

Your ref
Our ref 214431-50
File ref

ARUP

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3 April 2012

Dear Ms Huxtable

Wigan Core Strategy Examination: Additional Hearing Session

I write further to your letter of 13 March 2012 regarding the above, and the subsequent email from Paul Jarvis of 20 March 2012 confirming that NLPGL would be submitting a written statement and would wish to participate in the additional hearing session on 18 April 2012.

I note that the purpose of the additional hearing session is to explore matters in relation to housing land supply and NLPGL have been invited to participate in the additional session. The following written statement below re-confirms NLPGL's continued commitment to the expedient delivery of North Leigh.

I note that in respect of North Leigh, the Inspector's comments relate solely to the anticipated annual rates of development, when considered in relation to other sites at South of Hindley, East of Atherton and South of Atherton. Since the closure of the initial hearing sessions, NLPGL would like to draw the Inspector's attention to the following matters which will assist in demonstrating its continued commitment to the delivery of North Leigh.

NLPGL has already submitted evidence to the Inspector in respect of the anticipated annual delivery rate (included within the statements and appendices to Matter 4 – Housing Policy CP6 [Section 4 of NLPGL Statement] and Matter 6 – North Leigh Park Policy SP3 [Section 10 of NLPGL Statement]) and wishes to rely on this information and previous representations on the Core Strategy from March 2011 and November 2011. NLPGL remains confident that the development can be delivered in accordance with the Core Strategy policies.

The Inspector will also note that a 'Letter of Intent' between NLPGL and Taylor Wimpey formed part of NLPGL's representations on Matter 6 and was discussed at length during the course of the hearing sessions. We understand that Taylor Wimpey are submitting further representations to the Inspector on the matters raised under separate cover.

Since the closure of the EiP hearings NLPGL has submitted an outline planning application (Ref: A/12/76665), in line with the information provided to the Inspector and also in line with the timescales of the Planning Performance Agreement agreed with Wigan

Council. This application has been validated and Wigan Council is currently consulting on the planning application.

NLPGL is working with Wigan Council to ensure that following full consultation and consideration, the outline planning application can be determined positively by the grant of permission as soon as possible to allow early implementation of the first phases of the development. Throughout the EiP process there has been no material objection to the principle of the North Leigh allocation and it is considered that its development will remain a key building block for the Core Strategy whether it proceeds in its current or in an amended form. It would therefore be wholly counterproductive to delay the grant of planning permission in the event of delay to the EIP process.

NLPGL remains committed to the regeneration, remediation and development of this brownfield site. The site has a significant industrial past as is shown on the previous uses plan attached to this statement. These uses include:

- 1) Shallow coal seams, with a combination of shallow mine workings and opencast mining. Approximately 30 mineshafts on- site. It should be noted that in 2011, there was a collapse of a mineshaft on site (see enclosed photo), which is being treated by the Coal Authority.
- 2) Four large colliery spoil mounds.
- 3) Two former scrap-yards.
- 4) A former sewage treatment plant.
- 5) A former brickworks.
- 6) Four former landfills.
- 7) A former railway line, embankment and invasive plant species traditionally used to stabilise embankments
- 8) Significant contamination across the whole site has occurred as a result of these uses.

The previous uses of this site and the industrial legacy left behind mean that the site is unsafe and in need of substantial remediation and reclamation. It is clear from the above and the attached plan that this is a significant brownfield site. The scrub growth and patchy grass growth across some areas of the site cannot be construed as the site being reclaimed by nature as the dangers of the previous uses are still clearly evident. The new NPPF, published on 27 March 2012, confirms (paragraph 17) a number of core land-use planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking and states that planning should *inter alia* "...encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land)..." and re-confirms this approach at paragraph 111 "Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land)..."

The NPPF also contains the draft NPPF's emphasis on growth and delivery as referred to earlier in evidence to the EIP and underscores the need for up to date plans like the Wigan Core Strategy to be adopted as expeditiously as possible. This is a factor which needs to be taken into account in dealing with the matters the Inspector has identified in his letter circulated by the Programme Officer on 13 March 2012.

The NPPF states *inter alia*:

Para 12: "...It is highly desirable that local planning authorities should have an up-to-date plan in place."

Para 157: “Crucially, Local Plans should:

- plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework;
- indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map; and
- allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate.”

Para 216. “...From the day of publication, decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given)...”

In terms of NLPGL's representations, nothing in the NPPF materially changes the issues upon which evidence has been submitted to date or those discussed in front of the Inspector in respect of North Leigh at the EIP and as a result NLPGL does not consider that further representations are required.

NLPGL is committed to the development of this site as evidenced by the significant commitment in the preparation of the outline planning application. The grant of outline consent will be closely followed by the submission of two reserved matters applications. Reserved matters applications will be for 200 units accessed from Nel Pan Lane and for 200 units accessed from Westleigh Lane. NLPGL will deliver these further applications working with Taylor Wimpey and the early commitment to these applications is further evidence to NLPGL's commitment to early delivery of this Key Strategic Site.

