

**Gladman Developments Ltd**  
**Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (2011-2031)**  
**Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications**



**September 2017**

## TELFORD AND WREKIN MAIN MODIFICATIONS CONSULTATION

### 1.1 Main Modification MM1

- 1.1.1 The Main Modification states *“The Council will continue to consider this matter in the light of emerging evidence. It does not at present rule out the potential apportionment of some of the Local Plan’s housing requirement towards meeting the needs of the GBBC HMA.”*
- 1.1.2 Gladman are concerned with the drafting of this main modification. Previously, when the Council considered its OAN to be in the region of 502 dwellings per annum (a requirement of 10,040 dwellings over the plan period, 2011-2031) the Council accepted that allocating some of their housing requirement towards the GBBC HMA was possible, because the total housing requirement within the Local Plan was a “super growth” policy-on scenario, to support the economic growth in the Borough.
- 1.1.3 However, the Council have now accepted the figure of 864 dwellings per annum as their full, objectively assessed, market and affordable housing needs, which will meet simply their own needs for housing, meaning the “super growth” scenario no longer exists. The 864 dwellings per annum therefore represents the objectively assessed needs of Telford, and does not include an apportionment towards the unmet needs of the GBBC HMA.
- 1.1.4 Gladman consider that a review mechanism should be written into the plan, otherwise there is a serious danger that this issue will simply not be tackled, let alone resolved. The 864 dpa OAN figure did not contain any apportionment of need towards the GBBC HMA, and therefore this main modification is not sound. It is considered that Telford and Wrekin’s position on the issue of unmet housing need from the West Midlands conurbation could amount to a failure of the Duty to Co-operate.
- 1.1.5 Gladman suggest that the following review mechanism would be appropriate to be inserted into the Local Plan:

**The existence of unmet housing need arising outside Telford and Wrekin Borough will not render this Plan out of date. However, the Plan will be reviewed if evidence demonstrates that significant housing needs arising outside the Borough should be met within the Borough and cannot adequately be addressed without a review.**

**Where the evidence and the duty to cooperate process clearly indicates that there is a housing need that cannot be met within the administrative boundaries of the authority in which the need arises and part or all of the need could most appropriately be met within Telford and Wrekin Borough, the Council will seek to identify the most appropriate sites to meet this need and will review the Local Plan to do this, should it be required.**

## 1.2 Main Modification MM5

- 1.2.1 Gladman consider that the plan should support the delivery of a “*minimum*” of 17,280 dwellings, rather than “*approximately*” to be in line with §47 of the NPPF’s aim to “*boost significantly the supply of housing.*”

## 1.3 Main Modifications MM8, MM9, MM10 and MM12

- 1.3.1 Gladman still consider that policies SP1, SP2 and SP3 should state that the requirements in Telford, Newport and the Rural Area should be expressed as minimums, especially now that the Council’s OAN has been confirmed to be 864 dwellings per annum.
- 1.3.2 Previously, it was argued that because of the Council’s policy on uplift of the housing requirement, there was not the need for the same level of flexibility within the Development Plan. However, Gladman consider that to ensure flexibility, in the event that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, and to be in line with §47 of the NPPF’s aim to “*boost significantly the supply of housing*”, the Policies should be redrafted to state the requirements are “*minimums*”.
- 1.3.3 With regard to Policy SP3, Gladman support the modification relating to best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV). The policy (with regard to BMV) is now in line with §112 of the NPPF.

### Edgmond

- 1.3.4 It is extremely surprising that Edgmond was not chosen for further expansion in the emerging Local Plan. The Council’s own Rural Settlement Technical Paper places Edgmond at the top of the sustainability scale of all rural settlements, but it is only earmarked for very limited infill in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.3.5 Between 2011 and 2017, consented schemes in Edgmond only totalled 24 dwellings. Local residents have expressed concern over development despite the need for further housing within the village to support the ongoing expansion of Harper Adams University.
- 1.3.6 It is all the more startling that the Council seems to have ignored the accommodation needs of staff in the expanding Harper Adams University. Granting planning permission for 24 “infill” units within the last 6 years cannot possibly meet the needs of this expanding institution. The straightjacketed approach to settlement expansion has its own harmful consequences: it promotes unsustainable patterns of travel (contrary to §29 of the NPPF) and undermines the ability of people to live close to their place of work (§37 of the NPPF).
- 1.3.7 The infrastructure, facilities and services of Edgmond are more than capable of accommodating a far higher level of growth. Indeed, it is more likely that further development will maintain and enhance the vitality of the settlement, consistent with the objectives of NPPF §55. This latter policy represents a step change in the Government’s attitude to residential development in rural areas, recognising that the countryside will have to accept growth if its communities are to remain vital and if the challenge of an ageing population is to be met. The emerging Local Plan requirement for the rural area is 1,000 dwellings (for which Gladman consider should be expressed as minima). It

would be extraordinary if the most sustainable rural settlement was to accommodate only a tiny fraction of this need.

- 1.3.8 Gladman reinforce their previous concerns that insufficient development is being directed towards the identified rural settlements. Gladman do not consider the Council's pro-rata allocation to the rural is an appropriate approach to distributing growth, and there should be serious consideration for the 5 identified settlements to take a higher level of growth.
- 1.3.9 Gladman do not consider that the Policy as drafted any flexibility to address the needs of the rural area. With this in mind, Gladman consider adding to Policy SP3 as follows:

**Housing development will be permitted in the open countryside, adjacent to the built up limits of identified settlements where:**

- i. There is an identified housing need to which the proposed development can contribute; and**
- ii. The proposals will not have a negative impact on the character of the settlement and the capacity of infrastructure and services in the settlement; and**
- iii. The proposal is within a reasonable safe walking distance of services (such as a school and shop) or is within reasonable safe walking distance of a public transport interchange providing access by public transport to services; and**
- iv. The proposal will not adversely affect environmental assets (including areas of ecological value, areas of high landscape value and designated heritage assets) unless these can be suitably mitigated in line with other policies in the Plan.**

- 1.3.10 Adding this to the Policy provides the necessary flexibility in the event that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply or relevant policies are out of date for some other reason. In addition, the Rural Area housing requirement is heavily reliant upon two brownfield sites (Crudgington (111 dwellings) and Allscott (470 dwellings)) which, whilst with extant planning permission, have this far made no substantial progress.

