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28 September 2017

Dear Sir or Madam,

## **Representation to Warrington Borough Council's Local Plan Preferred Development Option in respect of Land off Hurst Lane, Glazebury, WA3 5LS**

We write on behalf of our client McCaul Developments (Cheshire) Ltd in respect of the Council's Local Plan Preferred Development Option, which is out for public consultation until Friday 29 September 2017.

### **Background**

By way of background our client has an interest in land located to the rear of Dukinfield Farm, Hurst Lane, Glazebury. A location plan is attached to this letter.

It should be noted that our client has previously submitted 'Call for Sites' representations in respect of the site; most recently as part of the October 2016 consultation process (reference: R18/039). This site is shown on Figure 1 of the Local Plan, and was also appraised by the Council in the 'Green Belt Assessment' published in July 2017.

### **Urgent Need for New Housing**

In preparing this response to the Council's Local Plan Preferred Development Option it is important, first and foremost, to draw attention to the urgent need for new housing in England.

According to current projections, an average of 210,000 new households will be delivered in England in each year between 2014 and 2039. In 2015/16, the total housing stock in England increased by around 190,000 residential dwellings: 12% higher than the previous year's increase but a long way short of the estimated 240-250,000 new homes needed to keep pace with household formation and to tackle the longstanding backlog of housing need<sup>1</sup>.

In tandem with this, the 2015 Government had a stated aim of achieving 1 million net additions to the housing stock by the end of the Parliament, which was expected to be in 2020. This translated into 200,000 additional homes per year. Net additions includes, for example, conversions and changes of use. Critics pointed out that the figure did not take account of the backlog of housing need.

The House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs concluded in Building More Homes (2016) that the target "*was not based on a robust analysis*" and went on to recommend that the housing crisis required the development of at least 300,000 new homes annually "*for the foreseeable future.*" In addition to questioning whether a target for 1 million homes is ambitious enough, there is some doubt over whether even this number is achievable.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7671>

The need for new housing has also been captured by the Government's Housing White Paper, 'Fixing our broken housing market' which was published on 7 February 2017. It set out "a comprehensive package of reform to increase housing supply and halt the decline in housing affordability."

The White Paper identified a threefold problem of "not enough local authorities planning for the homes they need; housebuilding that is simply too slow; and a construction industry that is too reliant on a small number of big players." The White Paper goes on to focus on four main areas:

- (i) Building the right homes in the right places.
- (ii) Building them faster.
- (iii) Widening the range of builders and construction methods.
- (iv) 'Helping people now' including investing in new affordable housing and preventing homelessness.

Put simply, there is therefore an urgent need for new housing in England – a position recognised by the Council in the Preferred Development Option which acknowledges the following in paragraph 4.17:

*"Despite maximising the capacity of the existing urban area, it is apparent that if Warrington is to meet the development needs arising from its growth aspirations, **it can only do so through the release of Green Belt land to provide for 8,791 homes and 251 ha of employment land.**" (our emphasis)*

It goes on to state [in paragraphs 4.18 and 4.19]:

*"The requirement for Green Belt release to provide new homes has increased in the period since the initial consultation. This is primarily due to the overly optimistic economic activity rate forecasts used in the initial SHMA as detailed in Section 2 above, but also due to the application of the flexibility factor and the need to address the backlog since 2015. The requirement for Green Belt release for employment land has fallen slightly due to the Council identifying additional urban capacity through its masterplanning work.*

*The Council is confident that exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to justify this scale of Green Belt release."*

### **Council's Preferred Development Option**

Our client has noted the 'Preferred Development Option' presented in Chapter 5 of the consultation document (also illustrated by Figure 9). This includes four main areas of growth, complemented by "incremental growth in Warrington's outlying settlements."

Table 22 goes to set out an 'indicative Green Belt capacity' for Glazebury of 50 dwellings. It does however caveat this information and say [in paragraph 5.49] that the "final numbers will depend on the detailed assessment of potential development sites, including a more detailed assessment of the implications for the character of respective settlements, the permanence of the amended Green Belt boundaries and transport impacts".

