will be granted for housing development which “...achieve a suitable density of development for the location, taking account accessibility to public transport and proximity to employment, shops and services in addition to respecting the surrounding landscape, character and built form”

4.16 The supporting text to Policy CS9 at paragraph 6.21 records that “...the density of new housing will depend on its design and appropriateness to its location. As a guide the following minimum density thresholds have been developed using the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment and the levels of accessibility to a range of facilities:

High Density – Minimum of 60 dwellings per hectare

Medium Density – Minimum of 45 dwellings per hectare

Low Density – Up to 45 dwellings per hectare”.

4.17 The proposal has a gross density of around 22dph which is firmly within the Low Density category, acknowledging the site’s location within the landscape and reflecting the generous provision of Open Space. A calculation based upon the likely net developable area is similarly within the low density category (at around 40 dph)

4.18 The design has somewhat been informed by the constraints of the site meaning dwellings in general, will front outwards, providing active frontages to The Mallards and Langstone Road. In order to reflect the character of the opposite site of Langstone Road, it is expected the properties in the scheme will be set back from the main road. The scheme has been envisaged to have softer southern and eastern edges, with a more dense core. This allows the scheme to feel more suburban on its edges, matching the character of areas to the south. The general form of the development proposed is shown on the accompanying plans.

4.19 A robust landscape scheme would be proposed to break up frontage parking through the use of medium height hedging and planting. Similarly the edges to the development will need suitable planting to match the green nature of the surrounding area. Garden sizes will generally comply with the Design SPD. The site has been laid out to respect the notable trees on the sites periphery, all which will all be retained

4.20 Dwellings forming the proposal would be restricted to two storey/two and a half storey in height with pitched and hipped roofs in response to dwellings in the vicinity and to limit any visual prominence of the properties from the surrounding area. Articulation to elevations through the use of front projections and front gables provides visual interest to the streetscene.

4.21 Dwellings will be framed by soft landscaping in front garden areas and trees within the streetscene. This approach breaks up the build form and adds to the verdant characteristics of the scheme. All dwellings will be provided with adequate space/storage areas to ensure that domestic waste and recycling bins can be stored at the rear of the property or in garages.

4.22 The proposal will be of a high quality design, easily accessed and responds positively to the edge of settlement location and nearby developments to create a sense of identity. The simple form of the dwellings reflects those in the vicinity but the variation of dwellings and articulation ensure a varied streetscene. The application is supported by a Design & Access Statement.

4.23 A significant amount of Public Open Space is proposed on the site, which will be in the region of 3 acres. This is well in excess of the Public Open Space levels which would be expected for a development of 65 units, using the Council's emerging Policy as a baseline. The large area of Public Open Space proposed also allows the opportunity to provide an equipped area of play.

Impact on amenities of neighbouring properties and future occupants

4.24 The application is made in outline with details of the dwellings to be Reserved Matters. It is possible, however, at this stage, in view of the position of the neighbouring properties, to conclude that the development proposing two storey dwellings on the site will not have a harmful impact upon the amenities of any neighbours in terms of loss of light or outlook. Moreover, in terms of privacy impacts, it should be acknowledged that the Council's adopted Design SPD states that *"...some overlooking of gardens from the upper floors of dwellings will be unavoidable in most urban and suburban housing layouts"*. There is nothing, therefore, to suggest that the number of dwellings proposed cannot be accommodated in an appropriate manner.

Impact on the highway network

4.25 It is acknowledged that Langstone Road can be particularly busy at peak times. The Company is aware that this is a particular issue for the Council, and was partly behind the necessity to produce a specific Transport Assessment covering the A3023 corridor. The Hayling Island Transport Assessment (HITA) looks at the development levels proposed in the Local Plan, and the potential mitigation measures required to accommodate them. Importantly, the overall conclusion of the report is that *"..taking into account the wider benefits associated with the proposed mitigation measures, it is considered that the impact of Local Plan development can be mitigated effectively to an acceptable degree and the overall impact on the road network is not considered to represent a severe cumulative impact on the road network."*

4.26 To that end, the overall impact on the level of housing planned to be delivered along that corridor is unlikely to create a significant impact. The delivery of 65 new homes, at the northern end of this corridor, is, therefore, highly unlikely to change this conclusion. The added benefit of the application site, over those proposed further south on Hayling Island, is that the additional issues south of the Hayling bridge would remain unaffected. In addition the proximity of the site to the train station (via the cycle path) as well as existing employment and retail centres means a higher proportion of new occupiers will have the choice to avoid using their cars. The same cannot be said of other allocations made in the A3023 corridor.

4.27 To confirm these points, the application is supported by a full Transport Assessment, with the data taken from the Council's PARAMICS modelling, that concludes that there would be no harmful impact upon the local highway network.

4.28 In terms of residential car parking, it is acknowledged that any detail layout would need to comply with the Council's adopted car parking standards.