- 1.3.11 There is a real possibility that these sites will not deliver the full, or perhaps any, housing over the plan period. Both sites are still being advertised for sale and at no stage have a reserved matters application been forthcoming. In addition, in Allscott's case, the S106 costs total £4,702,020 (including providing a new primary school on site). Building flexibility into the plan ensures that the Council can deliver the rural area requirement in full, in the event that the aforementioned sites do not deliver as anticipated by the Council.

**1.4 MM15**

- 1.4.1 Gladman support the Main Modification to Policy SP4. The Policy, as redrafted is in line with §14 of the NPPF, and is far less restrictive than the previous drafting of the Policy.

**1.5 MM37**

- 1.5.1 As with MM5, Gladman consider that the plan should support the delivery of a “*minimum*” of 17,280 dwellings, rather than approximately to be in line with §47 of the NPPF’s aim to “*boost significantly the supply of housing.*”

**1.6 MM38**

- 1.6.1 The Main Modification states “*The housing requirement set out in Policy HO1 has been informed in part by the objectively assessed needs identified in the Telford and Wrekin Objectively Assessed Housing Need report by Peter Brett Associates (March 2015).*”
- 1.6.2 Gladman do not consider that the OAN assessment prepared by Peter Brett Associates has “*in part*” informed the housing requirement set out in Policy HO1. On the contrary, Gladman consider that the OAN adopted by the Inspector in the Kestrel Close appeal was derived from a different methodology which ultimately concluded a far higher OAN for the Borough. In the circumstances, Gladman consider that Main Modification should be deleted from the plan.

**1.7 MM39**

- 1.7.1 The Council’s Main Modification MM39 states that “*The Council will identify further housing sites to achieve the Local Plan’s housing requirement through the preparation of a Housing Site Allocations Local Plan.*” Whilst Gladman do not object to this approach in principle, the following points should be noted:
- 1.7.2 The Policies, as drafted, are still based upon the submission version of the plan, and are restrictive in nature and have not been altered since the uplift of the OAN. In the circumstance that we now find ourselves in, the OAN is higher than previously drafted (and planned for) and the plan has no new allocations at this stage. Gladman consider this method to be problematic. The Plan will be complemented in the future by a Site Allocations DPD, but the Site Allocations DPD could be in conflict with the existing policies as drafted.
- 1.7.3 For example, if one of the previous SUEs suggested by the Council previously for allocation (but now deleted from the draft Local Plan) were to be considered for allocation again by the Council, it would be in direct conflict with the restrictive policies contained within the Local Plan. Given that the allocations DPD will be a “*daughter document*” to the Local Plan, as opposed to superseding it, all allocations within the DPD would be in direct conflict with the superior plan, i.e. the Local Plan. This would be unsound.
- 1.7.4 In addition, the Plan lacks the flexibility to be able to rectify any potential housing land supply shortfalls in the future, should the Council’s Site Allocations Plan not come forward. Telford and

Wrekin have a history of failing to complement an adopted Core Strategy or Local Plan with a Site Allocations document.

1.7.5 There is potential for the Site Allocations DPD to take 2 years at best, if not 3.

## **1.8 MM48**

1.8.1 Gladman are concerned over the wording of Main Modification 48. The modification states:

**...the current identified shortfall in site allocations does raise some uncertainty regarding delivery towards the end of the plan period.**

1.8.2 Gladman are concerned that the emerging Plan does not provide enough flexibility, should the Council be unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. The Council's five year housing land supply was found to be as low as 5.03 years in the recent Kestrel Close, Newport appeal decision (APP/C3240/W/16/3144445). The Council's five year housing land supply has been on a downward trajectory since submission of the emerging Local Plan for examination.

1.8.3 The Local Plan needs to have sufficient flexibility built into it to allow sustainable development to come forward prior to the Site Allocations DPD. There is a significant chance, as history in Telford has shown, that a Site Allocations document will not come forward. In this event, the Development Plan needs to be flexible enough to allow sustainable development to be brought forward to continue to maintain a five year housing land supply.

## **1.9 MM62**

1.9.1 Gladman support the deletion of the Lilleshall Strategic Landscape Area from the emerging Local Plan, for the reasons set out in their hearing statement for Matter 6 of the Examination.

## **1.10 MM68, MM69, MM71 and MM72**

1.10.1 The Council's revised policies BE4 and BE5 are not in accordance with §134 of the NPPF. Gladman are concerned how developments that cause less than substantial harm would be considered against the development plan policies within the emerging Local Plan.

1.10.2 The Policies should state that for developments that result in less than substantial harm, an unweighted planning balance should be undertaken to determine whether the proposed development is in accordance with the development plan.

## **1.11 MM90 and MM91**

1.11.1 As with MM5, Gladman consider that the plan should support the delivery of a "minimum" of 17,280 dwellings total provision, and a "minimum" of 1,000 dwellings in the rural area, rather than approximately to be in line with §47 of the NPPF's aim to "boost significantly the supply of housing."