HEARING STATEMENT

MATTER 3: STRATEGIC APPROACH

Word count (excluding Inspector’s questions) ~ 1,012

ON BEHALF OF PERSIMMON HOMES SOUTH YORKSHIRE (Ref: 05289 / 05290 / 03431)

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

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CONTENTS:

1.0 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
2.0 Inspectors Questions ..................................................................................................... 2
1.0 Introduction

1.1 This hearing statement is provided on behalf of our client Persimmon Homes South Yorkshire. It is made in respect of ‘Matter 3: Strategic Approach’. Responses are provided solely to questions which are directly relevant to our client’s site and previous submissions made on their behalf.

1.2 Persimmon Homes are one of the largest home builders in the country with an excellent track record of delivery. They are promoting three sites through this Local Plan. These being:

- Land to the East of Warning Tongue Lane, Cantley (site reference: 164/430) – this is a proposed site allocation,
- Armthorpe Lane, Kirk Sandall (site reference: 116), and
- Cemetery Road, Hatfield Woodhouse (site reference: 119)

1.3 Our Client is an important stakeholder in the plan making process and wishes to ensure that the Doncaster Local Plan is prepared in a robust manner that passes the tests of soundness contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para. 35), namely that the plan is:

- Positively Prepared;
- Justified;
- Effective; and
- Consistent with national policy.

1.4 Our client supports many of the policies within the Local Plan and believes with modifications the plan should be found sound. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions and provide the following responses to selected questions in so far as they relate to our previous representations.
2.0 Inspectors Questions

2.1 The omission of a response to a specific question should not be construed as our client having nothing further to add. Our client reserves the right to respond not only to the questions identified in this hearing statement but others as relevant and deemed necessary during the hearing session(s).

2.2 The questions are taken in order of publication within the Matters, Issues and Questions document (ref: INSP4).

Spatial Strategy

Q3.2. *Is the broad spatial distribution of development proposed in policies 2 and 3 justified? In particular, the aims to accommodate:*

_a) At least 50% of new homes in and around the Main Urban Area; approximately 40% at seven Main Towns; and about 10% at ten Service Towns and Villages._

_b) The ranges for the number of new homes in and around each of the individual Main Towns and Service Towns and Villages._

_c) Major new employment sites in locations accessible from the Main Urban Area and Main Towns in locations attractive to the market with good access to the strategic transport network as well as Doncaster Sheffield Airport._

_d) Retail, leisure, office, cultural and tourist developments in the network of town centres defined in Table 2._

2.3 Our client is broadly supportive of the spatial distribution of development proposed in policies 2 and 3 but is concerned over the strict adherence to the defined settlement hierarchy.

2.4 There is no consideration of sustainable sites in defined villages which are located near higher order settlements. Our client’s site at Cemetery Road, Hatfield Woodhouse (site reference: 119) is a good example, being located within 1km of the centre of Hatfield but excluded as it is physically located on the edge of Hatfield Woodhouse. Sites which are sustainable and well located in relation to services and facilities should not be overlooked simply due to their location on the edge of a lower order settlement.
2.5 Policy 3 identifies Hatfield Woodhouse as a ‘Large Defined Village’ and as such is restricted to ‘up to 20 dwellings’. The application of a cap is considered contrary to the NPPF requirements to plan positively and boost the supply of housing. Furthermore, it pays no regard to the sustainability of sites such as our client’s at Hatfield Woodhouse. It fails to consider the specific intricacies of the site and its potential to accommodate more than 20 dwellings given that it is a highly sustainable site located within close proximity to Doncaster Main Urban Area, Hatfield Main Town, and other locations within the settlement hierarchy.

2.6 Policy 2 also effectively precludes residential development outside defined settlement boundaries apart from in exceptional circumstances. It is considered this approach is overly restrictive and needs to be more flexible to take account of sustainable sites located outside, but closely related too, defined settlement boundaries. It is considered the policy is contrary to paragraph 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure strategic plans are prepared with the objective of contributing towards the achievement of sustainable development.

2.7 As per Policy 2, our client’s site at Armthorpe Lane, Kirk Sandall (site reference: 116) would only be supported for residential development if five criteria are met. This site is located in a sustainable location on the edge of the Main Urban Area and as such would be an ideal site for inclusion in the plan or consideration if the plan was failing to meet its housing requirement.

2.8 The approach identified in policy 2 is overly restrictive and fails to take appropriate regard for the site’s high sustainability credentials, owing to its located directly abutting the defined boundary of Doncaster Main Urban Area.

**Q3.3. Is the broad spatial distribution of development proposed by the employment and housing allocations in policies 4 and 6 justified having regard to the aims set out in policies 2 and 3? Are any main modifications required to ensure that the Plan is unambiguous and internally consistent in this respect?**

2.9 Our client is broadly supportive of the spatial distribution of development, however the answer to Q3.2 should be noted. Particularly in relation to sustainable sites on the edge of the Main Urban Area, such as Armthorpe land,
or near a higher order settlement, such as Cemetery Road.

**Q3.4. Is the suggested change to policy 2 set out in the Council’s response to PQ14 necessary to make the Plan sound?**

2.10 Our client considers the suggested change to policy 2 is an improvement in that it assists with the clear application of the policy from a development management perspective. However, regardless of the suggested change the policy remains contrary to national planning policy in that it takes an overly restrictive approach to residential development outside defined settlement boundaries and fails to take into account the potential sustainability factors of countryside development sites; contrary to national planning policy’s aim of ensuring strategic plans contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.

**Q3.5. Is the approach to deciding development proposals based on the figures for new homes set out in policy 3 for Doncaster Main Urban Area, the Main Towns and the Service Towns and Larger Villages justified, and is it sufficiently clear to be effective?**

2.11 Whilst these figures are a useful guide they should not be the defining factor, other issues such as flood risk, access to services and facilities and deliverability are all key considerations which need to be taken into account when determining both allocations and future applications.

2.12 Our client considers a flexible approach needs to be taken to the figures for new homes in locations within the settlement hierarchy. It is not considered that the ‘up-to’ figure for new housing should be used as a maximum, but instead a guideline. As noted within our response to question 3.2 above we consider the ‘up to’ approach to be contrary to national policy. This flexible approach should consider the sustainability of sites which come forward for development.

2.13 Our client considers that as a result of the fact the Plan fails to look ahead 15 years minimum, this flexible approach would ensure the required amount of housing can be delivered over the initial 15-year plan period.