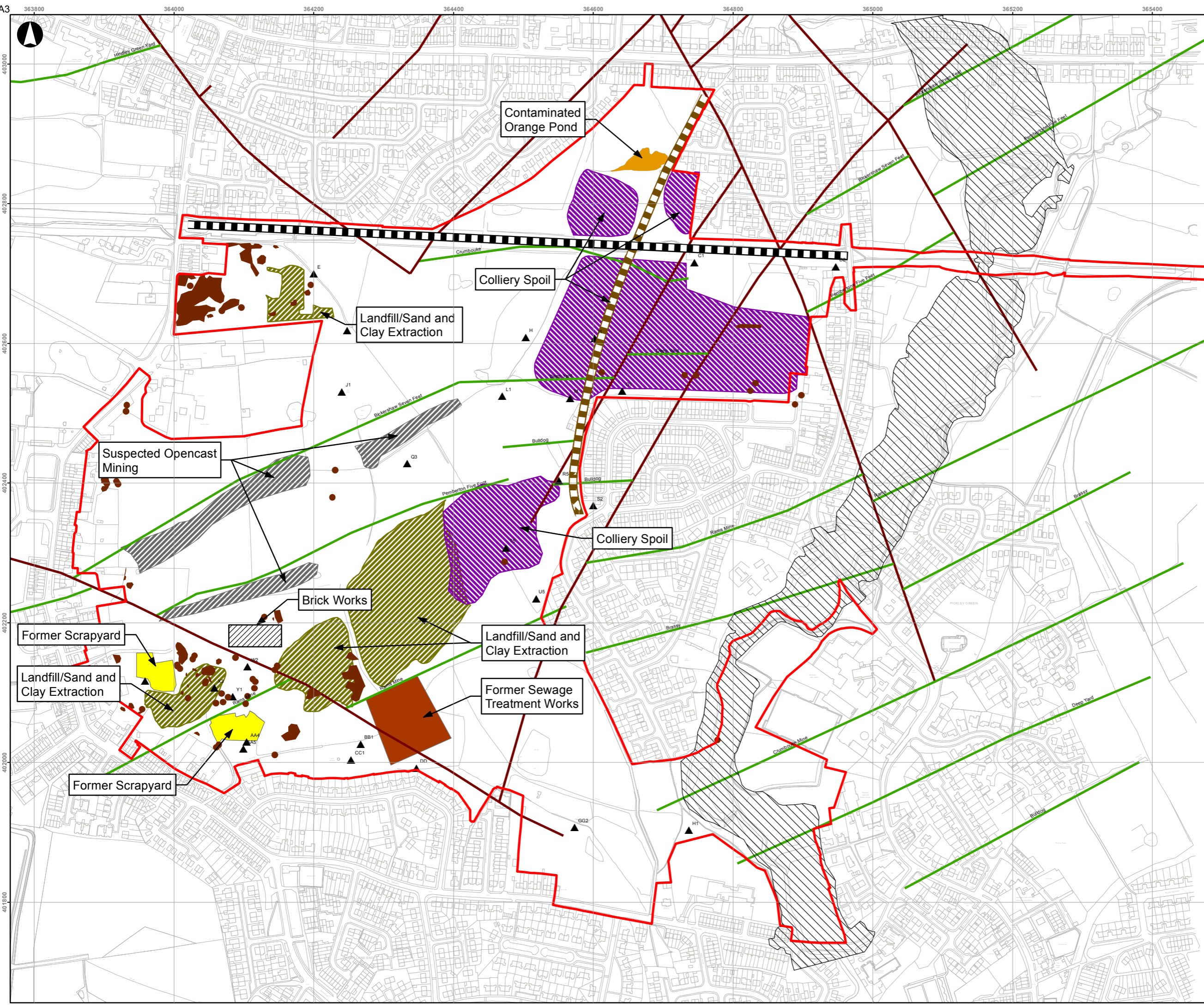
On the basis of the statement above, NLPGL and Taylor Wimpey can deliver distinct and different housing products (including affordable) from three different access points (Leigh Road, Westleigh Lane and Nel Pan Lane) and utilise different market and character areas for Hindley, Atherton and Leigh and are therefore confident that delivery of North Leigh can take place in full accordance with the Core Strategy policies. The submission of the outline planning application and previous statements provided during the hearing sessions regarding the delivery of the scheme provides further evidence to the Inspector in support of the deliverability of this Key Strategic site.

Yours sincerely



Hannah Smith
Senior Planner

cc Charles Billson - North Leigh Park Group Ltd



Key

- Site Boundary
- Main Line Railway
- Mineral Railway
- Westleigh Brook Flood Zone
- Japanese Knotweed (Point)
- Japanese Knotweed (Area)
- Mine Shafts
- Coal Seam
- Fault Line
- Colliery Spoil
- Landfill / Sand and Clay Extraction
- Area of suspected Opencast Mining
- Former Scrapyard
- Former Sewage Treatment Works
- Orange Pond

Notes

1. This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey Material with the permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright ©. Unauthorised reproductions infringe Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wigan Council 100019578 2010.
2. Review of extent of mineworkings and suspected mineshafts ongoing. Additional locations may be indicated following completion of this exercise.
3. Extent of geotechnical and geo-environmental constraints based on:
 - Capita Symonds, Geo-Environmental Constraints and Remediation Options Report, Ref. CS/034574-Geo1/C, Jan 2009.
 - Wardell Armstrong, Hindley South, Advanced Ground Investigation, Ref. LE02920 Dec 2003.
 - Geodrift Environmental, Ref. DR260 C1781/1 Site plan showing development constraints.
4. Work in progress - will be updated as additional information is received and reviewed.

F1	2012-03-30	APS	TS/HS	PJ
Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd

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Client

NLPG
North Leigh Park Group

Job Title
North Leigh

Drawing Title
North Leigh Previously Developed (Brownfield Land) Plan

Scale at A3
1:5,000

Drawing Status
For Information

Job No 214431-00	Drawing No SK-002	Issue F1
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