



Part 2

East Herts District Plan

Examination Hearing
Statements

Matters and Issues: Part 2

Chapter 9: Ware

Matter and Issues, Part 2: Chapter 9 - Ware

Issues:

Question 1

What is the basis for planning to accommodate 1,000 new homes at Ware within the plan period?

1. The Development Strategy Topic Paper (**TPA/001**) sets out the Council's approach to directing development towards sustainable locations. The Supporting Document (**SSS/001**) and the Ware Settlement Appraisal (**SSS/006**) provide greater information regarding processes followed and the various evidence bases taken into account, along with consideration of constraints, in determining the proposed level of residential development for the town.
2. Ware is the district's third largest settlement and shares a close inter-relationship with its larger neighbouring town of Hertford. Ware, which has two superstores and numerous national and independent retailers, performs a minor town centre role and is also supported by a significant employment base, including the district's largest private employer, GSK, which has both R&D and manufacturing bases in the town. Within its settlement boundaries Ware benefits from six primary schools, two secondary schools, and a base for further education, Hertford Regional College.
3. Being served by a rail station on the Hertford East Branch Line, direct access is available to Hertford, London Liverpool Street and Stratford and opportunities are also available to travel to various other destinations through interconnections. Bus services provide further multiple destination choice, through both local and wider routes. While suffering from some constraints, due to the historic nature of the town centre, direct road access is available to the A10 and A602 and, with the A414 close by, all provide the town with good road links to the Major Route Network. The M25, A1(M) and M11 also all lie within reasonable travelling distance. Health, community and leisure facilities, including Wodson Park Sports Centre, support the day to day functions of the town's residents.
4. In combination, all of these attributes make Ware a suitable location on which to base future growth, offering opportunities for self-containment and sustainable travel to other locations.
5. While the encouragement of redevelopment of existing vacant brownfield sites has previously been successful in delivering homes in Ware, given the need to retain a suitable employment base to facilitate job opportunities for residents, this vein has largely been exhausted. Therefore, the creation of a sustainable urban

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extension in proximity to existing services, facilities and infrastructure is the Council's selected approach in providing for a total of at least 1,000 dwellings in Ware during the Plan period.

Question 2

What is the overall amount of employment and retail floor space to be allocated in Ware (this should be added to policy WARE1)? Would this meet identified needs?

1. As set out in the Council's Part 1, Matter 3, Statement, the Council has based its approach on the findings of the June 2016 Hertford and Ware Employment Study (**EER/005**). This study appraised 14 existing employment areas across the two towns, and explored a variety of issues affecting the demand for employment in the joint study area, including the introduction of Permitted Development rights. The study, which recognises the close proximity and interrelationship between the two settlements and their markets, recommends that, in respect of matters pertinent specifically to Ware, the Council should develop a strategy to stem the ongoing loss of employment floorspace in combination with a strategy for the improvement; and, re-provision of employment land at an attractive strategic location such as at the intersection of the A10 and A414.
2. In addition, the Council's more recent Employment Study (West Essex and East Hertfordshire assessment of employment needs, **ED144**) identifies a need for new employment land across the district of between 16 and 20 hectares. A Main Modification is already proposed to allocate further sites to meet the increased employment land needs.
3. The Council is unable to support the re-provision of employment land in the area around the intersection of the A10 and A414, due to Green Belt issues, in particular the maintenance of the strategic gap to avoid coalescence between the two settlements. However, an equally well located alternative option is available through the delivery of strategic development, which would provide a highly accessible and visible location. This would also assist in providing local opportunities for employment in tandem with residential growth.
4. Therefore, the strategy for Ware allocates 3ha of employment land as part of the overall development to the North and East of Ware (WARE2). Such provision has been agreed between both the Council and the site promoter and will be delivered as part of the overall development within the Plan period (see

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Statement of Common Ground (**ED151**)). This figure is proposed to be added to Policy WARE1 as a Main Modification to the Plan.

5. It is considered that the provision of 3ha of employment land in this location will not only serve the local Ware and Hertford area, but will also make a significant contribution to the District's overall needs.
6. In respect of retail provision, the Plan does not allocate a specific area of land to accommodate retail uses. However, the WARE2 development to the North and East of Ware does allow for the provision of a neighbourhood centre which will include retail facilities to, *inter alia*, meet the day-to-day needs of new residents. It is therefore considered appropriate that the convenience and comparison potential capacity projections across the plan period (600sqm and 600sqm, respectively) included within the East Herts: Retail and Town Studies Study Update, 2013 (**EER/008**) for Ware, at figures 7.1 and 7.2, will largely be met in this location. Should any provision remaining unmet following development of the WARE2 site it is likely, in the event that suitable opportunities should present themselves, that this would be met in the retail core of the town centre. Therefore, taking into account the constraints of the town's historic core and the need to protect uses in areas both within and outside the central area, it is not proposed to allocate any further land to accommodate retail uses in the Plan beyond that to be provided via Policy WARE2. However, the retail policies in the District Plan also allow for retail opportunities to be provided in suitable locations, which would not preclude development coming forward in other areas of the town.

Question 3

How and why was the planned level chosen ahead of other options? Is the site selection methodology robust and transparent?

Question 4

How and why was WARE2 chosen ahead of other potential options, particularly having regard to the alteration of Green Belt boundaries and demands on infrastructure?

The Council considers that these two issues are linked and can therefore be covered by a single response.

