North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

Examination

Joint Position and Delivery Statement

By

North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit,
Kettering Borough Council
And
Persimmon Homes Midlands

Policy 38
Rothwell North SUE
Examination Library Reference SCG3

October 2015
1 Introduction

1.1 This statement has been jointly prepared by officers of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (NNJPU), Kettering Borough Council (KBC) and Persimmon Homes Midlands (PHM). It seeks to inform the Examination of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and provides an update on the progress of the Rothwell North Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), as detailed in Policy 38 of the Focused Changes to the Pre-Submission Plan (June 2015). The particular focus of the statement is to demonstrate the site's deliverability and confirm that the allocation of the site in Policy 38 is sound.

1.2 The statement considers the background to the allocation and outlines the progress of the planning application currently being considered by KBC. It also examines the viability of the scheme in the context of the infrastructure requirements, and the timetable for delivery. The statement demonstrates how PHM is working positively and proactively with KBC to ensure that a SUE is brought forward in line with the general principles established in JCS Policy 38. It does not, of course, prejudge the formal consideration by KBC of the current or any future planning application.

2 Background

2.1 The rationale for the selection of Rothwell North as the preferred location for growth of the town has been based on a sound sustainability assessment and has taken into account the relative benefits that development of this site can bring. A key benefit is the construction of the Strategic Link Road to the north of the town between the A6 and the B576 Rothwell to Desborough Road. This will help relieve traffic congestion in Rothwell by diverting traffic bound for the A14 away from the town centre onto the A6. The location of the site also allows for additional land to be provided to enable the expansion of the Montsaye Academy and for a new employment area to be located with easy access onto the A6.
2.2 The provision of a Strategic Development Area at Rothwell was initially identified in the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan (2001). This was followed by the production of a series of draft Local Plans which never proceeded to adoption including:

- the Kettering Local Plan Review (2001 – 2004 which was not proceeded with as a result of the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act);
- the Rothwell and Desborough Urban Extension Area Action Plan (2006 – 2010); and
- the Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document (2008 – 2012 when it was put on hold whilst work progressed on the review of the Joint Core Strategy which is now the subject of this Examination and includes, in the Focused Changes, the Rothwell North Sustainable Urban Extension as one of the strategic allocations).

2.3 The Emergent Draft North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (August 2012) identified North Rothwell as being a ‘Strategic site or broad location for housing that [is] not yet committed’. The specific policies for the strategic sites were not included as part of this draft but a later consultation paper on Strategic Housing and Employment Sites (August 2013) dealt specifically with the proposed allocations. Rothwell North SUE was included as a proposed allocation, however a specific policy for the site was not drawn up as the Joint Planning Committee had agreed it was unnecessary in the case where a planning application had already been submitted. This remained the case in the Pre-Submission Draft Plan (January 2015), where again Rothwell North featured, in paragraph 9.17, as a proposed SUE but not through a dedicated policy. However, the June 2015 Focused Changes have now added a Policy 38 specifically for Rothwell North SUE which sets out the development principles for the site and thereby brings it in line with the other proposed strategic allocations.

2.4 Policy 38 outlines the development principles key objectives for the Rothwell North SUE, as follows:

(a) The phased delivery of around 700 dwellings in the period to 2031;

