

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

**BY EMAIL:** [localplanconsultation@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:localplanconsultation@barnsley.gov.uk)

Planning Policy Team  
Economic Regeneration  
Barnsley MBC  
PO Box 634  
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S70 9GG

16<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Land at Hunningley Lane, Worsborough, Barnsley**

Persimmon Homes is one of the UK's leading house builders, delivering over 15,000 new homes per annum nationwide. Last year Persimmon Homes West Yorkshire completed 550 new homes and this figure is projected to increase to 620 this year.

This letter is intended to confirm Persimmon Homes' interest in the land at Hunningley Lane, Worsborough and to outline the planning reasons for this interest. Persimmon Homes have undertaken the necessary technical work to inform a detailed masterplan showing a mix of 2, 3 and 4-bed properties which will deliver a total of 329 much needed family homes. A copy of which is attached for your information.

**1. Planning Policy**

The Barnsley Local Plan Publication 2016 (BLPP) is currently available for public consultation.

The land at Hunningley Lane is shown to be retained within the Green Belt. The site is also proposed to be located within a Wind Turbine Area for Search and the Dearne Valley Nature Improvement Area.

Persimmon Homes disagree with the proposed policy designation of the site and therefore **object** to the following policies of the BLPP:

- Policy GB1 – The site should be removed from the Green Belt.

- Policy H3 – Site should be included as an allocation for residential development

### Greenbelt

Persimmon Homes disagree with the site's retention as Green Belt.

The area within which the site is located was assessed in the Council's Green Belt Review within General Area UB12; scoring 19 out of 25. We do not necessarily disagree with the assessment of the area as a whole but firmly believe that the site is well contained in Green Belt terms within strong defensible boundaries and should be sub-divided and reassessed as in the case of other areas for the reasons outlined below.

The site does not read as part of the wider landscape and is well defined by the railway line in a cutting to the east which provides a strong, defensible and enduring boundary. This is seconded within the Green Belt review 2014 produced by ARUP which states the following in specific relation to the potential sub division of the development site:

*" To the west, the Green Belt boundary is weakly defined by built form around White Cross Lane which has sprawled beyond the B6100 Ardsley Road (Hunningley Lane).*

*On the whole the existing Green Belt boundary is considered to be relatively weak*

*An operational railway line which traverses the General Area from north to south could constitute a strongly durable boundary should the area be considered for sub-division.*

*A small-scale area of natural consolidation exists to the south of the lockeaflyash cemetery on the land bounded by the operational railway and to the south by Dob Sike" (we have calculated that this area of land amounts to approximately 11 acres)*

We are of the view that, when considered against the five purposes of the Green Belt guidance contained in the NPPF, the site:

- Has a low potential to lead to unrestricted sprawl – due to strong existing boundaries around the site.
- Would not result in the merging of settlements.
- Development of the site would have no effect on the setting and special character of historic features.

Arup sets out that UB12 does serve to protect a strategic gap of less than 1.5 km between Urban Barnsley and Wombwell. However, we can confirm that development of this site would not narrow this gap, as it is located beyond 1.5 km from Wombwell.

This opinion is reflected by the conclusions of the Green Belt review conducted by Arup in 2014 when relating specifically to this development site.

#### Nature Improvement Area

The development site is situated on the boundary of the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area which encompasses the vast majority of the built form and housing site allocations in Urban Barnsley, Cudworth, Wombwell and the Dearne Towns. The site offers an opportunity, through a landscape led strategy, to create new areas of landscape planting which will extend and enhance existing wildlife corridors and exploit their potential as a resource for biodiversity. It is considered that an appropriate Landscape Strategy could mitigate any sensitive views and that this designation does not form a barrier to development that can not be mitigated.

#### Wind turbine area for search

The site lies within an indicative Area of Search for Wind Turbines within the settled arable slopes designation. The BLPP indicates that these areas will be subject to further investigation with any final boundaries and development principles set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.

The June 2015 Ministerial Statement on Wind Energy states that local authorities should only consider granting planning permission for wind turbines where they have been allocated within Local Plans and have community support. The indicative area for search has not been finalised as part of this publication. The site is located adjacent to settlement boundaries. The nature and location of the site lends itself more favourably to residential development. The areas are indicative at this stage and as this site should be allocated for residential development, it should therefore be removed from the Wind Turbine Area for Search.

#### National Planning Policy

Notwithstanding the current and proposed policy restriction, the site's development would be in accordance with guidance contained within the NPPF in so far as it is:

- Available for development now.
- Suitable: As the site is located within close proximity to key services such as shopping facilities, education, healthcare, recreation facilities and public transport. There are also no obstacles of a technical, physical or environmental nature to prevent the development of this site.

