

# ST HELENS BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2020—2035 EXAMINATION

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**Agenda**  
**Session 4 – 09.30 Tuesday 8 June 2021**  
**Matter 3**  
**(Site Selection)**  
**Matter 4**  
**(Allocations, Safeguarded Land and Green Belt Boundaries**  
**Bold, Eccleston, Sutton Manor, Thatto Heath and St Helens Core**  
**Area)**

This matter considers the proposed allocations and safeguarded land in Bold (1EA, 1ES, 3HA, 4HA, 5HA), Eccleston (3HS), Sutton Manor (6HS), Thatto Heath (10EA, 9HA, 7HS) and St Helens Core Area (11EA, 6HA, 10HA, 8HS)

**Policies to be covered by Matter 4: LPA04, LPA04.1, LPA05, LPA05.1, LPA06**

### **Main Evidence Base**

SD022 – Employment Land Need and Supply Background Paper  
SD025 - Housing Need and Supply Background Paper  
SD026 - Developing the Strategy Background Paper  
SD027 – Bold Forest Garden Suburb Position Statement  
SD020 – Green Belt Review 2018  
GRE001 - St Helens Local Plan Draft Green Belt Review 2016  
SD013 – Infrastructure Delivery Plan  
SD031 – Statement of Common Ground with Highways England May 2021  
TRA005 – Bold Forest Garden Suburb Transport Review 2019  
LOC004 - Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan, July 2017  
SHBC001 & SHBC005 – Council response to Inspector’s preliminary questions  
SHBC010 - St Helens Local Plan Draft Schedule of Modifications  
SHBC012 – Site Selection Paper

### **Examination library link**

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-examination-library/>

### **Participants**

Please refer to the latest Hearings Programme (INSP009C)

### **Statements (including those that relate to Matter 3, Issue 6)**

St Helens Borough Council (Matters 3 & 4)

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Wainhomes (Matter 3)  
Home Builders Federation (Matter 3)  
Steve Muskett (Matter 3)  
Church Commissioners for England (Matter 3)  
Jones Homes (NW) Ltd (Matter 3)  
Redrow Homes (Matter 3)  
Eccleston Homes (Matter 3)  
Persimmon Homes (Matter 3)  
Parkside Regeneration LLP (Matter 3)  
Miller Homes (Matter 3)  
Murphy Group (Matter 3)  
Bold & Clock Action Group (Matter 4)  
ECRA (Matter 4)  
Peel L&P (Matter 3 & 4)  
Homes England (Matter 4)  
Omega St Helens Ltd (Matters 3 & 4)  
Mr A Brown Mulbury (Warrington) Ltd ((Matter 4)  
Nicolas Cliffe (Matter 4)  
Andrew Cotton (Matters 3 & 4)  
Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd (Matters 3 & 4)  
Mr A Jones (Matters 3 & 4)  
Story Homes (Matters 3 & 4)  
CPRE (Matters 3 & 4)  
Tritax Symmetry (Matters 3 & 4)  
Redrow Homes (NW) & Wallace Land Investments (Matters 3 & 4)  
Lovell Partnership Ltd (Matters 3 & 4)  
John Fairclough STHGB (Matter 4)

## **Introduction to the hearing session**

**Main Modifications (MMs) relevant to the session** – MM005, MM018, MM038, MM056 and Annexes 1 and 2 to SHBC010.

## **Matter 3, Issue 6: Site Selection**

Paragraph 4.6.10 of the Plan summarises the approach to the selection of sites to be removed from the Green Belt to meet development needs. The GB assessments referred to under Issue 2 are an important part of this process but other factors such as accessibility, infrastructure and deliverability have been taken into account (see also paragraphs 6.24 – 6.28 of SD026 and SD020).

- 14. Taking into account the range of factors considered in site selection, has the Council's approach been robust, positive, and justified?*

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*The Council refers to the SHLAA process, particularly in respect of urban land supply, and the Green Belt Review in respect of sites outside the urban area. Further detail is provided in SD026, SD025 and SD020. A further explanatory note has been prepared following the Week 1 hearing sessions (SHBC012).*

## **Issue 1: Omega South Western Extension (1EA) and Omega North Western Extension (1ES)**

Site 1EA is allocated to meet Warrington's needs. Site 1ES is safeguarded to meet St Helens long term needs. Site 1EA was the subject of a call-in inquiry in late April/early May 2021, albeit that the site subject to the called in application was larger than the proposed allocation (75 ha compared to 31 ha). The decision on the application is likely to be made later in the year.

