



Planning Policy Team (fao Phil Drane)
Brentwood Borough Council
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex
CM15 8AY

30th September 2013

Dear Mr. Drane,

Brentwood Local Plan 2015 -2030 Preferred Options Consultation

We write further to the above on behalf of our client, Hansteen Holdings Plc, with respect to their estate in West Horndon – West Horndon Industrial Estate, Station Lane.

For your information, I enclose a copy of a draft master plan used in recent consultations with West Horndon Parish Council and as part of the Local Plan Open Day at the Village Hall. This shows Hansteen's ownership (within the red line boundary) and the neighbouring industrial estate, owned by Threadneedle. Hansteen and Threadneedle have been in discussion about how to take the redevelopment of their estates forward jointly. It should be noted the masterplan is not a finally agreed position, and it is also intended for discussion purposes with local residents, the Parish Council and the LPA.

The development of a joint masterplan with Threadneedle does not preclude the redevelopment of the open Green Belt land to the north coming forward as part of a larger masterplan. There is scope to make the necessary road linkages through both landholdings to ensure an appropriate connection to West Horndon (and its railway station) can be made. However, following the recent public consultation, we are aware there is likely to be considerable opposition to the loss of Green Belt and the development of the open land. In contrast, we are aware that there is support for the redevelopment of Hansteen's and Threadneedle's industrial estates for a mixed use scheme.

Hansteen and Threadneedle (who are making their own representations) do not object to the development of the Green Belt land to the north, as part of a larger masterplan. We fully appreciate the LPA's position in terms of finding sufficient land for housing. However, we would strongly object to any policy that is framed in an "all or nothing" way – that is to say, requiring all three landholding to be redeveloped together or none.

Hansteen and Threadneedle's industrial estates are old and increasingly ill-suited to the requirements of today's commercial tenants. As a consequence of the age and condition of the stock, the on-going maintenance costs to keep it going are rising, undermining the viability of the estates. You will also be aware that the comings and goings from Hansteen's estate in particular is a source of some complaint from local residents.

The Hansteen/ Threadneedle landholdings are previously developed land within the boundary of West Horndon, unconstrained by Green Belt or flooding issues. They are in a highly sustainable location, close to a rail way station and bus services, as well as being an established part of the village with easy access to West Horndon's services and facilities. The combined landholdings are large, particularly so relative to West Horndon. Their redevelopment would make a significant contribution to the requirement for housing land within Brentwood as a whole. Properly master-planned, their redevelopment would also enhance West Horndon in terms of improvements in housing choice and any other commercial, retail and community uses the village needs to ensure it is developed into a more sustainable community.

Our representations are made within the context set out above.

The consultation response requires we support or object to those parts of the plan we wish to comment upon. Some of our representations are comments seeking additions or clarifications to specific parts of the LDP. For the purposes of this consultation, we accept these comments have to be labelled as "objection". However, Hansteen supports the broad thrust of the policies affecting West Horndon within the draft LDP. As you will see there is very little between Hansteen and the LPA on many of the issues raised. Our client's focus will be to work with you to resolve this in the coming months as part of preparing Brentwood's Submission draft.

Support – Vision Statement (p6)

Hansteen supports the LDP's overall Vision Statement and considers that it is in accordance with the NPPF, particularly the final paragraph:

"Brentwood will grow sustainably with new development directed to locations well served by local services and facilities to help further improve existing and new residents' quality of life. This will be achieved by realising opportunities to enhance the quality and character of places and provision of facilities, and minimising the negative impacts of development on people, the environment and resources."

Support – Strategic Objectives SO1 – SO11 (p7)

Our client supports all the draft LDP's Strategic Objectives. They broadly accord with the NPPF and will provide the framework to help Brentwood as a whole meet up to the challenge of changing future needs. In particular we strongly support those Strategic Objectives that facilitate the growth of West Horndon, namely SO1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 10.

Support – S1 Spatial Strategy (p8)

Hansteen supports the LPA's preferred spatial strategy of focusing the majority of new development on land within accessible settlements, like West Horndon. This would allow sustainable previously developed sites, like the two industrial estates in West Horndon, to be redeveloped in a way that makes a positive contribution to the village (and wider borough) and is in accord with the NPPF.

