

February 2016

West Somerset Local Plan Examination  
Pre-Hearing Statement on behalf of Summerfield  
Developments (SW) Ltd - Representor No. 15  
**Matter 6: Other sites in the event that the Council needs  
to bring forward additional development sites for  
soundness**



Collier  
Planning

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This pre-hearing statement is submitted on behalf of Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd. Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd has submitted duly made representations in response to each of the consultation stages of the draft Plan and welcomes the opportunity to participate in the examination hearings.

## **2.0 Comments on issues raised by the Inspector**

- 2.1 Given our concerns, as expressed in previous representations and in statements in respect of other Matters, about the Plan's strategy for actually delivering housing and the deliverability of Sites WA2 and WI2, it is important to consider whether there is capacity to direct a greater proportion of the overall housing requirement and allocate additional land within Watchet and Williton.

### 1. Land to the east of Williton (Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd)

- 2.2 Summerfield Developments (SW) Ltd has made it clear in its representations that the process that has led to the Council identifying its strategic allocation of land in Williton has lacked explanation, transparency and supporting evidence. Those concerns are clearly set out within previous representations and we do not repeat those here.
- 2.3 The land controlled by Summerfield to the east of the village, which has been identified through the SHLAA process as suitable and available, was assessed within the Landscape Character Assessment of Potential Strategic Locations for development (sub areas F1-4) as having only a moderate adverse visual impact and low adverse sensitivity and magnitude. The assessment concludes that with mitigation this would result in only a low adverse visual impact but we would suggest that this could be even lower if consideration is given to the form of proposed development identified on the illustrative masterplan which was included within previous representations and which clearly showed that development would not occur on the higher ground within the southern part of these sub areas.

- 2.4 We are extremely puzzled by the findings of the SA that the land controlled by Summerfield to the east of the village *“is more remote making services difficult to access without a car and making it less likely to sustain the existing village services potentially increasing the need to travel by car”*. We haven’t seen any evidence to support this conclusion or the subsequent suggestion within the Plan that once in their cars, residents are more likely to drive further to the wider range of facilities available in the next nearest service centres of Minehead (to the west), Taunton and Bridgwater (to the east) giving rise to higher carbon dioxide emissions and reducing the amount of business in the village shops.
- 2.5 While the Council has produced no evidence to support its claims in this regard, a report prepared by FMW Transport consultants was attached to previous representations which compares the proposed WI2 allocation with the land to the east of the village in terms of its access to the village centre and other destinations within Williton on foot and by bicycle. It demonstrates that the village centre would be more accessible from the land to the east of Williton. The site is adjacent to the existing settlement with potential for multiple cycle and pedestrians links into the village centre. We believe this would encourage inhabitants to rely more on sustainable transport and use local services. The FMW report attached to Summerfield’s previous representations also makes it clear that a suitable access to the east of Williton site can be achieved, contrary to the Plan's supporting text.
- 2.6 Also attached to Summerfield’s previous representations was a report from EAD ecological consultants confirming that the land controlled by Summerfield to the east of the village has no ecological constraints to development. This addresses the issues raised by the HRA and referred to in the SA which itself recognises that mitigation can be achieved to make the impact neutral.
- 2.7 The SA suggests that the land controlled by Summerfield to the east of the village is in Flood Zone 3b and could cause a possible pollution risk and drainage challenges. However,

a Flood Risk report was also attached to Summerfield's previous representations prepared by Hydrock consultants which makes it clear that about 70% of the site is actually within flood zone 1 where there is the lowest risk from flooding. This is illustrated in the SFRA. Only about 30% of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3 and this leaves the majority of the site as developable and the illustrative masterplan provided with Summerfield's previous representations shows how the site could be developed to take account of this. The Hydrock report also explained how development proposals for the site could include flood compensatory storage features to provide a betterment for the village.

2.8 In our statements on other Matters we have expressed concern over the failure of the Plan to allocate sufficient land to help deliver the housing requirement. We have also exposed uncertainty over delivery and/or capacity of some of the proposed strategic site allocations. Given these concerns, this site could deliver a mixed use development that can positively respond directly to the objectives and aspirations of both the Local Plan and the Parish Plan, including:

- delivery of new housing (including affordable housing), including delivery capable of contributing towards the five year supply;
- delivery of housing adjoining the existing employment area in the village;
- improvements in traffic circulation in the form of the potential to provide a new connector road which can facilitate a link between A39 and A358 thus alleviating congestion on Fore Street;
- improvements in pedestrian circulation in the form of existing footpath/cycle links with the village centre;
- provision of new open space and sports pitches – as identified within Parish Plan;
- improvement of vehicular and pedestrian/cycle accessibility to existing employment areas;
- potential to provide new employment accommodation as part of a mixed use development, close to the existing employment area in the village;

- improvement to links with and public access to the surrounding landscape and countryside;
- potential delivery of new village hall – as identified within Parish Plan;
- potential development associated with West Somerset Railway;
- potential for biodiversity gain;
- flood compensatory storage features to provide a betterment for the village.

**T** 01823 334 283

**E** [enquiries@collierplanning.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@collierplanning.co.uk)

**W** [www.collierplanning.co.uk](http://www.collierplanning.co.uk)



Collier  
Planning