- 1. Do the Green Belt assessments support the allocation and safeguarded land and demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of the land from the Green Belt?*
- 2. In relation to these exceptional circumstances, is Site 1EA justified to meet Warrington's needs, having particular regard to the stage that Warrington's LP has reached?*
- 3. If exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated have these been clearly articulated in the Plan?*

*The Council acknowledge that the exceptional circumstances could be more clearly articulated in the LP.*

- 4. Are the configuration and scale of the allocation and safeguarded land justified taking into account development needs and the Green Belt assessments?*

*4a. If the called in application was permitted during the examination period would it be appropriate to increase the size of the allocation?*

- 5. Would the adverse impacts of developing Site 1EA (Green Belt impacts, traffic, air quality) outweigh the benefits?*
- 6. Is Site 1EA deliverable, taking into account any offsite transport infrastructure required?*

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7. *Should Site 1ES be allocated rather than safeguarded so that it can contribute to meeting needs in the Plan period?*

8. *Are the indicative site areas and appropriate uses for Sites 1EA and 1ES within Tables 4.1 and 4.7 justified and effective?*

*8a. Is the site area for Site 1ES in Table 4.7 on page 50 of the LP accurate (30 ha)?*

9. *Are the requirements for Site 1EA within Policy LPA04.1 (Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5) and Appendix 5 (Site Profile) and for Site 1ES within Appendix 7 (Site Profile) positively prepared and effective?*

*SHBC010 (MM005 and Annexes 1 and 2) proposes more specific requirements for sustainable modes of travel.*

10. *Are there any barriers to Site 1EA coming forward in the Plan period?*

## **Issue 2: Bold Forest Garden Suburb (4HA), Land south of Gartons Lane (5HA) and Former Penlake Industrial Estate (3HA)**

Bold Forest Garden Suburb (4HA) is the largest allocation in the LP with an indicative capacity of almost 3,000 homes, albeit that most of the development would be delivered beyond the Plan period. The allocation is supported by the Bold Forest Garden Suburb Position Statement and the Bold Forest Transport Review.

Land south of Gartons Lane (5HA) is also identified as a strategic site anticipated to deliver around 570 homes most of which would be within the Plan period. The former farm buildings and church site fronting Gartons Lane may need to be included in the allocation.

The former Penlake Industrial Estate (3HA) is under-construction and therefore should be treated as a commitment rather than allocation.

The Council, in response to preliminary questions, has indicated that MMs would ensure that Greenways are referenced in Policy LPA.05.1 and the Site Profile for 4HA.

11. *Does the Plan reflect the current status of Penlake Industrial Estate (3HA) as a commitment?*

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*The Council has agreed to delete the allocation and show Site 3HA as a commitment. Policy LPA05, the supporting tables and the Site Profile will need to be modified (MMs).*

12. *Do the Green Belt assessments support the allocations 4HA and 5HA and demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of the land from the Green Belt?*

13. *If exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated have these been clearly articulated in the Plan?*

*The Council acknowledge that the exceptional circumstances could be more clearly articulated in the LP.*

14. *Are the configuration and scale of the allocations justified taking into account development needs, the Green Belt assessments and land ownerships?*

*14a. In relation to land south of Gartons Lane, should the former farm buildings and church site fronting Gartons Lane be included in the allocation?*

15. *Is the allocation of Site 4HA broadly consistent with the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (AAP)?*

*The Council makes reference to Policy BFP1 of the AAP in particular. Policy BFP SN1 is also relevant.*

16. *Would the adverse impacts of developing Sites 4HA and 5HA (including Green Belt impacts, traffic, air quality, flood risk, loss of agricultural land and equestrian business, biodiversity) outweigh the benefits?*

17. *Are the requirements for Sites 4HA and 5HA within Policy LPA05.1 (Section 2) and Appendix 5 (Site Profiles) positively prepared and effective, particularly in relation to ensuring Green Infrastructure and sustainable modes of travel are delivered alongside the development?*

*SHBC010 (MM005, MM038 and Annexes 1 and 2) propose more specific requirements for sustainable modes of travel, Greenways and infrastructure contributions.*

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*17a. Should there be a closer alignment between the requirements for Sites 4HA and 5HA e.g. tree cover?*

*18. Are the net developable areas, minimum densities, and indicative site capacities within Table 4.5 justified and effective?*

*19. Should the Bold Forest Garden Suburb (4HA) have a bespoke policy in view of its scale?*

*19b. Should any bespoke policy (or Policy LPA05.1) include a requirement to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document?*

*The Council considers that there is merit in having a bespoke policy in the Plan for the allocation of the Bold Forest. This would require a MM.*

*20. Will infrastructure to support the allocations be delivered at the right time and in the right place?*

*The Council draws particular attention to SD027 (Bold Forest Garden Suburb Position Statement) which outlines the latest information regarding infrastructure needs for the site.*

*21. Are there any barriers to Sites 4HA and 5HA coming forward as anticipated by the housing trajectory, for example land assembly/multiple ownerships?*

### **Issue 3: Eccleston (3HS), Sutton Manor (6HS), and Thatto Heath (10EA, 9HA, 7HS)**

The Plan proposes to safeguard the former Eccleston Golf Course (3HS), Land east of Chapel Lane, Sutton Manor (6HS) and Elton Head Road, Thatto Heath (7HS). There is a hybrid application pending at Eccleston Golf Course for some 830 dwellings, retail and a children's nursery.

The Former Linkway Distribution Park (9HA) is identified as a strategic site anticipated to deliver around 350 homes within the Plan period. It has planning permission so should be treated as a commitment rather than as an allocation.

