

**CORE STRATEGY FOR CHILTERN DISTRICT - EXAMINATION**

**INSPECTOR'S POST HEARING NOTE (1) – HOLY CROSS SITE, POLICY CS6.**

1. In accordance with arrangements agreed at the hearings, Chalfont St Peter Parish Council have submitted additional written representations regarding the allocation of the Holy Cross site under policy CS6. It is now for the Council to respond.

2. Parties will be aware that I had come to the hearings with the view that as the allocation corresponded with a recent extant permission, that was a strong indication of its soundness and that there was little purpose in exploring the matter further. I remain disinterested in the background to the decision on the planning application resulting in the current permission. Nor do I give much weight to the current High Court challenge. (Nevertheless, I would be grateful if parties would inform me when this is scheduled for consideration in the High Court and the outcome when known). My focus is on whether the submitted plan is sound in relation to the specific allocation made under CS6.

3. Whilst the Council should respond as it wishes to the points raised in the submission, I highlight below 3 matters on which I am particularly interested in clarifying/understanding the District Council's position:

3.1 As part of the evolution of the Core Strategy, did the Council consider the future land use needs of St Peter Church of England Junior School? I note that there is a general reference to school capacity at 17.4 of the Core Strategy. Appendix 7 states that "no requirement for the provision of new primary schools has been identified in any of the settlement areas". Does this statement remain consistent with evidence now available? Given the constraints on the school accommodation outlined in the letter from the Headmaster (20 April 2011) should the Core Strategy or other DPD be seeking to address the future needs of this school? Is it unsound not to do so?

3.2 No change in the proposals in the Core Strategy will undo the extant permission and the owner can implement that proposal if it wishes to do so. Nevertheless, in terms of the appropriate long term use of the site and in the light of the information now provided by the Parish Council, does the District Council remain of the view that the allocation of the site solely and entirely for housing is justified compared with alternatives which include elements other than housing, such as the proposal now suggested? If so, please explain briefly why. Did the Council consider alternatives to the allocation of the whole site for housing (if so please highlight how/when). If not, how is the current allocation justified as the most appropriate use?

3.3 In my main matters and issues (21 February 2011) I asked (Q5.7): *Should the allocation for the Holy Cross site include the land shown in the approved planning application as a relocated*

*playing field?* The Council was the only party which responded to this question, in summary, concluding that it is not necessary for the boundary of the strategic allocation to be amended to take account of land requirements for playing field. I did not feel that I needed to take this point further, but on reflection could the Council please clarify the following. Why does the permission require retention of a playing field/whose needs is this intended to meet etc? Is such provision now regarded as a requirement of the development of the site and, if so, should it be reflected in the allocation proposal? Policy CS28 indicates that this site will be required to provide "open space", but the context implies that this is to meet the needs of the new development, not existing/wider needs. Please clarify how the retention of the playing field required by the planning permission relates to the requirement of this policy.

4. Setting aside considerations of soundness, I would not want the Examination process to get in the way of the Council taking a fresh look at the appropriate use of sites in Chalfont St Peter if it wished to do so. Accordingly, if the Council wishes to consider this matter in more detail please let me know the likely implications for the response on this matter and the consultation timetable.

5 There is one further matter on which I seek clarification from Chalfont St Peter Parish Council. Even if I were to conclude that the existing allocation is in some way unsound, I could impose new wording only if satisfied that it was itself sound. Reasonable prospects of delivery is a relevant consideration in the context of a strategic allocation. The Parish Council's submissions indicate that the current expectation of the relevant parties is that the cost of building a new school would be covered by the value of the existing school site for residential redevelopment. Does this estimate include a purchase price of the land on the Holy Cross site and, if so, at what use value? If it does not, why would the owner be willing to release part of the site currently covered by a residential planning permission for use as a new school?

**Simon Emerson**  
**Inspector**  
**4 May 2011**