

**Newcastle upon Tyne Development and Allocations Plan Examination in Public
Response to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions**

Made on Behalf of Ashdale Land and Property Company Ltd

Matter 2 – Economic Prosperity

Preamble

- 2.1 This Hearing Statement is made on behalf of Ashdale Land and Property Company Ltd (our 'Client'), in advance of making verbal representations at the Examination in Public of the Newcastle upon Tyne Development and Allocations Plan (DAP). Our Client has made comments throughout the DAP consultation process, including at the Pre-Submission Draft stage in November 2018.
- 2.2 This Hearing Statement is specifically in reference to our Client's land interests south of Rotary Way, North Gosforth (the 'Site'), which was removed from the Green Belt following the adoption of the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (CSUCP) in 2015. The Site is proposed to be left as white land in the DAP but would be washed over by a Wildlife Enhancement Corridor via draft policy DM29: Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Habitats, and is referenced in draft policy DM28: Trees and Landscaping.
- 2.3 Our Client's land was specifically removed from the Green Belt in the CSUCP in order to facilitate development of the Site during the plan period. It was anticipated that the land would therefore be allocated as part of a subsequent allocations document, however the emerging DAP in its current form does not propose to allocate the land for any specific purpose.
- 2.4 Our response to the relevant questions in Matter 2: Economic Prosperity are found below. We have had specific regard to the tests of soundness outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework'); namely that the policies in the DAP must be justified, effective, positively planned and consistent with national policy in order to be found sound. As the DAP was submitted to the Secretary of State by Newcastle City Council (the 'Council') after the transition deadline set in Annex 1 of the February 2019 Framework, we refer to the most up to date version of the Framework where appropriate within this Hearing Statement.

Issue: Whether the policies seeking to support employment and retail provision in Newcastle are justified, effective, and consistent with national policy and in general conformity with the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne, adopted March 2015 (CSUCP).

2.5 Our Client does not wish to make written representations on Question 2.1.

Question 2.2 Is there a suitable range and choice of proposed and existing employment site allocations, in terms of location, type, quality and size to meet the requirements of the CSUCP?

2.6 The CSUCP states, in Policy CS5: Employment and Economic Growth Priorities that Newcastle will continue to develop a diverse economy with accessible employment, and ensure a range high quality economic development locations are available and attractive to the market. However, we do not consider that the Council have allocated enough land to ensure a range of employment uses, specifically in relation to commercial roadside uses. Our Client's Site is the most suitable and available site for such purposes, of which there is clear demand, and we propose the land is allocated for such use.

2.7 The Council have approached the subject of commercial roadside uses before through local policy. The Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in 1998, allocated land through policy ED1.1 to meet the strategic aim of '*a range and choice of sites and opportunities by size, location and quality which can secure economic and employment growth for the city and the region*'. In order to assist in doing this, the UDP allocated a range of different use classes including '*Essential Services for Trunk Road Users*'. This specific allocation was the land north of Rotary Way, immediately north of our Site.

2.8 The Supporting text to Policy ED1.1 stated:

"The City Council believe additional services are required immediately to the north of Newcastle to cater for the needs of travellers. The proposed site at North Brunton is ideally located next to a major junction on the A1. The potential of the site is, however, limited because of its small size as the Council does not consider that the expansion of the site northwards across the existing lane would be environmentally acceptable. The range of service uses which could be provided is therefore limited and the key facilities of parking, fuel, toilets, refreshments and picnic areas are likely to be the only acceptable uses."

2.9 It is clearly evident that the land north of Rotary Way that was allocated for '*Essential Services for Trunk Road Users*' was a small site to provide limited level of roadside services due to site constraints. However, the Council consider, in their response to our Regulation 18 Consultation Representations, that additional trunk road services are not required at this location.

2.10 Despite this, the land north of Rotary Way is now at full occupancy with no further land available for development. There is no other potential roadside service area within the

Council's boundaries except our Client's Site, and our Client has spoken with numerous commercial roadside operators who are expressed strong interest in the Site and are willing to pursue delivery. We therefore consider that the Site should be allocated within the DAP, either under policy DM1 or as a standalone policy specific to commercial roadside uses to reflect the availability and suitability of the Site, and the intention to deliver uses where the demand is evident and its delivery would meet the aims and aspirations of the CSUCP.

- 2.11 Given the economic objective stated within Paragraph 8 of the Framework is *'to help build a strong responsive and competitive economy by ensuring sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places'*, the Council are failing to consider one of the three overarching objectives of sustainable development by not allocating land for employment use where there is clear demand. This makes the Employment allocation policies in the DAS unsound.

Question 2.3 Was the Methodology used to assess and select the proposed employment site allocations appropriate? Were reasonable alternatives considered and tested?

- 2.12 The Newcastle Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) has assessed the Site as a potential housing and employment site. As part of its conclusions, the HELAA has assessed that the Site is Suitable, Available and Achievable for both uses, and that the Site is developable. However, the HELAA also concludes that the Site is not currently deliverable, ostensibly on the basis the Site has access constraints. We do not agree with the HELAA conclusion that the Site is not deliverable.
- 2.13 The Site Access Appraisal Note that was submitted as part of our 2018 Pre-Submission Draft Representations was produced on the basis of the commercial roadside use of the Site and considered access arrangements into the Site. The Site Access Appraisal Note proposes an access junction solution that could facilitate access and ensure delivery of the Site. This is mirrored by the Council's DAP Schedule of Representations (by Policy), where the Council's Highways Team indicated that they considered that a safe site access was possible to serve the Site. The Access Note is high level and a pre-cursor to more in-depth discussions with the City Council's Highways Team, but clearly shows access is feasible and access should not be considered a constraint to deny deliverability.
- 2.14 Despite the Site being Suitable, Available and Achievable in the HELAA, the Site is not included in the Employment Land Review, or its Appendix 3: Schedule of Potential New Employment Site Assessments. This is clearly an oversight, and the Site should be considered so that it helps support the economy and ensure that economic development locations are available and attractive to the market.
- 2.15 With the Site being deliverable in the short term to meet the demand for commercial roadside uses, it is considered that the Council should reconsider its methodology to ensure the

evidence base has investigated all possible employment opportunities to support economic objectives within the Framework, and the current policies are not justified on this basis. The DAP employment policies are therefore unsound.

Question 2.4- 2.9

2.16 Our Client does not wish to make written representations on Questions 2.4 – 2.9

Question 2.10 Should a greater mix of uses be accommodated on employment site allocations?

2.17 As has been set out in response to Questions 2.2 and 2.3, we consider that the Council have failed to consider all options for potential uses on land to be allocated for employment purposes. Our Client's Site is well located to provide commercial roadside uses to complement those that exist on land north of Rotary Way and consider that the Site should be allocated as part of the DAP employment policies.

2.18 The DAP has no mechanism in place to accommodate commercial roadside uses, and the policies are not flexible enough to accommodate such uses. We therefore consider that a greater reflection of potential employment uses should be included within the DAP employment policies as previously stated, either through amendments to Policy DM1 or a separate commercial roadside use policy.

Question 2.11- 2.17

2.19 Our Client does not wish to make written representations on Questions 2.11 – 2.17.