(b) 3 hectares gross of B1 and B2 employment land;
(c) A local centre comprising shops and community facilities that meet day to day needs of occupants of the development without adversely affecting the town centre of Rothwell;
(d) Enhanced and new green infrastructure including a multi-functional buffer around the Rothwell gullet and Rothwell Meadow Local Wildlife Sites. Development will include strategic planting and landscaping along the entire northern edge of the site to prevent visual coalescence with Desborough;
(e) Roads and other infrastructure including a new roundabout junction off the A6 and a strategic link road within the Rothwell North SUE to a new appropriate junction off the B576;
(f) A well-connected grid of streets, integrated with the surrounding area to provide strong links to the town centre, to the open countryside, and to Desborough and the Ise Valley, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists;
(g) Future potential for new connections to the Montsaye Academy and to potential future development to the south and to the east;
(h) A contribution to public realm/traffic calming, reducing the amount of through traffic in Rothwell Town Centre and reducing the dominance of the car and improving the shopping environment for pedestrians;
(i) A range of residential densities to reflect the different character areas within the site and the nature of surrounding land-uses;
(j) A sustainable urban drainage system;
(k) Physical improvements or financial contributions towards enhancement of the existing community centre in Well Lane or new provision of a community centre;
(l) Provision of an additional 2.13 hectares of land for educational purposes to the north of Montsaye Academy along with education contributions for the future development of existing schools;
(m) An energy strategy to ensure the highest viable amount of heat and energy used within the development is generated on-site from renewable or low-carbon sources.
2.5 The majority of the principles reflect the content of the outline application, however there are some outstanding points that were raised in the PHM response to the Focused Changes Consultation, prepared by Marrons Planning. The JPU agrees with some but not all of the suggested changes and will address these in its statement to Matter 11 of the Examination. Subject to these requested minor changes, PHM are content with the Development Principles for Policy 38.

3 Outline Application

3.1 An application (ref KET/2007/0461) for outline planning permission for the SUE was submitted by Persimmon Homes Midlands in 2007, prior to the severe downturn in the housing market. The application initially covered a larger area of land than the site proposed through the strategic allocation but following a detailed review of the proposals this was revised to virtually align with the site as shown in Figure 28 of the Focused Changes document. Appendix A shows the minor difference between the site boundary in Figure 28 compared with the application red line boundary.

3.2 In August 2014 a revised package of amendments was submitted to the Borough Council to refresh and update the application and provide additional information to enable its favourable determination. The Development now provides for 700 dwellings, 2.88 hectares (gross) of employment land (Classes B1 and B2), a local centre (Classes A1 – A5, B1a, C3 and D1), open space and green infrastructure and an extension to the Montsaye Academy’s playing fields. The proposed development also includes pedestrian and cycle routes facilitating access into the surrounding area, together with associated roads and other infrastructure, including sustainable drainage measures. Detailed proposals of the vehicular access junctions into the site from the A6 and B576 have been submitted as part of the application; all other matters are to be reserved for later approval.

3.3 The amended application was informed by many meetings which have been held with the planning officers and others, including officers from ATLAS, North Northamptonshire
Development Company, the highways authority, the Highways Agency, the Environment Agency and the Town Council. Documentation submitted with the application includes:

- Design and Access Statement;
- Environmental Statement incorporating the Flood Risk Assessment, Utilities Statement and Transport Assessment;
- Indicative Masterplan Dwg No: P.0736-05-1P dated 8th August 2014 (and included as Appendix B);
- Indicative Testing Layout Parcel 3 Dwg No: P.0736_31F;
- Site Plan (Red Line Plan) Dwg No: P.0736_19-1C;
- Planning Statement incorporating the draft Heads of Terms. (This document provides further detail and background information and is included as Appendix C to this Joint Statement);
- Design drawings of the new accesses to the site:
  - BWB Drawing No: TRT97062/09 Revision 1 (Proposed A6 Bypass / Rothwell SDA Site Access Roundabout); and,
- Access and Linkages Report;
- Residential Travel Plan;
- Framework Employment Travel Plan; and,
- Addendum to Statement of Community Involvement.

3.4 The aim for the scheme has been to provide a sustainable new community at Rothwell that will enable improvements to the existing town through the construction of a key piece of highways infrastructure to ease traffic congestion (i.e. the strategic link road). As well as new homes, the development will bring with it a range of jobs, services and facilities, the scale of which has been carefully controlled so as not to undermine the wide range of services and facilities which exist in the town centre.

