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26th June 2007

Your contact is: David Breeze - Planning Implementation Manager

Green Park Village, Green Park, Reading - PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk) and consultations with the Environment Agency.

Thank-you for your letter of 21st May 2007 in respect of flood risk assessment at Green Park Village.

I set out below the Council's current pre-application understanding of the situation with regard to flood risk and the sequential test.

The existing position is that the EA flood map identifies the site of Green Park Village as being located within Flood Zone 3 (High Probability) in terms of flood risk. In accordance with PPS 25, therefore, the applicant would be required to submit a Flood Risk Assessment. The council will then undertake a Sequential Test and, if the Sequential Test is passed, carry out the Exception Test.

The material factors that need to be taken into account in considering the Sequential Test in relation to this specific application are as follows:

- a) The site is identified as a housing site within the Council's draft Core Strategy Document, as the development as a whole will provide essential infrastructure that cannot be provided in any other location or by any other means. There are no alternative locations in a Flood Zone 1 area.

The new South Reading Railway Station and the associated transport interchange (to be delivered by way of the overall scheme) is an essential component of the Reading Integrated Transport Strategy to service the development strategy for the Borough and its commitment as a South East Region Growth Point. The funding that has been secured as part of the new Growth Point designation is being used to help deliver the proposed transport interchange.

- b) Approval exists to raise the land above the 1 in 200 year flood level, and albeit that the works have not been carried out, they would be as part

of the implementation of those consents. These would effectively place the site in flood zone 1. As a result, you have indicated that the proposed housing will be above the level of the floodplain, in accordance with a flood management scheme that the EA has indicated its support for, subject to final confirmation following evaluation of the FRA which accompanies the planning application.

On this basis, the Council believes that Green Park Village, including the proposed station, is a unique proposal. The site has approval for works to raise the land which would put it in Flood Zone 1. Moreover, there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2 to accommodate the proposed development. Its development would therefore appear to satisfy the PPS25 Sequential Test.

In terms of the Exceptions Test in PPS25:

- a) The development could contribute to wider sustainability benefits provided:
 - i. Its contribution to the development of the sustainable public transport for Reading through the provision of the South Reading Station and a multi-modal interchange;
 - ii. It provides a mixed-use development and a high Code for Sustainable Homes Level and development with good public transport opportunities;
 - iii. Housing mix - It provides larger type family housing as part of a mixed scheme including school and community facilities and local transport.
- b) The development is on a site where part of the land is degraded land that has been excavated, but in any case there are no reasonable alternative sites on developable previously developed land; and
- c) In terms of the flood risk assessment, a site-specific flood risk assessment will need to demonstrate that the development will be safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

I trust this satisfactorily sets out the Council's position, but should you need any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

This advice is of course without prejudice to the Local Planning Authority's formal consideration of any application.

Yours sincerely,

David Breeze
Planning Implementation Manager