

Three Rivers District Council Site Allocations LDD

Statement in Response to Main Issue 5:

1.0 Issue 5: Whether the approach anticipated for Langleybury and the Grove (Policy SA7) is appropriate in the context of relevant policy

1.1 Question 5.1

1.2 Whether the adopted development brief and the SALDD are mutually consistent.

1.3 Yes.

1.4 The Agreed Statement between Ralph Trustees Limited and Three Rivers District Council on RTL's Withdrawal from the Core Strategy Examination on Matter 3 (Green Belt- Major Developed Sites) sets out that the parties agreed that the most appropriate way forward for the planned future of both RTL sites was as follows:

- TRDC to prepare separate Site Allocations for The Grove and Langleybury sites, for inclusion in the Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options consultation stage (Autumn 2011). The Langleybury Site Allocation will specifically examine the suitability of the site for housing and economic development uses.
- To inform the Site Allocations DPD, TRDC, in conjunction with RTL and other stakeholders, is to prepare a Planning Brief for both The Grove and Langleybury sites (during June to August 2011) to set out the parameters for development and the types of uses envisaged. This Brief would address the unique characteristics of each site and the economic development opportunities which exist.

1.5 The Langleybury and The Grove Development Brief [**SD50 and SD50a**] was adopted following consultation in June 2012 with an aim to inform the potential allocation of both sites within the SALDD and set out the guidelines/parameters for future proposed development. It forms part of the evidence base of the SALDD and will be a material consideration when assessing planning applications that relate to the two sites.

1.6 Paragraph 10.5 of the SALDD reflects the Development Brief and sets out that the Council consider that the future restoration and enhancement of the Langleybury Estate is best linked to the use and operation of The Grove, given the similar planning considerations, landownership, physical proximity and potential uses on the sites. Paragraphs 10.8 and 10.9 provide further detail of the main proposals for the two sites.

1.7 However to provide further clarification the Council propose the following modification included in the Schedule of Changes under reference **PC39** to Policy SA7:

The Council acknowledge the need for change in these two areas.

Appropriate uses on the Langleybury site are hotel/leisure development and residential, and the continuation of agricultural uses remain appropriate.

Appropriate uses on The Grove site will be hotel/leisure use.

~~Detailed proposals are set out in a development brief for the site.~~

Proposals for the development of the Langleybury and The Grove sites should be in accordance with the adopted Langleybury and The Grove Development Brief (2012) and any subsequent revisions.

2.0 Question 5.2

2.1 Whether the SALDD is consistent with national policy in respect of heritage assets.

2.2 Yes.

2.3 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF sets out that Local Planning Authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

2.4 The Council has developed a Development Brief which provides guidance on the appropriate location for potential future development and enhancement of both the Langleybury and The Grove sites. The Council has proposed a modification to the wording of Policy SA7 as set out in paragraph 1.7 above to clarify that the Langleybury and The Grove Development Brief is a material planning consideration in assessing any planning applications submitted that relate to the two sites.

2.5 The heritage features of Langleybury and The Grove are set out on page 12 of the Development Brief. It is evident that the two sites are in significantly different states of repair, with Langleybury currently in a state of very poor repair with its heritage value affected by insensitive alteration and late 20th century development. Whereas The Grove Estate is well maintained with full time maintenance staff and has been sensitively altered to accommodate hotel usage.

2.6 Specific heritage development parameters for both sites are set out on pages 18 and 19 of the Development Brief. For instance the Langleybury Mansion is currently on the English Heritage buildings at risk register. One of the heritage parameters for development at Langleybury includes 'Alteration to the mansion-internal and external repair and alteration should protect or exploit key features of heritage value (for example the wood panelling and main staircase) and limit alteration to original fabric.'

2.7 English Heritage (**60171/30044/SA7/4**) recognises that there is an opportunity to repair and reuse Langleybury House. They have suggested that the proposed development should seek to secure the repair and future use of Langleybury House by means of demolition of the nearby modern, unsightly school building at Langleybury, and the provision of equivalent development sensitively located at The Grove. In addition Policy SA7 should not make provision for 20 houses on the Langleybury site. The Council consider that relocating all of the new development to The Grove would be unreasonable. The Langleybury Development Parameters Plan in the Development Brief illustrates that there are 'least' visually and heritage sensitive areas on the Langleybury site where new development could be located. Moreover there is no national or local policy justification to take English Heritage's approach.

3.0 Question 5.3

3.1 Whether the anticipated housing and other development may be considered 'enabling' development.

3.2 No.

3.3 Enabling development is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact that it would bring public benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved. Enabling development is by definition contrary to policy and is necessary to generate the funds needed to secure the future of a significant place.

3.4 The Council do not consider that the proposed development would be unacceptable in planning terms, and therefore there is no need to consider the anticipated housing and other development as enabling development.

4.0 Question 5.4

4.1 Whether the proposed development as a whole may be considered sustainable.

4.2 Yes.

4.3 Sustainable development encompasses economic, social and environmental aspects. The Sustainability Appraisal [**SA CD3**] sets out the contribution the proposed development would make to sustainable development. It is acknowledged that the site is not within close proximity to local services and amenities. However the proposed development would contribute to meeting the District's housing needs and affordable housing objectives; and would be an opportunity to conserve and enhance Langleybury House, a Grade II* Listed Building which is on the National Heritage at Risk Register. The hotel and residential use proposal would also help increase inward investments and potentially increase job opportunities and support local economic growth. Overall the proposed development is considered as sustainable.

4.4 The Development Brief sets out the constraints and the development parameters for Langleybury and The Grove in order for sustainable development to be achieved on both sites.

4.5 As set out in the Development Brief any development must embrace the principles of sustainable construction and design. Any planning applications submitted would be assessed against Policy CP1 (Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development) of the Core Strategy which requires all development in Three Rivers to contribute to the sustainability of the District.

5.0 Question 5.5

5.1 Whether the anticipated housing and other development would be regarded as inappropriate within a Green Belt or whether it may be regarded as not inappropriate.

- 5.2 There is a general presumption against 'inappropriate development' within the Green Belt which should not be approved except in very special circumstances (NPPF paragraph 87).
- 5.3 The construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt, although an exception to this is limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (excluding agricultural buildings) whether redundant or in continuing use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.
- 5.4 It is considered that the redevelopment of the secondary school buildings at Langleybury and limited infilling at The Grove may fall under this exception and be considered appropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to the assessment of impact on the openness of the Green Belt, although clearly this would depend on the specific detail of any proposal and as a result would need to be assessed fully as part of a planning application.
- 5.5 For development on either site where this exception would not apply, it will be necessary for any applicant to demonstrate that 'very special circumstances' exist to justify development in order to outweigh the 'in principle' Green Belt harm. The Council consider that there is potential for a 'very special circumstances' case to be established, but this will need to be demonstrated by the applicant as part of any application.