

Elstree Way Corridor – Comments from Chair of Governors of Hertswood Academy

Thank you for the opportunity to comment again on the Elstree Way Corridor Area Action Plan.

The Plan is to be welcomed as an opportunity for ensuring strategic rather than piecemeal development and the Council is to be congratulated for this.

Page 5 – paragraph 1.10 – the inclusion of a new area in the Corridor to the west of Manor Way is to be welcomed. Part of the reason for its inclusion is the known residential interest in this area. The same applies to our southern site which adjoins the corridor. The Council has known for a long time about our intention to sell this site for residential development and to use the proceeds to rebuild the Academy on the northern site. Indeed it is included within the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADM) document. It would therefore be consistent to give very serious consideration to including our southern site in the Corridor.

Page 6 – I understand that the map showing the town centre, EWC and the Elstree Way Corridor Plan are meant to be approximations but I think they should be more precise. I say this because, as currently drawn, they give the misleading impression that some of the playing fields of our southern site are included within the EWC. This may, of course, change if my previous point about including our southern site in the Corridor is taken on board.

Page 9 – Figure 1 and page 16 paragraph 4.19 – reference is made to two alternative sites for a new health facility. This appears to conflict with the Infrastructure Assessment dated February 2013 which concludes in paragraph 13 about primary care that there is “significant capacity in the Borehamwood area within existing HCL premises which has a comfortable surplus”. The Action Plan provides no hard evidence of the need for new health facilities. Unless there is such evidence this identification of new facilities is contrary to the conclusions of the Infrastructure Assessment and should be taken out of the Action Plan.

If evidence is provided to make the case, the suggested site at the front of the former Oaklands College site is inappropriate. It conflicts with paragraph 4.10 on page 15 which says that the Council welcomes the establishment of a new further education facility on the site. Paragraph 4.19 muddies the water by saying that the site **may** no longer be required for the education purposes. All the evidence provided by Herts County Council and the Academy, in response to previous attempts by the developers to get planning permission for more houses rather than the agreed college, points to the very strong need for this site to be retained for education use. The Action Plan provided no evidence at all for any loosening of the commitment to retain this site for this purpose and in these circumstances reference to it as a possible site for a health facility should be removed from paragraph 4.19.

Page 15 – paragraph 4.12 – reference is made to the identification of the Maxwell Park Community Centre as a site for a new primary school if another is not found. This a very controversial proposal and

there is no hard evidence to suggest that all other possibilities for meeting the demand for primary education in the future have been fully explored. It is possible to build in extra capacity at existing primary schools to meet future demand and there are also on-going discussions about whether a new school could be positioned on a site adjacent to our northern site. This proposal should therefore be withdrawn from the Action Plan.

Page 29 Figure 5 and Page 31 car park – reference is made to the opportunity to have a residential development on the site of the civic centre car park. This does not tally with the SADM as it is not mentioned in there as a future site for residential development. That may be because it is not expected to happen within the next ten years or so. If that is the reason the Action Plan should make this clear. If it is expected to happen earlier it should also be included in the SADM.

In any event further consideration does need to be given as to whether the civic centre car park can be developed for housing whilst retaining the existing spaces at what is a very busy weekday car park used by people working in the area and others visiting the nearby leisure facilities. Indeed more spaces will be needed in the vicinity to accompany the proposed residential development and to cope with demand from other developments along the Corridor. This does not appear practical and it should only be included as an opportunity if it can be demonstrated that this is feasible.

Page 31 primary school – small typo ‘sited’ not ‘cited’.

Page 35, table A2 – there is no reference to our plans for the residential development of our southern site. It is included within the SADM and should therefore also be in the Action Plan.

Final comment – the Section on Monitoring and Review is to be welcomed as it will enable the Plan to be revised and maintained as a living, working document. It would also benefit from a Section on Risk. It is good practice in any Action Plan to have a Risk Register in relation to the Vision as a whole and its constituent parts.

Some risks are mentioned in the plans but they are not brought together in any coherent way. Having a Risk Register as part of the Action Plan will also considerably help the process of monitoring and review. Without Risk being a fundamental part of the process at the outset there is a real danger of potential problems not being identified and tackled at an early stage. For example whilst it is clear that funding and the multiplicity of landowners are major risks, I can see no mention in the Plan to potential issues arising from covenants that preserve certain types of uses and prohibit others.

In these circumstances the Action Plan should be expanded to include a comprehensive Risk Register and it may be that as a result of this some of the proposals and opportunities may need to be revised.



Chair, Hertswood Governors and local resident