Our client supports the Council's approach, which is to release Green Belt land in outlying settlements for much needed future housing development. They look forward to providing the Council with the necessary supporting information during the next stage of the Local Plan consultation process which illustrates that their site in Glazebury should be released for development.

**Conclusions and Next Steps**

In summary, our client is supportive of the direction advocated by the Preferred Development Option which promotes the necessary development of housing within the Borough.

We would be grateful if you could please confirm, by return e-mail, receipt of this representation.

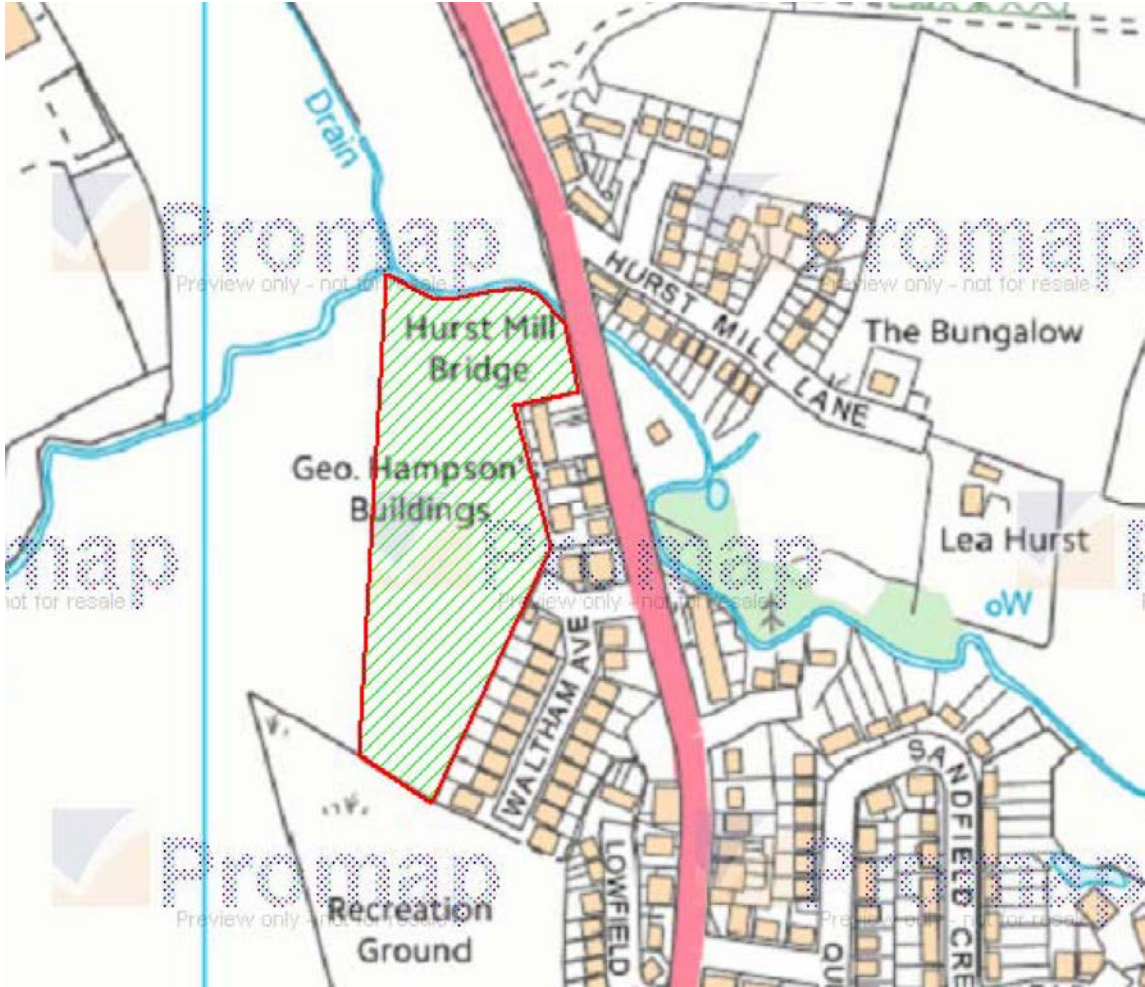
Yours faithfully,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Enc.

**Appendix 1 – Location Plan**



Not to scale