
Stevenage Local Plan Examination
Stage 3
Hearing Statement on behalf of the
East and North Herts NHS Trust

Matter 16 – Housing Site Allocations
HO1/11: Land west of North Road Rugby Club

Matter 18 – Employment and Mixed Use Site Allocations and Protected Employment Sites
EC1/4: Land west of North Road

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EC1/4: Land west of North Road

1.0 MATTER 16 – HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS

HO1/11: LAND WEST OF NORTH ROAD RUGY CLUB

A. Introduction

1.1 The East and North Herts NHS Trust has submitted a Hearing Statement in respect of Matter 11 (Community Facilities) which sets out the Trust's anticipated requirements for the Lister Hospital, based on future population growth and operational needs, both over the short term and the longer term up to the end of the Local Plan period. The Trust considers that the Published Draft (LP1) fails to make provision to accommodate these requirements in Policy HC3 (The Health Campus). The Trust has consistently made the case to SBC that land to the north of the Lister Hospital, occupied by the Rugby Club and partially allocated for housing (Site HO1/11), is the most appropriate location to accommodate the short term needs of the Hospital.

B. Is the site needed for future hospital expansion?

1.2 This Hearing Statement does not rehearse the arguments again but asks the Inspector to consider amending the current site allocation to deliver both the short term needs of the Lister Hospital and housing in the early stage of the Local Plan. It also seeks to address how the site can deliver both residential and future healthcare in the light of the fact that the landowner of the Rugby Ground is not currently willing to make the site available to the Trust.

1.3 The draft allocation occupies an area of approximately 3 ha in area. The Trust understands that the tennis courts and the gym at the eastern end of the Rugby Ground do not form part of the allocation. The Council has estimated a net dwelling capacity in Policy HO1 (Housing Allocations) of 149 dwellings. The Trust accepts that the Council's housing delivery strategy is dependent upon three large urban extensions with a relatively small number of other sites. Owing to the scale of these urban extensions and the corresponding need for additional strategic infrastructure to support these new developments, it is possible that a significant proportion of these new dwellings may not be delivered until the latter part of the Plan. The Trust understands that the Council anticipates a proportion of housing from the development of the Rugby Ground could come forward within the first five years of the Plan. The owner of the Rugby Club supports the allocation of housing which will enable the existing sport facilities to be relocated elsewhere.

- 1.4 The Trust has been consistent in identifying a requirement for approximately 2-3 acres (0.8-1.2 ha) to accommodate its short term needs, which would equate to about one third of the allocated site. The Trust suggests the Inspector may wish to explore the option of allocating the western third of the Rugby Club specifically for healthcare associated with the expansion of the Lister Hospital and the remainder for residential use. To enable the land to become available for healthcare purposes, the Trust would ask the Inspector to consider amending the Plan to phase development so that the residential use comes forward at the same time but not earlier than the healthcare use. The Trust would be willing to agree that this phasing only applies for a specific period of time to ensure that residential development on this site is not unduly delayed until the later part of the Plan period.
- 1.5 The Trust has identified a potential need for up to 19,200 sqm of floorspace requirements in the medium to long term up to 2031. This potential scale of development is dependent upon funding and therefore these are not commitments. The Trust has not identified a site within close proximity of the Hospital where all or part of this growth can be accommodated. Whilst the Rugby Ground is undoubtedly the Trust's preferred site to meet future long term expansion, it is acknowledged that this would not be supported by the Council. Although the Trust has not identified an alternative site, it is of the view that any available land within the Health Campus would not be suitable, for the reasons set out in the Hearing Statement for Matter 11.

**2.0 MATTER 18 - EMPLOYMENT AND MIXED USE SITE ALLOCATIONS
AND PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT SITES
EC1/4: LAND WEST OF NORTH ROAD**

Will this proposal limit the future expansion of Lister Hospital?

- 2.1 The East and North NHS Trust considers that site EC1/4 is relatively remote from the location of the existing hospital site and this substantially reduces its potential suitability for future healthcare uses associated with the Lister Hospital.

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