3.5 The only outstanding issues with the application which remain to be resolved are:
1. **The scope and content of the Design Code:** As indicated in paragraph 3.3 above, Persimmon Homes submitted a revised Design and Access Statement which would have been sufficient to enable the Council to determine the planning application. However, knowing that the Council would impose a condition requiring the approval of a Design Code prior to the preparation and submission of any Reserved Matters applications, and conscious of the potential implications of the Design Code on viability considerations, Persimmon Homes decided to progress this prior to the determination of the current application. This approach has inevitably resulted in some further delay as negotiations on the content and scope of the draft Design Code are on-going and once completed, it will be formally submitted to the Council for its approval alongside the outline application.

2. **Clarification on the operation of SUDS:** It has been a long standing principle of this development that a multi-functional landscape buffer will be provided between the edge of the Rothwell Gullet and the development. It continues westwards towards the new roundabout on the A6 and in so doing incorporates the strategic landscaping being provided in association with the employment area. Further amenity space extends southwards between, firstly, the employment and residential areas and then between the housing and the extended school site. In so doing, the public open space not only forms the landscape structure to the development but also a network of green infrastructure, incorporating pedestrian links which permeate the development. In this way, the Open Space will not only provide a landscape and wildlife buffer but will form an important element of the Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SUDS), as described in paragraphs 2.29 – 2.31 of the Planning Statement and in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment. The North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit has recently instigated a meeting to be held on 13 October 2015 at which the technical and landscape considerations associated with the provision of SUDS will be discussed.

3. **Scheme Viability:** In view of the costs associated with the development and in particular the requisite infrastructure, the viability of the development has had to be kept under continual scrutiny. The overall viability position has been agreed
between PHM and KBC but the detailed apportionment of available funding, particularly in respect of affordable housing and education contributions is still being finalised (see section 5).

3.6 It had been anticipated that the application would be considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 17 November 2015. However, with the SUDS meeting on the 13 October 2015, this is no longer possible. The next meeting of the Planning Committee will be held on 15 December 2015. It is anticipated that finalising the S106 agreement would take a further three months from this date, thereby giving a target date for the granting of permission by March 2016.

3.7 As indicated above, the Design Code is progressing and this has enabled the detailed design work for the Phase 1 reserved matters application to be undertaken. As a consequence, it is envisaged that the application will be submitted by June 2016 and approved by September 2016.

3.8 A planning and development programme has been provided at Appendix E.

4 Deliverability

4.1 The site is in four ownerships (Appendix F) and is entirely within the control of Persimmon Homes Midlands. All of the landowners are committed to the delivery of the scheme, as indicated by the letter from their agent provided at Appendix G.

4.2 Working to the application timetable outlined above, the target date for starting on site is January 2017. It is anticipated that the site could provide around 100 dwelling completions per year and therefore take around 8 years to complete. On this basis, the whole of the Rothwell North SUE would be delivered by 2025, well within the plan period.

4.3 The residential market in Rothwell is considered capable of comfortably accommodating this level of annual completions. After provision for affordable completions has been
discounted (assuming 18.6%), the private market will need to accommodate approximately 71 units each year which equates to between 5 and 6 a month. Rothwell North will be the primary location for new house building in the town over the plan period and there is very little competition from other sites. The town has good access to the A14 which is a major cross-country strategic highway route and makes Rothwell an attractive location for house buyers.

4.4 An indicative phasing plan at Appendix H illustrates how the site is proposed to be delivered.

5 Viability

5.1 The main infrastructure elements that the scheme needs to provide or contribute towards are as follows:

- New roundabout on the A6
- Strategic Link Road between the A6 and Desborough Road
- Off-site highway improvements at High Street/Bridge Street, B576 and A14 Jnct 3
- Financial contribution towards primary education
- Provision of land for extension to Montsaye Academy
- Provision of new play facilities
- Financial contribution towards healthcare

