

Appendix G

HIGHWAYS (RESPONSE TO QUESTION 29)



Project	St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 – 2035 Examination
Title	Land at Florida Farm, Haydock (2HA) - Matters, Issues and Questions for the Examination and Hearing Sessions – Question 29
Revision	1st Issue

	Author
Name	Mike Smith
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This technical note has been prepared on behalf of Barratt Homes to respond to the Matters, Issues, and Questions for Examination and Hearing Sessions, Matter 4, Issue 3, **Question 29** in relation to the Land at Florida Farm (2HA) Site.

2.0 Q29 - Are there any barriers to Site 2HA coming forward as anticipated by the housing trajectory?

2.1 From a highway perspective, it is our view that there are no barriers to Site 2HA coming forward as anticipated by the housing trajectory, and furthermore, that there are also no reasons why Site 2HA cannot come forward in advance of the housing trajectory.

2.2 The Council's housing trajectory, set out in St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 Housing Need and Supply Background Paper (October 2020) (SD025), indicates that the first completion on Site 2HA will be in 2024/25 when it forecasts that 22 dwellings will be complete. Following that, the trajectory forecasts that 45 dwellings will be completed each year with completion of the full 520 dwellings extending past the end of the Local Plan period, 2035.

2.3 We understand that the housing trajectory has recently been updated as set out in the 'Updated Employment and Housing Land Supply Position as of 31.03.21 (May 2021)'. This updated paper indicates that the first completion on Site 2HA will be in 2027/28 with completion of the full 522 dwellings extending past the end of the Local Plan period, 2035.

2.4 Neither aforementioned papers in themselves present any barriers to Site 2HA coming forward. However, the Housing Need and Supply Background Paper (October 2020) makes reference to a 4 year lead in time for Site 2HA to come forward based on progressing the Junction 23 Study. i.e. in para 4.22 the paper states:

'For site 2HA, a lead in time of 4 years has been applied to allow for the completion of the ongoing M6 Junction 23 Study and any subsequent follow-on work'.

2.5 However, the paper does not provide any technical evidence to justify the requirement for a 4-year lead in time, nor elaborate on why this appears to have only been applied to Site 2HA. We are also unaware of any other published technical work which justifies this position.

- 2.6 As is set out below, given the relatively low level of traffic that will be generated by Site 2HA over the site's phased delivery, we do not consider that there is a need for the M6 Junction 23 study to be complete before the identified housing need on Site 2HA can come forward.
- 2.7 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly sets out that the planning system should aim to create sustainable and healthy communities. The NPPF in paragraph 108 sets out a number of key tests for considering development, namely, that plans for development should ensure that:
- Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
 - Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
 - Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 2.8 Furthermore, at paragraph 109, the NPPF states that:
- Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 2.9 Taking each of these three factors in turn, our response to Q24 clearly establishes that Site 2HA is in a sustainable location for residential development and that appropriate opportunities can be taken to promote sustainable transport modes.
- 2.10 The site is located within walking distance of a full range of local facilities necessary to cater for day to day needs, without relying on trips by car. Much of Haydock village, which contains a wide variety of local services is within walking distance of the site, as are various existing and proposed employment opportunities. There is an established cycle route running along the northern boundary of the site and the site is located within walking distance of bus stops which offer regular bus services operating to a variety of local destinations.
- 2.11 The sustainability of the site is supported by the Council's own sustainability appraisal which identified that of ten key indicators used to appraise accessibility and sustainability, eight were classified as either 'Good' or 'Excellent', designating the site as one of the highest performing sites in this regard.
- 2.12 Overall, we conclude that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development in terms of paragraph 108 of the NPPF and that appropriate opportunities can be taken up to promote sustainable transport modes.
- 2.13 Our response to Q24 also showed that safe and suitable access to the site could be provided, thereby meeting the second criteria of paragraph 108 of the NPPF in that '*safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users*'.