4.29 Parking will in the main, be on plot achieved by frontage parking, which provides convenient parking and a quantum of space that accords with the Councils parking standards. It is the experience of Persimmon that frontage parking is nearly always used and is what is requested by purchasers with the convenience factor meaning cars seldom park on the highway. Parking courts for dwellinghouses are not considered convenient by Persimmon and are generally underused leading to parking on the highway outside of individual plots. Furthermore, tandem side spaces are kept to a minimum as they are inconvenient by way of requiring the front car to be moved in order for the rear car to exit. This often leads to only one of the spaces being used and the other vehicle parking on the highway

4.30 Adequate visitor parking will be provided and spread evenly throughout the development.

4.31 Frontage parking will be broken up using a robust landscaping scheme of hedges tall planting to ensure the streetscene is not over dominated by cars. However, it should be noted that multiple car ownership for properties cannot be avoided and the convenience of the home owner should be given considerable weight.

4.32 The site is sustainably located close to primary and secondary schools, doctors surgery and local shops and amenities. The site is well connected to the local highway infrastructure with the main Havant railway station located within 20 minutes walk. It is considered, therefore, that the proposal accords with the aims and objectives of DM13 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy).

Ecological Interests of the Site

4.33 The Council previously raised concerns about ecology on the site, centred around the sites use by protected Solent Waders and Brent Geese, as well as a concern that the site is actually an unimproved meadow which is worthy of priority habitat designation. To address this a suite of ecology documents are attached for consideration, concluding that *"...following the incorporation of appropriate mitigation, including an appropriate nutrient neutrality strategy, financial contributions to the Solent Bird Aware strategy and implementation of appropriate construction methods it has been concluded that there would be no adverse impact on site integrity either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects on Solent and Dorset Coast SPA, Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC. A finalised compensation scheme/mechanism in relation to loss of functional land in the form of Secondary Support Area H27 associated with the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA/Ramsar site will be required."*

Flood Risk

4.34 The application is supported by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy that confirm despite part of the site being within an area of flood risk, it is considered that the indicative layout reproduced within those documents is such that, subject to specified mitigation measures, the development of the site will not result in any significant loss of floodplain storage and will not increase the risk of surface water flooding to existing parties within the vicinity of the site or downstream, in accordance with Policy CS15 3 of the Local Plan (Core Strategy).

Other Matters

4.35 There is a 400mm high pressure gas main crossing the southern edge of the site running East to West. Discussions have been held with the utility companies responsible for the Gas Main, and it is acknowledged there is a no build easement which will need to be avoided. However, the proposed layout provided sits well clear of this easement, demonstrating that the gas main is not an overarching constraint to the development of the site.

4.36 The application is supported by an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment which concludes that there are no overriding archaeological issues on the site.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 This statement has provided details to demonstrate the proposal is in accordance with the relevant Policies of the Development Plan and national planning documents.

5.2 The proposal would make best and most efficient use of land, significantly contributing to the housing supply, of both market and affordable units, of the Borough whilst ensuring the capacity for a high quality design through both the built form and landscaping to be later approved at Reserved Matters stage. The needs of modern car usage has been taking into account as the scheme having ample provision for the required number of car and cycle spaces which will be conveniently located. The development would not have and unacceptable adverse impact on the occupiers of the nearby dwellings and would provide a significant area suitable open space.

5.3 The NPPF requires Local Authorities to determine applications in line with their adopted Development Plans, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The housing requirements in Havant Borough have increased significantly since the adoption of the last Havant Local Plan, and the introduction of the standardised methodology has only reiterated this point. This requirement for new homes is a material consideration that cannot be ignored. Even though the Council are seeking to address this through the emerging Local Plan, the concerns raised in relation to deliverability around a number of sites highlight potential issues in the Borough that should mean a pragmatic approach to sustainable new sites should be taken.

5.4 The above review of the potential constraints has highlighted that there are no overarching issues that prevent the site from coming forward. The concerns previously raised by the Council regarding flood risk are noted, but the note on flooding provided, coupled with the Council's own evidence, points to part of the site being suitable for the level of development proposed.

5.5 65 well designed new homes in Langstone would make a positive contribution to local and sub-regional housing needs. The indicative details show that a high quality scheme with a significant amount of POS which will be available for the wider community to enjoy can be provided, whilst also helping to prevent landscape and heritage harm.

5.6 The site is in single ownership and the current use, along with the lack of any known constraints to the site, means that a residential scheme is immediately viable. As one of the UK's largest house builders Persimmon Homes have the financial and logistical capability to deliver residential development on the site without delay. To that end, units on the application site can start to be delivered from 2022, with all units completed within 18 months from starting on site. This will help the Council meet its 5 year land supply target whilst providing a reliable contribution to annual completions based on a realistic build rate ending in 2024..