5.2 The new Strategic Link Road and other highway improvements are to be funded solely from the development, at an estimated total cost in the region of £5.5m. This has an impact on the level of affordable housing provision and other infrastructure contributions that the scheme can afford. As referred to at 3.5 above, the apportionment of funding between these elements is still to be finalised. However, for illustrative purposes only, the outline viability appraisal at Appendix D shows one of the scenarios tabled by PHM, with 18.6% affordable housing and a total of just over £7m s106 contributions. PHM are confident that their scheme would be both viable and deliverable on this basis.
6 Conclusion

6.1 This statement has highlighted that the application for the scheme at Rothwell North is well advanced, with PHM and KBC working jointly to aim for a resolution to grant by the end of the 2015. The detailed design work has been progressed alongside the outline application, which will enable the reserved matters application to be submitted shortly following issue of the outline permission.

6.2 The entire site can be comfortably delivered within the plan period and will enable the construction of a key piece of highways infrastructure that will ease traffic congestion in the town.
Appendix A – Figure 28 showing minor difference with application site boundary

NOTE: Minor amendment to align with application site boundary (marked with a yellow line).
Appendix B - Indicative Masterplan
Appendix C – Planning Statement

See separate document
Appendix D – Viability Assessment

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Credits and work includes:
- Road and sewer costs: £6,815,010
- Servicer costs: £1,250,649
- Strategic landscaping: £915,778
- Cost of site works: £0
- Public open space: £0
- Site specific sustainability initiatives: £0
- Motorway aerial works: £29,771,070
- Other 1: £0
- Other 2: £118,746,070

Other site costs:
- Fees and certification: £1,537,112
- Other acquisition costs: £0

Site abasement includes:
- Gas Radon: £75,000
- Noise mitigation: £40,000
- Retaining structures due to topography: £77,686
- Archaeological investigations: £245,000
- Employment land sales: £694,490
- Local move costs: £80,000
- £102,019

Total Site Costs Inc Fees: £22,238,869
Statutory 106 costs: £7,056,511
Marketing costs: £3,093,000
Total Direct Costs: £32,451,379
Finance and acquisition costs:
- Land purchase: £8,920,000
- Arrangement fees: £0
- Mac fees (Surveyors etc): £0
- Agents fees: £0
- Legal fees: £250
- Stamp duty: £323,000
- Total Interest paid: £1,847,362
Total Finance and Acquisition Costs: £9,147,363
Total Operating Profit (excluding developer overheads and taxation): £33,917,766
TOTAL COST: £104,317,526
Surplus (Deficit) at completion 19/1/2024: (£197,526)
Present Value of Surplus (Deficit) at 6/10/2015: (£35,079)
### Appendix E - Planning & Development Management Programme

#### Rothwell North Strategy Programme

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**Total dwellings, 2017 – 2024: 700**
Appendix F - Land Ownership Plan
Appendix G - Landowner Letter

Mr Andrew Longley
North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit
c/o East Northamptonshire Council
Cedar Drive
Thrapston
Northants
NN14 4LZ

Our Ref: JHG/KA19675
7th October 2015

Dear Mr Longley,

Re: Allocation of land at Rothwell North for a Sustainable Urban Extension

I am writing on behalf of the landowners of the proposed Rothwell North SUE in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 that has recently been submitted for Examination. I can confirm that we act for all of the landowners within the site boundary, outlined below for clarity:

- Burton Latimer Estates
- Rothwell Farming LLP (Brookas)
- Trustees of the 1591 Mary Pitiam Accommodation and Maintenance Trust (Pitam)
- G W Read

Persimmon Homes have been promoting the site for development on behalf of the landowners for many years. The landowners are all committed to the development of the land and are pleased that the site is identified as an allocation in the submitted plan.

I am happy for this letter to be submitted to the Inspector as part of the plan’s Examination, as evidence that the landowners are working positively with Persimmon Homes Midlands to deliver the site.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Mrs Joanna Gardner BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV
For and on behalf of Berrys
Email: joanna.gardner@berrybros.com
Appendix H - Phasing Plan