- 2.14 With reference to the third criteria of paragraph 108 of the NPPF, our response to Q24 and Q28 demonstrated that the expected level of traffic estimated to be generated by the proposed development when distributed through the local highway network would be relatively low, would be unlikely to impact on junction operation, and would be of a level that most highway users would be unable to discern or notice and would likely fall within day to day variations in traffic flow.
- 2.15 Our response to Q28 demonstrated that with 90 dwellings complete and occupied, the volume of traffic estimated to be generated by the development would result in less than one additional vehicle movement per minute (on average) being added to the network.
- 2.16 With 270 dwellings complete and occupied, the only key junctions where traffic generated by the site is forecast to be more than one additional vehicle movement per minute are at the proposed Vicarage Road Site Access junction and the A58/Vicarage Rd and A58/A580 junctions. At these locations, the development generated trips would equate to just over one additional vehicle movement per minute. The development's impact at other key junctions would be less than one additional vehicle movement per minute, and in the case of J23, less than one additional vehicle movement every two minutes. This level of increase in traffic at J23 would not be noticeable.
- 2.17 With the whole site built out (600 dwellings assumed), our response in Q28 demonstrated that additional key junctions where traffic generated by the site is forecast to add more than one vehicle movement per minute were limited to the second site access onto the A580, the Haydock Ln/A580, Park Rd/Parr St/Ashcroft St, and A58/Millfield Lane junctions. However, the additional traffic forecast to be generated through the A58/Millfield Lane junction is only just over 1 vehicle movement per minute.
- 2.18 Of these junctions, the A58/A580 and Haydock Ln/A580 junctions have both been subject to recent significant improvement schemes, the A58/A580 in 2020 and the A580 / Haydock Lane in 2019. The IDP also states that the A58/Millfield Lane junction has been the subject of a scheme providing short term benefits which was delivered in 2017.
- 2.19 Of the Park Rd/Parr St/Ashcroft St junction, the Transport Impact Assessment Report (TRA003) prepared for the St Helens Local Plan by WSP, identified that the forecast junction operation in the 2033 DS1 scenario (which includes all Local Plan developments – therefore including Site 2HA) would be comparable to that identified in the Do-Minimum scenario.

where:

- Do Minimum: the likely future network operation incorporating sites with extant planning permissions, SHLAA sites, and planned infrastructure schemes on the local road network.
- Do Something 1 (DS1): includes all do minimum developments and planned infrastructure schemes, and in addition also includes the Local Plan preferred site allocations – including Site 2HA. No further highway improvements have

been assumed under DS1.

- 2.20 For the wider A58 corridor, the WSP TIA states that for the 2033 DS1 scenario, the *'forecast junction operation along the A58 corridor is generally similar to that for the Do Minimum scenario at the majority of junctions, with the highest Volume over Capacity (v/c) values increasing by up to around 5 percentage points'*.
- 2.21 In respect to J23 of the M6, and also J24, our response in Q28 demonstrated that the level of traffic forecast to be generated by 600 dwellings on Site 2HA passing through junction 23 and 24 would result in less than one additional vehicle movement per minute. This additional traffic would again be of a level that most highway users would be unable to discern or notice and would likely fall within day to day variations in traffic flow.
- 2.22 The supporting analysis undertaken to identify the distribution of trips generated by Site 2HA through the local network identified that the majority of journeys (to work) would be towards locations to the south and south-west of the site and to the Haydock area – all located to the west of the M6. Therefore, as a result limited development trips pass through J23 and Site 2HA therefore has very little influence on J23 (or the need for improvement there) and vice versa.
- 2.23 Given that the expected level of traffic estimated to be generated by the proposed development when dissipated around the highway network is relatively low, and that junction improvements have already taken place at junctions in the immediate vicinity of Site 2HA (i.e. at the A58/A580 and A580/Haydock Lane junctions), we do not consider that large scale infrastructure improvements need to be put in place to enable Site 2HA comes forward.
- 2.24 It is therefore considered that based on the above and the results of the assessments contained within the WSP TIA, the development of Site 2HA for housing would also meet the third criteria of paragraph 108 of the NPPF in that:
- *Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.*
- 2.25 In conclusion therefore, based on the reasons identified above, the specific reference in the Housing Need and Supply Background Paper to a lead in time of 4 years for Site 2HA to *'allow for the completion of the ongoing M6 Junction 23 Study and any subsequent follow-on work'* should have no bearing on the delivery or required timing of the development of Site 2HA.
- 2.26 It should also be noted that any future proposed development on Site 2HA will be the subject of a planning application which will include a comprehensive Transport Assessment. The Transport Assessment will comprehensively detail the impact of the development on the highway network, following which discussions and agreement with the local planning and highway authority will need to be undertaken on whether any further junction improvements are required, and the extent of these.



8 First Street
Manchester
M15 4RP

wsp.com

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