
Breckland Local Plan Examination

Local Plan Examination
Hearing Statement – Matter 5

On behalf of
Abel Homes Ltd



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1. Introduction

1.1. This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Savills (UK) Ltd on behalf of Abel Homes Ltd.

1.2. Abel Homes is a family run Local housebuilder based in Watton, Norfolk. The award winning company is known for its high quality homes. Abel Homes has built homes across Breckland and is committed to the continued delivery of new homes at their sites across the District.

1.3. Abel Homes has actively participated in the preparation of the Local Plan for Breckland for a number of years. Savills will attend the Hearing sessions on Matter 5 to expand on the representations made to the Regulation 19 consultation and the content of this Statement.

2. Matter 5 – Housing: the settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution of new housing (Policies GEN 03, GEN 05, HOU 02, HOU 03, HOU 04 and HOU 05)

2.1. With regard to this matter, Savills will reference the representations submitted to the Regulation 19 consultation. In addition, Savills make the following comments.

Question 5.1: Is the proposed distribution of housing supported by the Sustainability Appraisal, and will it lead to the most sustainable pattern of housing growth? And

Question 5.14: Taking into account all of the above, overall, is the spatial distribution of housing justified?

2.2. Policy HOU 02 identifies a percentage level of growth for each tier of the settlement hierarchy. Broad support is given to the focus of development at Key Settlements and in particular at the Market Towns of Swaffham and Watton. These settlements offer a range of services and facilities including education facilities, retail, employment opportunities and public transport links to support sustainable development.

2.3. The Sustainability Appraisal has assessed three options for growth (pages 157 to 170) and considers that the level of growth as outlined at Policy HOU 02 scores most positively in respect of the sustainability objectives. Most notably the distribution of HOU 02 scores positively in criterion 16 'ensure all groups have access to affordable, decent and appropriate housing that meets their needs' and 17 'increase the vitality and viability of existing town centres'.

2.4. Table 12.28 (page 157) of the Sustainability Appraisal states "*The proposed approach which distributes growth across the sustainable settlements in the District should provide the most sustainable development by taking into account the suitability of areas to accommodate development, offering opportunities to support the local economy in more rural areas and not reducing the easy access to open spaces in and around Key Settlements and Market Towns*".

2.5. Notwithstanding the broad support for the distribution of growth throughout the District, we are of the opinion that the Council has fallen short in its identification of its full objectively assessed housing need which has consequences for the minimum housing targets for each settlement.

2.6. In respect of Watton, it is noted that the Council through its allocation of two sites and as a result it is planning for an additional 30 new homes (175 + 30 = 205 dwellings). Abel Homes continues to give preference to the identification of Watton Allocation 2 which allocates land for "*at least 45 dwellings, and at least 60 bed care home*". Abel Homes is committed to the delivery of development in this location.

2.7. In respect of Swaffham, it is respectfully requested that the Inspector considers the benefits of allocating Land West of Brandon Road, Swaffham (LP[097]014) for residential led mixed use development. This site is currently the subject of an outline planning application (LPA Ref: 3PL/2017/1487/O) seeking permission for "*the erection of up to 64 bed care home (C2 Use), up to 40 assisted living dwellings (C2 Use), Medical Centre (D1 Use), 650 sqm retail use (A1-A5 Use), up to 160 dwellings (C3 Use) with Open Space, associated infrastructure and the detailed means of access.*" Please refer to the detailed submissions made in response to the Regulation 19 consultation to promote this site.

Question 5.7: How have the completions / commitments (2011-2017) for each settlement been identified? Is there evidence to suggest that the existing commitments will be implemented as anticipated?

2.8. It is noted that Breckland Council produced a 'Statement of Five Year Housing Land Supply' which was published in July 2017. This reflects the housing land supply position at 31st March 2017. This may have informed the stated completions and commitments for Policy HOU 02.

2.9. It is considered that the Council should produce a new report in conjunction with developers to demonstrate the up to date position. Abel Homes would be happy to provide the Council with anticipated completion rates for their sites across the District.