Memo

Our ref 12110/07/JG/JG
Date 14 June 2016
To South Northamptonshire Council
From Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners
Copy Burcote Developments Limited

Subject South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2A – Representations on behalf of Burcote Developments Limited

Issue: Urban – Scale of Housing

Question 19 – Should any additional housing sites be identified in the urban area and if so how much and where should these be located?

Yes

Please explain your response:

Towcester and Brackley are the main settlements of the district and should remain the focus for accommodating housing growth over the Plan period and beyond. Of these two settlements, Towcester is the largest, most sustainable and able to accommodate more development than currently planned for. Development in Towcester has also not progressed at the same pace as in Brackley, primarily for reasons of land ownership/control, where significant areas of allocated housing land fall within limited ownerships.

Further land at Towcester should be allocated in the Part 2 Plan, to de-risk the Joint Core Strategy from delivery failure. It is important that the delivery of housing is not constrained, as it has been to date, by a reduced number of developer ‘outlets’.

Land promoted by Burcote Developments Limited at Burcote Green, to the south of the allocated Towcester South SUE, should be allocated in the Part 2 Plan to ensure that the full housing requirement for South Northamptonshire District is delivered within the Plan period. The land at Burcote Green has been submitted to the Council in response to the Call for Sites exercise.

The Burcote Green proposal is at an advanced stage of preparation towards submission as an application for planning permission. Public consultation has been held over a period since 2013 and an EIA Scoping Opinion has been received from South Northamptonshire Council in June 2014, following a submitted request that the Council forms a scoping opinion by the land promoter.
Issue: Affordable Housing

Question 30 – Should sites be allocated in the urban areas to boost affordable housing provision?

Yes

Please explain your response:

The Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies a need for 3200 affordable homes in the District over the Plan period to 2029.

Since 2011, only 407 affordable houses were delivered. While planning permissions exist for additional (approx. 1000) further affordable houses, paragraph 7.11 of the Part 2A Plan Consultation document rightly identifies that this figure may reduce as reserved matters and associated viability matters are addressed. Significantly, of the sites with planning permission, the allocated Towcester South Urban Extension (Towcester vale) has not been required to deliver the district’s Core Strategy affordable housing target of 40%, but committed to only a 10% contribution. As the largest single development in the district, this is a considerable delivery failure of affordable housing provision.

Paragraph 7.11 of the Part 2A Consultation document points out that consequent on the delivery figures to date and as predicted:

*It is clear that in order to deliver its requirement for affordable housing the Council will need to boost supply over the remaining plan period.*

Land at Burcote Green, submitted in response to the Call for Sites exercise, should be allocated for housing development. This site, when brought forward within the Plan period, will deliver 340 affordable housing units (at 40% of the proposed 850 dwellings). This will make a valuable contribution towards the district’s affordable housing requirement, to meet the needs of Towcester, where there is a clear and identified need for this type of accommodation. This is particularly the case to support the Council’s economic strategy where investment in Towcester and around Silverstone will be reliant on labour that must find affordable accommodation locally.

Issue: Transport and Accessibility

Question 38 - Are there other transport and accessibility principles that need to be included?

Yes

Please explain your response:

The West Northamptonshire Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identifies the provision of the A5 Relief Road and junction associated with the Towcester South SUE as being a required element of highway infrastructure to support the development proposed for the Plan period. A cost of approx. £31m is identified to come partly from central government and partly for contributions from developers.
The highway solution to accommodate the Towcester South SUE has been revised over time to reduce the positive strategic impact of the A5 relief road and this route now forms an external distributor road to the prosed urban extension. We understand that Highways England has accepted this reduced scope of highway solution. However, the allocation of land at Burcote Green would improve the infrastructure provision in this location and additional contributions to the relief road could provide a better solution than that currently proposed as part of the Towcester South SUE.

It would enable an upgrade of Burcote Lane to the A413, which would allow better, more direct connections (including bus connections) between Towcester Silverstone Village and Silverstone Business Park. Burcote Developments has been discussing these bus connections with the local operator, Stagecoach, who supports the proposals. The Burcote Lane upgrade will also deliver a high quality cycle route between Towcester, Silverstone Village and Silverstone Business Park, which will be of significant benefit in the context of the strategic importance of the economic objectives for these areas.

 Allocation of the land at Burcote Green should be confirmed in the Part 2 Plan and the additional transport infrastructure improvements itemised in this policy allocation.

**Issue: Economic Advantage**

**Question 39 - Are there other economic advantage options that need to be included?**

Yes

**Please explain your response:**

Whilst the WNJCS identifies strategic employment land, additional employment land opportunities should be identified in the Part 2A Plan.

Additional land should be made available at Towcester, the principle town and most sustainable location for employment and housing development in the district. Towcester, despite its scale, exhibits high levels of out-commuting and measures to address this, along with the planned growth of the settlement, should be embedded within the Local Plan.

Land put forward for allocation at Burcote Green will provide for small-scale business development to support the growth of indigenous industries, knowledge-based start-ups and local enterprises looking to secure a location close to where employees live.

The master plan for Burcote Green, submitted with the response to the Call for Sites exercise demonstrates how a local centre will provide for around 100 jobs in business, retail and education services.