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MATTER 5 HEARING STATEMENT

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD EXAMINATION

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF ECOWORLD LIMITED

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Carter Jonas is instructed by EcoWorld Limited ('EcoWorld') to submit this Hearing Statement in response to the Inspector's Questions for the Site Allocations DPD Examination. The representations are made with regards to Site Allocations UA11, UA12 and UA13. EcoWorld has an ownership interest in each of these sites.
- 1.2 EcoWorld supports the fundamental aim and purpose of the Site Allocations DPD in seeking to identify sites sufficient to accommodate the identified levels of growth for the plan period. However, EcoWorld maintains that a flexible approach should be adopted to land uses that may come forward on the urban sites to ensure the end development is market facing and viable. Policies should not be prescriptive with regards the quanta of units and floorspace that may come forward.
- 1.3 EcoWorld agrees with the Inspector that the policies are repetitive and have overlapping requirements that would benefit from simplification and amalgamation in the interests of clarity. EcoWorld also agrees that some elements of policy text would be better incorporated in reasoned justification and supporting text.
- 1.4 EcoWorld is in the process of preparing a new detailed planning application for the development of the land at Goldsworth Road, Woking (Site Allocations UA12, UA13 and part of UA11). The new application builds on the precedent set by the resolution to grant achieved for the application submitted on site UA13 only. It is a shared vision between the Council and EcoWorld that a new neighbourhood can be achieved on Goldsworth Road, with EcoWorld's landholdings being the catalyst for a landmark new development. As part of this, EcoWorld has been in discussions with the Council and with local charity The York Road Project about the provision of a new homeless shelter for Site UA12. EcoWorld will be submitting a Screening Request shortly pursuant to the EIA Regulations. The timings for the preparation and submission of the planning application have been agreed through a Planning Performance Agreement confirming the deliverable nature of the proposals. An application will be submitted in 2020.

2 MATTER 5: ARE THE SADPD'S POLICIES JUSTIFIED, CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL POLICIES, AND CLEARLY WRITTEN AND UNAMBIGUOUS SO IT IS EVIDENT HOW A DECISION MAKER SHOULD REACT TO DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS?

Issue (ii)

2.1 We respond to the specific matters arising in relation to Issue (ii) below.

Question 10 – The implementation section of the SADPD outlines that “Very robust finance evidence will be required to justify any negotiation away from the requirements of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD... The Council will expect development negotiations on specific sites to be supported by an open book financial appraisal process.” Would these requirements be more fittingly expressed in a standalone overarching SADPD policy?

2.2 No, there isn't a requirement for a standalone policy on this topic within the SADPD as the Council's Core Strategy Policy CS12 sets out the requirements for delivering affordable housing, including the open book appraisal process. The purpose of the SADPD is to identify sites sufficient to accommodate the identified levels of growth for the plan period.

2.3 We do not consider that the document needs an additional policy confirming the Council's approach to the delivery of affordable housing.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Technical analysis and assessment has already taken place for Site UA13 as a result of the extant resolution to grant for the site under application reference PLAN/2016/0742. It supports the principle of a cluster of tall buildings on the site at a higher density than anticipated in the SADPD.
- 3.2 Since representations were last made to the Regulation 19 consultation EcoWorld has progressed with pre-application discussions on wider landholdings which has taken into consideration the constraints across sites UA11 (part of), UA12 and UA13 to deliver a brand new neighbourhood for Woking town centre. EcoWorld respectfully requests that flexibility is enabled within the policies to ensure the Borough reaps the economic benefits created by a higher level of footfall within the town centre.
- 3.3 By introducing flexibility the Council has adequately justified and evidenced its SADPD. Therefore the document is sound. The application is anticipated to be submitted in 2020 and would therefore be delivered within the identified timescale 2019-2024.