

East Herts Council's comments on Policy MH H7 South Plot, Culver

In their response¹ to the Examiner's question about the purpose of Policy MH H7, Much Hadham Parish Council stated they would not want to remove MH H7 without agreement from East Herts Council (EHC) that the Neighbourhood Plan would still meet the requirements of District Plan Policy VILL1.

EHC previously advised that the site should be allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan to safeguard the efficient use of land. Given the site size, there was potential for more than two homes if the existing planning permissions for 2 dwellings were not implemented. However, following the grant of planning permission for 3 dwellings in 2021 and given that construction has now commenced on the site, it is agreed that Policy MH H7 could be deleted.

The Council is satisfied that the dwellings will still count towards Much Hadham's village target of a minimum of 54 new homes, so the approach would comply with District Plan Policy VILL1. With reference to table 1 on page 19 of the Neighbourhood Plan, the allocation for 2 dwellings on MH H7 South Plot, Culver will need to be deleted from the allocated sites category, bringing the total to 21 (instead of 23). Then the 3 dwellings being built on the site should be added to the 'Other Sites With approval', so the total would be 7 instead of 4.

However, it is not considered necessary to reduce the windfall figure from 8 to 7 on the basis that an additional dwelling has been provided. The requirement for 54 homes in the plan period is a minimum figure and the Council is satisfied that a windfall figure of 8 is realistic. As set out on pages 20-21 of the Neighbourhood Plan and in appendix B, development has consistently come forward in the village boundary over the last ten years. 19 homes were completed between April 2017 and 2020 on 6 sites. Garden land was a key source of supply and in the five years prior to 2017, 13 additional dwellings were also permitted on garden land. With a number of large gardens in the village, this trend is likely to continue. Equally, on the basis of past trends, some windfall is likely to come forward through conversion of commercial properties.

¹ See examination document, dated 7th February 2022, p2