Support – Figure 2.1 Key Diagram (p10)

Hansteen supports the Key Diagram showing the strategic allocation at West Horndon, including both parts of the West Horndon industrial estates. Hansteen and Threadneedle's estates are previously developed land within the village boundary, adjacent to West Horndon railway station. Early proposals for their redevelopment for housing-led mixed use development have been well received by both the Parish Council and local people. Housing development on the estates would make a significant

contribution to the total housing land supply for Brentwood, which would be broadly consistent with the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 47 and 52.

Support – para 2.7 Protecting the Green Belt and the quality and character of the Borough (p11)

Hansteen considers this paragraph to be non-contentious, in conformity with the NPPF, and would go further in confirming our own support for the protection of Green Belt. We are, though, concerned that a debate about the Green Belt release at West Horndon would undermine the real benefits of redevelopment of the old industrial estates within the village, which are not within Green Belt. Rather than amend this paragraph, it may be this can be dealt with within the sites-specific policies for the Strategic Allocation or in para 2.8 (see below).

Support – para 2.8 Developing within existing settlements (p11)

Hansteen strongly support this paragraph and consider this offers an opportunity to provide an example of such sites within West Horndon, in the same way as the Green Belt element in para 2.7.

Object – para 2.9 Development in Villages excluded from the Green Belt (p11)

The reference to “*limited development in villages excluded from the Green Belt with a strategic allocation to be made at West Horndon*” is ambiguous, suggesting West Horndon is a village to be excluded from Green Belt. The whole of Hansteen’s and Threadneedle’s industrial estates are within the village settlement boundary of West Horndon which has never been within the Green Belt. Clearly, the Strategic Allocation also includes land to the north of the industrial estates, outside the village settlement boundary and within Green Belt at present. Further clarification is sought to remove any ambiguity.

Object - para 2.15 Settlement Category 3: Larger Villages (p12)

West Horndon has a range of facilities that makes it comparable to Settlement Category 2 (Village Service Centres, such as schools, some health and retail provision, jobs and excellent rail links). The redevelopment proposed at West Horndon would almost certainly result in improvements to the village’s services and facilities that would make it comparable to Ingatestone. Hansteen welcomes the clarification given within Settlement Category 3 about West Horndon offering most scope for such development. We are concerned about potential ambiguity when comparing West Horndon with other Category 3 villages that the LPA considers to be comparable, such as Doddinghurst, Herongate and Ingrave, where large scale housing-led redevelopment would in all likelihood be resisted. Further clarification is sought.

Object – para 2.20 (p13)

Experience has shown that where LPAs fail to meet their objectively-assessed housing need, their Local Plans can be subjected to serious delay at the Examination. Para 14 of the NPPF is clear, “*Local Plans should meet the objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless: any adverse impacts in doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework (the NPPF) as a whole; or specific in this Framework indicate development should be restricted*”. We accept the general conclusions offered in the draft LDP about the difficulties in meeting Brentwood’s objectively-assessed need, but until the evidence for this is available (eg the forthcoming assessments listed within the evidence), this is a matter of concern.

Object - S2: Amount and Distribution of Residential Development 2015-2030 (p14)

See the concerns set out for para 2.20 above. In the event that the LPA can show “significant and demonstrable harm” in meeting all Brentwood’s objectively assessed need, Hansteen would support the LPA’s position and welcomes a Strategic Allocation at West Horndon as a way of meeting a significant part of the housing land requirement.

Support - S4: Provision for Retail and Commercial Leisure (p26)

West Horndon’s retail offer is relatively poor, limited to two small top-up shops and a handful of other retail businesses. Hansteen considers that there is retailer demand for further appropriately-sized retail provision within West Horndon. This is also evident in anecdotal accounts from residents and business tenants leaving the village to fulfil their retail needs elsewhere (and not always in Brentwood). This demand will increase as the numbers of houses within the village increases. Policy S4’s commitment to improving West Horndon’s retail offer is welcomed.

Support – CP1 Sustainable Development (p30)

We agree this fully accords with the NPPF and should be supported.

Object – CP2 Managing Growth (p30)

Hansteen considers most of this policy is sound and supports its overall aims. However, in respect of CP2(a) please refer to the comments on para 2.15 above. CP2 (b) requires the provision of employment or infrastructure development to be delivered before or at the same time as the housing development. Whilst it is not possible to build housing without providing the roads, sewers and utilities required (including off site highway works), other potential costs such as wider infrastructure or employment space may be uneconomic to deliver until housing and other higher value uses have been delivered. Hansteen is concerned that the way CP2(b) is set out may effectively undermine the viability of any large scale redevelopment (like the Strategic Allocation at West Horndon) because of punitive upfront costs. Employment and other infrastructure can be delivered as part of s106 or CIL. Hansteen urges the LPA to frame the policy in such a way that allows some flexibility and does not result in the potential for frontloading punitive levels of cost on development.