- Achievable: The site is in single ownership and under the control of a regional development company with firm interest from a major well financed national housebuilder; as such development of the scheme could take place immediately

#### 2014 Barnsley SHLAA undertaken by Peter Brett Associates

The Hunningley Lane site SHLAA site reference 547 performed well against 'availability' and 'achievability' criteria in the 2014 Barnsley SHLAA, undertaken by Peter Brett Associates and it also performed well against the vast majority of the 'suitability' criteria, being judged suitable for inclusion in the first five year land supply. We are aware that the site achieved an overall Category 2 rating in the SHLAA rather than Category 1 with the only reasons for this being that 1) at the time of assessment, it was thought the site was likely to be only 'moderately' attractive to the market, and 2) because it was incorrectly assessed as being located adjacent to (rather than within) Urban Barnsley, which is the main focus for Housing Growth.

We have since confirmed our firm interest in acquiring and developing the Hunningley Lane site at the earliest opportunity and we believe that this confirms that the site is actually 'highly' attractive to the market. Indeed, as we explain below, **we are also eager to increase our presence in the Barnsley area**. Regarding the latter point, the site is located within Urban Barnsley, as confirmed by the plan from the adopted Barnsley Unitary Development Plan ('UDP') entitled 'Diagram 1, Community Areas' which we note is reproduced as Appendix 12 to a previous Local Plan representation submitted by Peter Brett Associates in respect of this site. Now that these erroneous matters have been addressed, we believe it is unequivocal that the site should be considered a Category 1 'deliverable' housing site in the Barnsley SHLAA

#### 2016 Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment Update undertaken by ARUP

The site is included within the SHELAA under reference 547. The assessment of the site within the SHELAA concludes that there are no significant constraints in relation to access, drainage, ground conditions and amenity on the site that cannot be mitigated.

The SHELAA document is not accurate with regard to location, ownership, availability and achievability conclusions. The document should confirm that the site is within Urban Barnsley, in single ownership, available immediately and achievable within the first 5 years of the Local Plan Period. However the SHELAA correctly confirms that the site is suitable for housing and taking this into consideration with the aforesaid, can therefore be considered to be deliverable in line with footnote 11 of the NPPF.

## **2. Housing Numbers**

Worsborough lies within the Urban Barnsley housing market area. Our planning consultant has carried out a detailed deliverability assessment on all sites allocated for housing for 100+ units within the BLPP. The study found that there is a shortfall of 2,168 dwellings within the plan period in Urban Barnsley which is due to various deliverability issues.

As referred to in the section above, we are eager to increase our presence within the Barnsley Borough. Unfortunately several of our interests (including the Hunningley Lane site) are not currently proposed to be allocated within the Barnsley Local Plan Publication Version. **This is disappointing and we wish to take the opportunity to put on record that sustainable sites which have identified housebuilder interests are key to the delivery of the qualitative and quantitative housing needs of the Borough within the plan period. This concern is magnified when considering the deliverability concerns our planning consultant has identified with a number of the current allocations proposed in the Barnsley Local Plan Publication Version.**

In this vein, we are highly concerned that the Local Plan seeks to identify a large number of allocations in the east of the Borough, in and around the Dearne Towns area. Whilst we agree that some new development and regeneration efforts are required here, such areas are already specifically acknowledged by the Council in the BLPP (Policy H9) to have low housing demand, exhibiting weak and at times failing housing markets, and it is for these reasons that we, alongside a number of our market competitors, are unwilling to take on significant exposure within these areas. This further emphasises the need to allocate deliverable and market facing sites with acknowledged developer interest, such as this site at Hunningley Lane.

## **3. Technical constraints**

There are no physical, technical or environmental constraints preventing the delivery of this site whilst residential development will also seek to maintain and enhance any biodiversity of interest.

## **4. Conclusion**

The land at Hunningley Lane is sustainably located within 1km of a number of services. These include Worsbrough Health Centre, a number of supermarkets and retail outlets, Vida five-a-side centre, Hunningley Lane Junior School and Barnsley Academy.

The existing and proposed policy restrictions can be justifiably removed from this site and mitigated. There is an acceptance within the BLPP that Green Belt land will need to be released across Barnsley in order to meet the objectively assessed housing needs of the district. The Green Belt review

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undertaken by Arup in 2014 suggests that the site should be recommended for sub-division from the Green Belt.

There are no technical constraints that cannot be overcome through the planning process. The land at Hunningley Lane presents an opportunity to provide sustainable housing development immediately and will assist in addressing the shortfall in housing in Urban Barnsley which currently exists within Policy H2 of the BLPP and we therefore request that the site is identified as a housing allocation in the Barnsley Local Plan.

Yours Faithfully,

For and on Behalf of

**PERSIMMON HOMES**

**James Parkin**

Planner

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