

South Staffordshire Local Plan Review Examination

Hearing Statement for Matter 7: Site Allocations – Site 536a
Land off Holly Lane, Great Wyrley

Representor: Miller Homes

Representor Reference: AGT24-030-03

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group is instructed by Miller Homes to respond to the South Staffordshire Local Plan Examination: Matters, Issues and Questions produced by the Inspectors appointed to hold an independent examination of the South Staffordshire Local Plan Review 2023–2041 (the Local Plan).
- 1.2. This Hearing Statement relates to **Matter 7: Site Allocations**.
- 1.3. Miller Homes are promoting the housing allocation referred to as **Site 536a Land off Holly Lane, Great Wyrley**. There is a signed and dated Statement of Common Ground between Miller Homes and the Council for the allocation¹.

¹ DC26

2. Matter 7: Site Allocations

- 2.1. Site 536a is located at Great Wyrley, which is a highly sustainable Tier 1 settlement which is a suitable location for Green Belt release and housing growth. The land is appropriately 1.2km (15-minute walk) from Landywood railway station which offers regular services to Walsall and Birmingham, which are authority areas which have significant unmet housing needs.
- 2.2. The site is suitable, available now and can achieve the requirements of the housing allocation that are set out in the site proforma of Appendix C of the Local Plan. The Illustrative Masterplan provided with the Regulation 19 representations clearly shows how the site can achieve the requirement of the allocation including new homes, specialist units for older people, drop-off parking for Landywood Primary School, open space, landscaping, and access off Holly Lane².
- 2.3. The site also has a reasonable prospect of meeting the other relevant policies of the development plan. The relevant policies have been yet to be found sound and could be subject to main modifications. Miller Homes reserve the right to comment further on relevant policies subject to main modifications at the appropriate time.
- 2.4. Miller Homes appointed highways consultant, Sweco, have progressed detailed proposals for the access arrangements off Holly Lane and drop-off parking area. These have been subject to pre-application discussions with Local Highways Authority who have not raised any issues.
- 2.5. Miller Homes are currently in the process of preparing a pre-application for submission to the Local Planning Authority and would follow with a planning application in 2025/2026, with a view to obtaining a decision in 2026. Permission would be sought for a comprehensive scheme comprising new homes, specialist units for older people, drop-off parking for Landywood Primary School, open space, landscaping, and access off Holly Lane.
- 2.6. The Local Plan trajectory³ sets out that the site can deliver new homes, as follows, which Miller Homes can confirm is achievable:
 - 35 homes in 2028/29
 - 35 homes in 2029/30
 - 14 homes in 2030/31
- 2.7. Miller Homes are one of the nations most respected homebuilders and are currently completing over 3,000 plots a year with 17,000 plots in their strategic land pipeline. They have an excellent track record in terms of delivery and ensure sites are swiftly brought forward once secured through site allocations and planning applications.
- 2.8. Not only are there exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release at the Tier 1 settlement of Great Wyrley (meeting local housing needs and contributing towards the unmet housing

² https://www.sstafes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/agt24-030-03-15_pegasus_group_for_miller_homes_rep.pdf

³ SST/ED7b and SST/ED7c

needs the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area), but there are also site-specific exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary in this case.

- 2.9. Landywood Primary School suffers from a lack of dedicated drop-off parking and is immediately adjacent to the site which can provide of drop-off parking for the school and data also suggests that it may be beneficial to increase the number of specialist units for older people in Cheslyn Hay / Great Wyrley. Both are a requirement of the housing allocation and can be provided at this site as clearly shown on the Illustrative Masterplan provided with the Regulation 19 representations.
- 2.10. The site form part of a larger 650.5ha parcel (ref: S16) and larger 89.7ha sub-parcel (ref: S16D)⁴, albeit the site itself has not been assessed against the five purposes on the Green Belt. As such, relevant consideration in relation to the contribution that the site makes to the purpose of the Green Belt are set out in the table below.

Green Belt Purpose	Comments
Purpose a – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The site is adjacent to the 'large built-up area' of Cannock / Cheslyn Hay / Great Wyrley, as it is defined in the evidence base (EB18). The site is enclosed by development on its northern and eastern side and contained by the railway line on its western side, which diminishes the contribution that the site makes to checking unrestricted sprawl of the 'large built-up area'. Furthermore, if the site were developed, it would not result in an incongruous pattern of development,
Purpose b – To prevent neighbouring towns margining into one another	The site is positioned between the 'towns' of Cannock / Cheslyn Hay / Great Wyrley / Hednesford to the north, and Bloxwich to the south, as they are defined in the evidence base (EB18). The extent of the gap between the two 'towns', diminishes the contribution that the site makes in preventing neighbouring 'towns' from merging. In this location the southern edge of Great Wyrley is approximately 1.9km to the northern edge of Bloxwich. The site forms a very small part of this gap with a depth of around 205m. Furthermore, if the site were developed, it would not result in the loss of visual separation between the 'towns' given the presence of existing built form (Newland) and deciduous woodland between the two.
Purpose c – To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The evidence base suggests that in order to effectively assess the effects of encroachment on countryside, it is important to determine the extent to which Green Belt land 1) contains or is influenced by urbanising land uses and features, and 2) relates to adjacent settlements and to the wider countryside (EB18). The site is positioned immediately adjacent to the settlement edge of Great Wyrley. The site is influenced by urbanising land uses taking the form of development on its northern and eastern edge, and the presence of the railway line to the west which has overhead gantries which are highly visible urbanised features. This diminishes the relationship that the site has with the wider open countryside.
Purpose d – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The 'historic towns' considered in the evidence base include Lichfield, Penkridge, and Bridgnorth (EB18). The site does not contribute to the setting or special character of these 'historic towns'.
Purpose e – To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling	All Green Belt plays a role in encouraging the recycling of derelict and other previously developed land within the urban area. However, it has been determined that there are exceptional circumstances to review and alter the

⁴ EB18 and EB18a

of derelict and other urban land	Green Belt boundaries such as meeting the minimum local housing need and the significant housing shortfall across the Greater Birmingham and Black Country House Market Area.
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- 2.11. Whilst the Local Plan is being assessed under the December 2023 version of the National Planning Policy Framework, the site could nevertheless be considered Grey Belt. It does not contribute strongly to purpose (a), (b) and (d) of the Green Belt as set out in the table above, and its proposed allocation demonstrates that there are no Footnote 7 restrictions which would provide a strong reason for refusing development at the site.
- 2.12. The site is entirely Flood Zone 1 and at no risk of surface water flooding at the 1 in 30-year event. There is just one very small, isolated area within the site at risk of surface water flooding at the 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000-year event⁵. The Lead Local Flood Authority has concluded that flood risk concerns are mitigable⁶, and this matter will be considered through a Flood Risk Assessment at the planning stage. Miller Homes have already appointed a drainage consultant, Sweco, to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and to consider sustainable drainage systems.
- 2.13. The housing allocation requires reinforced landscaping on the southern site edge to provide a defensible boundary, and this is clearly shown on the Illustrative Masterplan provided with the Regulation 19 representations.
- 2.14. In short, the site is suitable, available now and can achieve the requirements of the housing allocation.

⁵ Flood map for planning

⁶ EB20c

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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