

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL UPDATE

1. Introduction.

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) is based on BMD's Landscape and Visual Appraisal dated February 2015 and updates it as appropriate. This LVA also takes reference from BMD's Review of BBC Local Plan Landscape Evidence Base dates November 2018. This LVA should be read in conjunction with GL Hearn's description of the Concept Masterplan and accompanying Appendix 1.
- 1.2 This LVA is a high-level assessment of the latest emerging Concept Masterplan.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The same LVA methodology has been adopted as set out in BMD's Landscape and Visual Appraisal.
- 2.2 The representative site record photographs contained in Appendix 1 present the winter scene in 2019, the worst-case scenario and are for site record purposes only.

3. Landscape Policy and Guidance

- 3.1 The policy context remains broadly the same as set out in BMD's Appraisal, with the exception of the Local Policy context set out in the Draft Brentwood Local Plan dated February 2019 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated February 2019.
- 3.2 In terms of the latest Local Plan Policies, particular regard has been given to the policies set out in the Chapters covering Green and Blue Infrastructure, Design and Place Making and Natural Environment. In terms of the NPPF particular regard has been made to the overarching objections of Sustainable Development.

4. Landscape Baseline

- 4.1 The Landscape Character Baseline remains unchanged from the BMD's LVA and the site remains characteristic of the Local Landscape Character Area F8 Doddinghurst Wooded Farmland.
- 4.2 The main changes to the BMD LVA in terms of Landscape Baseline are that the PROW to the east of the site no longer exists on the ground and the County Wildlife Site (CWS) to the south and east of the site has been extended to the east as a Local Wildlife Site (LoWS).
- 4.3 This LVA has also undertaken additional Landscape Baseline Studies and has concluded that the Landscape Sensitivity of the sites is Low / Poor, due to its agricultural and Hopefield Animal Sanctuary uses and in the absence of any landscape designations, the Landscape Value of the site is also considered to be Low.
- 4.4 In addition, this LVA considers that the open landscape character of the site provides it with a Medium Landscape Sensitivity to change and it provides a Moderate contribution to the

Countryside. Its Landscape Capacity to Accommodate Development is Moderate, due to its generally flat topography, absence of vegetation and visual enclosure. The topography of the site is generally flat and contains few trees, other than on its boundaries. As a result, its sensitivity to change, in these respects, is considered to be Low. The site also has a Low tranquility value arising from its proximity to the A12.

5. Visual Baseline

- 5.1 The visual baseline remains unchanged from the BMD LVA and the site is visually well enclosed, even during the winter months, with maximum visibility. The main exception is that the nearest PROW to the east of the site no longer exists on the ground.
- 5.2 The Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) of the site is less than 1 kilometre and as a result the Visual Sensitivity of the site is Low, due to its low-lying nature, visual containment by existing boundary vegetation and limited high sensitivity receptors, such as residential areas and PROWs.

6. Development Capacity

- 6.1 The Development Capacity of the site remains unchanged from the BMD LVA and is considered to have a Moderate / Medium Capacity to Accommodate change.
- 6.2 In terms of the Green Belt, the overall contribution of the site is considered to be Moderate. This is based on the assessment of the Green Belt Purposes contained in the BMD Review of Local Plan Evidence Base dated November 2018. This is based on BMD's summary as follows; Purpose 1: Partly Contained, Purpose 2: Separation Reduced but Functional, Purpose 3: Functional Countryside, Purpose 4: Limited Relationship with Historic Town.
- 6.3 The site has Moderate Defensible Boundaries to the Green Belt, in the form of its existing Boundary vegetation and the A12.

7. Guidelines and Recommendations

- 7.1 The guidelines and recommendations for the site are set out in GL Hearn's Concept Masterplan and accompanying Appendix 1. These generally accord with the BMD conclusions.

8. Assessment

- 8.1 In terms of the Landscape Impact of the proposed Concept Masterplan, the overall impact is considered to be Moderate to Slight Adverse Impact. This assessment is based on the following, Landscape Character: Moderate / Slight Adverse, Topographical Impact: Slight Adverse, Vegetation Impact: Slight Adverse, Tranquility Impact: Slight Beneficial.
- 8.2 The above Landscape Impact Assessment is based on Sites 24A and 24B being combined. It is also based on the fact that the Countryside Character of the existing site is influenced by the presence of the Hopefield Animal Sanctuary.

- 8.3 In terms of the Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed Concept Masterplan, the overall impact is considered to be Moderate to Slight Adverse. The Visual Sensitivity of the site is Low, due to its low-lying nature, visual containment by existing vegetation and limited sensitive visual receptors, including residential areas and PROWs.
- 8.4 In this regard, the ZVI is limited. The Visual Impact on sensitive residential receptors is Slight Adverse. The Visual Impact on PROW's is Slight to Non. The Visual Impact from the Moderately Sensitive receptor of the A12 is Slight Adverse and the assessment from adjacent Recreation Areas is Moderate to Slight Adverse.
- 8.5 In terms of the impact of the Concept Masterplan on the Green Belt / Green Wedge, the overall assessment is considered to be Moderate to Slight Adverse Impact. This is based on the contribution of the site to the Green belt being Moderate.
- 8.6 In this regard, it is important to note that the site contains strong defensible Green Belt boundaries in the form of existing / proposed vegetation and the A12 to the north.
- 8.7 In addition, the Concept Masterplan provides significant open areas, including the relocated Hopefield Animal Sanctuary and Blue and Green Infrastructure, which equates to some 5 hectares of the site, @ 20% of the total 20 hectare site area.
- 8.8 In terms of the Green Belt / Green Wedge "gap" between Shenfield and Brentwood, at its closest point, it is 1.2km distance, notwithstanding the fact that there is no intervisibility between the two urban areas. The Concept Masterplan would result in the reduction of this "gap" by some 400 metres @ 30% of the total distance between the two Urban Areas.

9. Summary and Conclusions

- 9.1 On the basis of this high-level Landscape and Visual Appraisal the following conclusions are drawn; Landscape Impact: Moderate to Slight, Visual Impact: Moderate to Slight and Green Belt Impact: Moderate to Slight.
- 9.2 In conclusion, the overall Landscape and Visual Impact of the Concept Masterplan, including Green Belt / Green "Gap" considerations is judged to be Moderate to Slight Adverse.
- 9.3 With further design development during the future planning process stages, it is anticipated that this LVA situation and outcome would be maintained and potentially improved.