

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD – 27 January 2016**

### **UPDATE TO AGENDA**

**APPLICATION NO:** 13/5242C

**LOCATION:** Land off Hawthorne Drive, Sandbach

**PROPOSAL:** Residential development comprising 144 dwellings

### **KEY ISSUES**

#### **Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan**

The Independent Examiner's report on the Sandbach Neighbourhood Plan has now been issued, and the overall findings of the Examiner are that the Neighbourhood Plan should, subject to the recommended modifications (35 in total), proceed to referendum.

The recommended modifications include the removal of the 30 dwelling limit within policy H1 (Housing Growth). More flexibility is required to cater for the possibility that the final housing target (in the Cheshire East Local Plan) may differ from the one on which the Neighbourhood Plan is based and/or the expected contribution from current planning permissions and windfall sites within the Policy Boundary is insufficient to meet the housing requirement.

With specific regard to Strategic Site CS24 as identified in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan, policy JLE1 (Future Employment and Retail Provision) in the Neighbourhood Plan aims to ensure that future land allocations and planning permissions for employment uses are retained solely for employment purposes. The Examiner notes that, *“While the policy does acknowledge that the retention of employment uses is only justified where there is a reasonable prospect of the intended use being taken up, by specifically precluding residential and care related uses as potential alternatives it conflicts with national planning policy (NPPF paragraph 22) which states that applications for alternative uses should be treated on their merits.”*

The Examiner therefore recommends that the first part of the policy be amended to better reflect national policy and the emerging Local Plan by removing the restriction on alternative residential use provided it can be demonstrated that there is no demand for the intended use and/or the intended use is not viable.

The comments raised in the Examiner's Report are not considered to raise any issues that would warrant a change in recommendation from the original report.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

As in the original report, it is recommended that the application is delegated back to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chairman to approve subject to conditions and the prior completion of a s106 agreement.