

Q37

Inspectors Question:

I would welcome the Council's response to the representation by Geoff Gardner of Gardner Planning Ltd on behalf of Arnold White Estates to the effect that allocation AGT-2 is unsuitable for development because of the noise and visual effects of HST2.

Representation:

Representations made by Arnold White Estates and Geoff Gardner of Gardner Planning Ltd promotes the AWEL Berryfields East site to the NW of Aylesbury.

The line of HS2 is now confirmed and the centre line now seems to be the southwestern boundary of site AGT2. The site is wholly within the HS2 safeguarding area, and the line is on an embankment here - the foot of which is some 100m into the site.

Noise contours of 45dB - 60dB also extend some 100m into the site. The site width varies from some 100m - 500m so that a very large area affected by HS2 is undevelopable. Even if free of the embankment and unacceptable noise, the other constraint is visual outlook which is onto a railway embankment. A pylon line runs along the South-Western boundary of Aylesbury and crosses the site from South-East to North-West. As a key site, it seems wholly unsuitable for development.

AGT2 (South-West Aylesbury, 1,550 homes) is severely constrained by HS2 of which the centre line forms the south-west boundary of the site such that for at least 100m into the site there can be no housing, and even beyond that living conditions would be uncomfortable. The conclusion of the Core Strategy Inspector's report in June 2010 on this site was "This would have a major impact on the deliverability and potentially, the viability of the SGA, through significant land take in the SW site".

Response:

The purpose of the hearings does not extend to the inclusion of alternative site promotion and representors should make note of the AV Hearings Advice at 7.5.18.

D-AGT2 is proposed to the east of HS2 which will be separated from the proposal site (and Aylesbury) by bunds and planting. This mitigation will also have the effect of visually divorcing the landscape to the west of the line.

The policy (D-AGT2) requires that 'existing vegetation should be retained', the provision of 50% green infrastructure, the delivery of a 'linear park' and the retention of flood areas as 'green space'. All these factors will ensure that the northern end of the proposal site in the vicinity of the A418 will retain a green character at the entry point to Aylesbury. It will also provide sufficient mitigation of the visual impact from HS2.

The presence of HS2 and its associated mitigation plus the requirements set out in policy D-AGT2 will ensure that there will be an adequate buffer between the proposed line for HS2 and the proposed D-AGT2.

Approximately 60% of the land within site AGT-2 is predicted to experience noise levels from the HS2 development of between 50 and 60dB_{LpAeq,16hr} during the day time and 40-50dB

LpAeq, 8hr at night. The Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Levels LOAEL's for the HS2 project have been determined as 50dB LpAeq, 16hr during the day and 40dB LpAeq, 8hr at night. The Significant Observed Adverse Effect Levels, SOAEL's, are 65dB LpAeq, 16hr and 55dB LpAeq, 8hr respectively. Therefore, over approximately 40% of the site noise levels from HS2 will be below the LOAEL, and for the rest of the site lie between LOAEL and SOAEL. In terms of national noise policy and guidance these noise levels do not preclude development but for the areas where noise levels lie between LOAEL and SOAEL there is a requirement to mitigate and reduce noise to a minimum.

Mitigation can be provided in various ways. At source mitigation in the form of a 5m high noise bund is already proposed by HS2. Therefore, developers of this land will need to consider further mitigation on the site which could include layout and orientation of buildings, internal design so that noise sensitive rooms are not facing the noise source, acoustic glazing and ventilation of individual buildings and the provision of acoustic fencing to protect outside spaces.

Potential developers of this site have agreed to follow guidance contained in ProPG: Planning & Noise Professional Practice Guidance, New Residential Development, published by the Institute of Acoustics in May 2017. This guidance is based on the principals of good acoustic design from an early stage of development to ensure that all accepted internal and external noise level guidelines are met.

From a noise perspective development of this site is therefore practically possible and potentially has the benefit of reducing the impact of noise from HS2 on the existing housing on Walton Court.

In regard to the HEDNA and household projections evidence this question has been answered under answers to Q29, Q51 and Q79