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Land at Lea Green Farm (10EA) is completed and therefore should be treated as such rather than as an allocation (MM056).

22. *Does the Plan reflect the current status of Former Linkway Distribution Park (9HA) (with planning permission) and Lea Green Farm (10EA) (completed)?*

*SHBC010 (MM005 and Annex 1) proposes MMs to reflect the current status of Sites 9HA and 10EA. The Council notes that Site 9HA is subject to a reserved matters application.*

*22a. Should Table 4.5 of the LP and the housing trajectory be updated to reflect the reserved matters proposal for 294 dwellings?*

23. *What is the up-to-date position on the application for development at Eccleston Golf Course?*
24. *Do the Green Belt assessments support the safeguarded land (3HS, 6HS, 7HS) and demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of the land from the Green Belt?*
25. *If exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated have these been clearly articulated in the Plan?*

*The Council acknowledge that the exceptional circumstances could be more clearly articulated in the LP.*

26. *Is the configuration and scale of the safeguarded land justified taking into account long-term development needs and the Green Belt assessments?*
27. *Should any of the safeguarded sites be allocated rather than safeguarded so that they can contribute to meeting needs in the Plan period?*

*27a. If it was found necessary for soundness to allocate additional sites to meet housing needs, potentially utilising safeguarded sites, what additional evidence would be required and what would be the implications for the timescale of the examination?*

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28. *Are the requirements for the sites within Appendix 7 (Site Profiles) necessary, positively prepared, and effective?*

*SHBC010 (MM005 and Annex 2) propose more specific requirements for sustainable modes of travel.*

29. *Are the net developable areas, minimum densities, and indicative site capacities within Table 4.8 justified and effective?*

## **Issue 4: Gerards Park, College Street (11EA), Land east of City Road, Cowley Hill (6HA), Moss Nook Urban Village (10HA) and land south of A580, Windle (8HS)**

Gerards Park (11EA) has an extant planning permission and site clearance is underway. An application for up to 1,100 dwellings and mixed use floorspace is pending on land east of City Road (6HA). Moss Nook Urban Village (10HA) has outline planning permission and a pending reserved matters application. Site preparation appeared to be underway in January 2021.

The Plan proposes safeguarding 52 ha of land at south of A580, Windle (8HS).

30. *What is the up-to-date position on the allocations 11EA, 6HA and 10HA?*

31. *Should the status of any of 11EA, 6HA and 10HA be changed from allocations to commitments?*

*The Council acknowledge that Site 11EA should change from an allocation to a commitment as it is under-construction. MMs would be required to Tables 4.1 and 4.4 and the Site Profile.*

32. *Does the Green Belt assessment support the safeguarded land (8HS) and demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of the land from the Green Belt?*

33. *If exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated have these been clearly articulated in the Plan?*

*The Council acknowledge that the exceptional circumstances could be more clearly articulated in the LP.*

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34. *Is the configuration and scale of the safeguarded land justified taking into account long-term development needs and the Green Belt assessments?*

35. *Should 8HS be allocated rather than safeguarded so that it can contribute to meeting needs in the Plan period?*

*35a. If it was found necessary for soundness to allocate additional sites to meet housing needs, potentially utilising safeguarded sites such as 8HS, what additional evidence would be required and what would be the implications for the timescale of the examination?*

36. *Are the requirements for the Site 8HS within Appendix 7 (Site Profiles) necessary, positively prepared, and effective?*

*SHBC010 (MM005 and Annex 2) propose more specific requirements for sustainable modes of travel.*

37. *Is the configuration of Site 10HA justified taking into account the extant planning permission?*

38. *Are the requirements for Sites 6HA and 10HA within Policy LPA05.1 (Section 2) and Appendix 5 (Site Profiles) positively prepared and effective?*

*SHBC010 (MM005 and Annex 1) propose more specific requirements for sustainable modes of travel and highways.*

39. *In particular in relation to Site 10HA, will the Plan ensure that any playing fields lost will be replaced by the equivalent or better provision?*

*39a. What specific requirements are included within the planning permission in respect of replacement provision?*

40. *Are the indicative site areas, appropriate uses, net developable areas, minimum densities and indicative site capacities within Tables 4.1, 4.5 and 4.8 justified and effective?*

*The Council suggests that Table 4.5 could be amended to reflect*

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*the resolution to grant planning permission at Site 6HA (MM).*

41. *Does the Plan contain sufficient safeguards so that the development of Site 6HA would not prejudice adjoining employment uses?*
42. *Will infrastructure to support the allocations be delivered at the right time and in the right place?*
43. *Are there any barriers to Sites 6HA and 10HA coming forward as anticipated by the housing trajectory?*

## **Issue 5: Other Green Belt boundaries**

44. *Are the Green Belt boundaries elsewhere in Bold, Eccleston, Sutton Manor, Thatto Heath and St Helens Core Area justified?*

*The Council notes that, in addition to changes as a result of proposed allocations and safeguarding, Appendix I includes some further proposed changes (anomalies). It is also noted that a further change at Carr Mill Road is required to reflect the alignment of the A580 (MM).*

## **Actions arising from the hearing session**