

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION (2016-2023)
Stage Two Hearing Statement Shropshire Local Plan Review
Matter 19 – Much Wenlock Place Plan Area (Policy S13)
Reference A0370, B-A292
Date Tuesday 26th November

Residential development for up to 120 dwellings on land adjoining the primary school and Hunters Gate, Much Wenlock

Please find below a response on behalf of Wenlock Estates in respect of Matter 19. We have responded here to those questions where the land owner is best able to assist the hearing session.

2. What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

The site allocation is for 120 dwellings with associated infrastructure.

3. What is the basis for this and is it justified?

Much Wenlock is identified as a key centre. It has a good range of facilities including primary and secondary schools, an active retail, employment, leisure and tourism offer, medical facilities, support services and infrastructure. The explanatory text to draft policy S13 provides further narrative which has informed preparatory work undertaken on behalf of the landowner to demonstrate that the site is deliverable. In particular, paragraph 5.181 states:-

“The Plan therefore identifies an appropriate growth level over the plan period of around 200 dwellings, along with 2 hectares of employment land provision in order to secure balanced growth. Development is focussed into a single housing allocation at Hunters Gate, where it is considered a maximum of 120 dwellings is acceptable in order to secure sufficient local housing supply and opportunity in the long term, but at the same time directly responding to and addressing the issue of flooding in and around

the site, and with adjoining residential areas. The development guidelines for the allocation at

Hunters Gate therefore are clear in the level of community benefit required to be delivered as a direct result of the scheme with regards to flood mitigation measures. In addition, it is considered the allocation offers the opportunity for a well-designed scheme, integrating green infrastructure and other open space features throughout.”

4. What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

The land is currently used for agriculture. It is an arable field adjacent to the town.

5. What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

The topography and geology of Much Wenlock, which sits within a natural bowl, is such that the town has experienced periodic surface water flooding for many years. This has impacted on property adjacent to the proposed allocation, particularly the Hunters Gate residential development. In developing proposals for the new local plan the Council has taken the opportunity to consider the potential for new development to address and mitigate the surface water flood events arising at the east end of the town. The development would also bring housing and policy compliant affordable housing to the community as well as being policy compliant in all respects.

6. What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

This is an edge of settlement location and so the landscape impacts of this will need to be considered. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in support of any subsequent planning application will help inform the landscape design and any mitigation required.

7. How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?

The proposed allocation is within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at the lowest risk of flooding and sequentially the site is therefore acceptable for development. However, land down stream of the proposed allocation does suffer from pluvial flooding in periods of high rainfall, this being a longstanding issue for Much Wenlock. The proposed local plan allocation provides an opportunity to manage flood water that crosses the site by providing onsite attenuation and further control measures to manage the flow of surface water.

It is an objective of the emerging policy that this allocation provides the mitigation to benefit the wider community. The land owners commissioned a Surface Water Flood study produced by McCloy Consulting (submitted as part of Regulation 19 response) to determine the mitigation required and an indicative plan has been produced to illustrate the land requirements for an attenuation basin within the proposed allocation to manage the effects of flood water off site.

8. What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

The development will require a new vehicular access to the A458. The design of this access has yet to be finalised with the Local Highway Authority although the indicative plan (attached) illustrates a traffic island. This has not been costed at this stage, but the plan illustrates the land required to provide infrastructure of this type.

In order to provide flood relief protection to properties downstream of the proposed allocation it is proposed to provide a 1.2m diameter culvert constructed below the adjacent Hunters Gate Development through to The Parks. In addition to this an 8,000m³ attenuation basin would be required within the proposed housing allocation, this represents an area of around 25% of the available land area. As a consequence the land area currently allocated will not provide all of the mitigation and housing numbers sought and a revision to the proposed allocated site boundary is therefore recommended.

9. Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

Yes, however to achieve the housing numbers proposed in the local plan (maximum of 120 dwellings) as well as the surface water and drainage infrastructure together with the green infrastructure/biodiversity net gain requirements, additional land will be necessary. It is suggested that this could be achieved by extending the existing proposed allocation by a minimum 1Ha. This is illustrated on the plan attached with this response. If this is extended to 1.36Ha additional land, there will additionally be an opportunity to provide a substantial landscape/biodiversity area along the Southern site boundary. Both of these options are illustrated in the plans attached.

10. What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

Much Wenlock is an attractive market town with comprehensive range of local services. It is well located with good transport connections to other

larger towns and to the West Midlands conurbation. There is therefore a latent demand for new housing and it is expected that this would be a site delivered early within the plan period.

11. Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

The proposed site allocation was produced prior to a detailed assessment of the land drainage requirements being undertaken. The attached plan illustrates an indicative layout for a maximum of 85 dwellings within the proposed site allocation having regard to the land required for drainage mitigation and surface water management. In addition the proposed site allocation does not recognise the contribution made by existing green infrastructure across the site (a tree belt has been planted which bisects the proposed allocation). This is maturing and has the potential for ecological as well as landscape impact value. To retain this tree belt would further reduce the land available for housing to approximately 73 dwellings. Furthermore, the proposed site allocation does not account for Biodiversity Net Gain requirements that are now required. It is therefore recommended that the site boundary be increased by a minimum of 1 hectare to ensure that the housing numbers can be delivered while providing also for the necessary drainage infrastructure and meeting the natural environment/Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. This is shown in the attached plan. A further option is also attached illustrating a 1.36HA extension which would provide further opportunity for green infrastructure and on site biodiversity gains.

Yours faithfully,