Support- CP3: Strategic Sites (p32)

Hansteen supports the policy, particularly the reference to West Horndon, but would suggest the reference to West Horndon be amended to refer to a residential led mixed use development.

Support - Policy CP4: West Horndon Opportunity Area (p33)

Hansteen and Threadneedle’s industrial estates are previously developed land within the village’s settlement boundary and are within easy reach of West Horndon Railway Station and the village centre. We are aware there is considerable local support for the redevelopment of the industrial estates for the housing led mixed use development set out in this policy. Following the recent draft LDP consultation, Hansteen is also aware there may be considerable local opposition to development on Green Belt Land. Hansteen do not object to the development on Green Belt land and (as you can see from early indicative drafts of the masterplan for the two industrial estates) provision can be made to allow for access from the Green Belt land into the village centre. However, Hansteen is concerned that the draft LDP’s policy is

seen in such a way that it is “all or nothing” – ie all the Hansteen, Threadneedle and the Green Belt land together or none at all. Clarification is sought on this point.

The “all or nothing” approach does not take account of the aging condition and declining quality of the industrial offer or the impacts of the estate on the village as a whole. It also fails to acknowledge the considerable role the combined industrial estates themselves can make to provision of housing and other facilities within the village, or the significant contribution they can make to helping meet the Borough’s objectively-assessed housing need.

Object -Policy CP8: Housing Type and Mix (p41)

Hansteen supports the broad thrust of this policy, but is concerned about the prescriptive nature of the requirement for 50% of the homes on sites greater than 0.2 hectares to be 1 or 2 bed – which is generally flatted development or high density development, neither of which may be appropriate in the master-planning of the redevelopment of West Horndon industrial Estates. Local residents have expressed concern about a development dominated by flats. Our own market testing shows there is demand for a range of house types, mostly 2 and 3 bed. Hansteen is concerned a prescriptive requirement such as the one set out would be detrimental to the development of a masterplan for the industrial estates, both in the market demand and in the view of local residents. Furthermore, we are also unclear what is meant by the requirement that “*particular house types provided, such as bungalows, remain available in perpetuity*” and seek further clarification.

Support – para 3.53 (p55)

Hansteen supports the draft LDP in keeping a flexible view of the enlargement and enhancement of the retail offer within West Horndon, in terms of becoming comparable to Ingatestone. However, this may well happen prior to 2030.

Support - Policy CP13: Sustainable Transport (p57)

Hansteen supports the requirement for a Green Travel Plan and Green Travel Route in respect of the West Horndon Strategic Allocation.

Support - Figure 3.3: Green Travel Route (p59)

We support the indicative location of the Green Travel Route to/from West Horndon.

Object - Policy CP14: Sustainable Construction and Energy (p62)

Hansteen supports the broad thrust of what the policy is trying to achieve. The open-ended nature of “allowable solutions contributions” makes it impossible to express a view upon this. Clarification is sought.

Support - Policy CP15: High Quality Design (p67)

Hansteen support this policy.

Support - Policy CP17: Provision of Infrastructure and Community Facilities (p71)

Hansteen support this policy.

Support - Policy DM1: General Development Criteria (p74)

Hansteen support this policy.

Support - Policy DM2: Effective Site Planning (p77)

Hansteen support this policy.

Support - Policy DM3: Residential Density (p79)

Hansteen support this policy.

Object - Policy DM6: Areas Allocated for General Employment and Office Development (p84)

The Strategic Allocation at West Horndon includes a requirement for about 5ha of employment land. However, should only the industrial estates come forward as part of the LDP process, it makes sense to review the figure for the total amount of employment, including the retain employment elements, on a pro rata basis. Hansteen consider that the policy would be more robust if it were framed to allow some flexibility in the event the Green Belt land does not come forward.

Support - Policy DM9: New Retail and Commercial Leisure Development (p91)

See comments for policy S4 above.