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1. As discussed at Question 1 above, the Development Strategy Topic Paper (**TPA/001**) sets out the Council's approach to directing development towards sustainable locations. Ware is the district's third largest settlement with existing employment and retail bases and is supported by services, facilities and infrastructure commensurate with its size and status. In combination, and due to its proximity to neighbouring Hertford, all of these attributes make Ware a suitable location on which to base future growth, offering opportunities for self-containment and sustainable travel to other locations. Therefore, an approach involving the creation of a sustainable urban extension in proximity to existing facilities has been the main approach employed.
2. The site selection process undertaken throughout the Plan-making process has been most comprehensive. The Supporting Document (**SSS/001**) details how 69 Areas of Search were considered against 21 criteria-based topic areas, with each area subject to several 'sieves' in order to shortlist the options presented at the Regulation 18 stage. The Areas of Search comprised a range of potential scales of development, from new settlements, urban extensions and village developments.
3. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Submission District Plan (**SUB/004**) explains how the Council has developed and considered reasonable alternatives to the proposed development strategy. It sets out how the 'stepped approach' undertaken throughout the Issues and Options, Preferred Options and Submission District Plan preparation process identified and appraised development options, then established and appraised alternative spatial strategy options. Each stage of the shortlisting and sieving process was presented to the District Planning Executive Panel for consideration.
4. The Settlement Appraisal for Ware (**SSS/006**) continues the narrative of the Supporting Document; describing how technical studies undertaken following the Preferred Options Consultation were considered and contributed to the site selection process. The Settlement Appraisal also considered the site allocation in detail, taking into account relevant site specific related evidence bases, where appropriate, and described why alternative Green Belt sites were discounted from the submitted strategy. The site selected to be removed from the Green Belt in Ware (WARE2) is in good proximity to support the use of existing local services and facilities.
5. Furthermore, the scale of development proposed will achieve a critical mass sufficient to allow for the delivery of substantial infrastructure and services, e.g. new link road, foul sewer and 8 form entry secondary school, which will benefit not only new residents of the development, but will also support communities from a wider locale (e.g. the secondary school will serve pupils in both the Ware and Hertford areas). The neighbourhood centre and other facilities, such as the

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burial ground, employment area, open space and leisure provision will support a contained community, while also benefitting the wider local population.

6. While the impact of development on the local and wider road network will, in the short, and possibly medium, term limit the amount of development that can be brought forward, once a strategic solution to the A414 through Hertford is in place, the development will be able to deliver a total of around 1,500 dwellings, with supporting infrastructure and increased sustainable transport provision.

Question 5

Are the allocated sites appropriate and deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints?

1. The allocated site at WARE2 to the North and East of Ware is considered by the Council to be appropriate and deliverable, having regard to the provision of necessary infrastructure and facilities and taking account of environmental constraints.
2. In terms of necessary infrastructure and facilities, these matters have been taken into account from the outset of the sieving process, where sites were assessed against 21 criteria, many of which were related to these issues. Since the initial stages, dialogue has been ongoing with service and infrastructure providers and bodies to ensure that any identified matters can be addressed. The Settlement Appraisal for Ware (**SSS/006**) details requirements in respect the site, and identified necessary mitigations will be delivered through a combination of complying with policy provisions, Masterplanning, and financial contributions, as appropriate.
3. Specific infrastructure requirements have been identified for the site in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (**IDM/001**) at Appendix E, which are all fully or (in the case of secondary education provision, which will serve the wider Hertford and Ware area) partially funded by the development.
4. The agreed Statement of Common Ground (**ED151**) supplements the details contained in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in this regard, and it should be noted that there are no Outstanding Matters to be resolved in respect of infrastructure provisions.

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5. However, in order for the level of development to exceed 1,000 dwellings within the Plan period, Hertfordshire County Council has identified that a need exists for a strategic solution to capacity issues on the A414 through Hertford prior to bringing forward the additional 500 dwellings at the WARE2 site.
6. In this respect, Hertfordshire County Council will be carrying out a public consultation on its draft Local Transport Plan 4 (**ED138**) from 31st October 2017 to 23rd January 2018, which includes proposals for a programme of A414 highway improvements including a Hertford Bypass, which will be brought forward in combination with Hertford becoming a Sustainable Travel Town (comprising a comprehensive package of improvements for walking, cycling and passenger transport, combined with activity to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour). However, while the direction of travel is such as to provide confidence in a strategic solution being delivered in due course, contrary to the position presented by the site promoter in its Hearing Statement, based on work undertaken by TPA, Hertfordshire County Council is currently unable to support development beyond 1,000 dwellings. This position was reconfirmed in a letter to this Council dated 18th September 2017, which is included at Appendix A to this Statement.
7. Therefore, while confident that the delivery of a minimum 1,000 dwellings at the WARE2 site can take place within the Plan period, the Council is unable at this stage to extend that amount in the absence of the necessary strategic highway mitigation sought by Hertfordshire County Council. However, in the event that a scheme should be delivered within the Plan period, which fully addresses the Transport Authority's concerns, the Council agrees that greater clarity would be beneficial to provide flexibility in terms of timescales in the policy wording. Therefore, the Council proposes the following Main Modification to Policy WARE2, II:

~~In the longer term, and in~~ the event that suitable mitigation measures to identified constraints on both the local and wider strategic road networks can be identified and agreed by Hertfordshire County Council as Transport Authority, a further minimum of 500 dwellings will also be delivered in this location.

8. The environmental constraints of the area, including both natural and local heritage assets, have been an important aspect that has taken into account in the assessment of the site and its opportunities as well as in defining Green Belt boundaries. The Masterplanning approach will ensure that, where necessary issues are identified, these will be suitably addressed with mitigations delivered through a combination of complying with policy provisions, Masterplanning, and financial contributions, as appropriate.

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9. A Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed for the WARE2 site which demonstrates that the site can, subject to suitable mitigation, be brought forward within the identified timescale.