Object - Policy DM23 Housing Land Allocations – Major Sites (p128)

Hansteen supports the policy insofar as it allows for the redevelopment of the combined industrial estates within West Horndon and the wider Strategic Allocation. The draft policy refers to phasing (specifically appendix 3), but no site specific phasing information is given. We do not consider this need be provided by the LPA. However, the fact that phasing is referred in this way allows the LPA to control when sites come forward. This affects all sites, not just West Horndon, but Hansteen wishes to clarify how it might affect the timing of the West Horndon Industrial Estates, which make up such a significant part of the overall land supply. The policy also deals with density assumptions, which are commented upon below (see comments on Appendix 2)

Object - para 4.96 (p131)

Para 4.96 states “Sites 20 and 21 are brownfield land in Green Belt”. In Appendix 2, Hansteen (site 21) and Threadneedle’s (site 20) sites are also labelled 20 and 21 and they are not within Green Belt. This may give rise to some confusion. To be clear, Hansteen/Threadneedle’s sites are previously developed land within West Horndon’s settlement boundary, which is surrounded by Green Belt. Hansteen agrees their site 21 “need to provide for an appropriate level of residential density across the site to efficiently make use of allocated land”, but because it is built up and not within Green Belt, any reference to the impact test on the openness of Green Belt is not relevant. Further clarification on the whole of paragraph 4.96 is sought.

Object - Policy DM24: Affordable Housing (p133)

Policy DM24 requires developments of 15 or more houses within Brentwood urban area to make provision for 35% affordable housing. Para 4.110 refers to affordable housing thresholds and targets

outside the Brentwood urban area. There is some ambiguity whether this encapsulates the LPA's preferred option for affordable housing outside the Brentwood urban area. Clarification is sought.

Support - Policy DM29: Accessible, Adaptable Development (p148)

Hansteen support this policy

Support - Policy DM30: Provision of Open Space in New Development (p150)

Hansteen support this policy.

Object - Policy DM36: Sustainable Drainage (p163)

Hansteen support this policy insofar as it is consistent with the "Technical Guidance to the NPPF". Table 1 of the Guidance sets out the instances where FRAs are required. In the case of Flood Zone 1 areas (like the industrial estates in West Horndon) it suggest a brief form of FRA is appropriate, unless the local considerations indicate otherwise. Hansteen seeks clarification of the factors that have resulted in the draft plan not accepting the advice given in the Technical Guidance.

Objection - Appendix 2: Preferred housing allocations and small sites allowance 2015 – 2030 (p193)

Hansteen is concerned that the proper master-planning of the combined sites would be unduly constrained by the density assumptions set out in Appendix 2. Both sites 20 and 21 are shown as being allocated for 250 dwellings. The density measured by dwellings per hectare (dph) works out at 39dph for site 20 and 25dph for site 21. If the density assumption is uniformly 39 dph across both sites this would lift site 21's contribution to the housing requirement to 384 dwellings (and the total across both sites to 634 dwellings). It is notable that no other housing allocation outside West Horndon assumes a density of lower than 40dph. Applying this to the combined sites 20/21, the total housing contribution rises to 650. Hansteen seeks clarification as to why the density assumptions for sites 20 and 21 are so different, and lower than elsewhere within Brentwood.

Objection – Appendix 3: Housing Trajectory (198)

The draft plan sets out the phasing assumptions for both Hansteen and Threadneedle's sites within the tables. Both are shown as contributing 50 dwellings per year from 2017/18 to 2021/22. It is likely Hansteen's estate will become available in lots over the next few years (rather than as whole). Parcels could be available for redevelopment to housing as early as 2015. In addition, the assumed rate of development in good housing sites can reach 1.25 -1.5 dwellings per month, which could result in 65 to 70 plus houses per year. Hansteen seeks clarification about how flexible the LPA would be in the event the development sites became available sooner and on the density and rates of development.

Hansteen's estate is an old and increasingly unviable, and a source of complaint from the residents of West Horndon . It is clear that its redevelopment to residential-led mixed use (along with Threadneedle's adjacent estate) is welcomed by local residents and the Parish Council. Both sites are previously developed land within the existing settlement boundary. That, along with the proximity of the railway station and the village centre, makes redevelopment to residential mixed use development a very sustainable option, and fully in accordance with the NPPF.

The sites can also make a significant contribution to Brentwood's objectively assessed housing need.

Hansteen welcomes much of the draft LDP and where our client objects it is largely seeking clarification.

