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Our ref        NS

Dear Mr Williams

**Market Drayton Neighbourhood Development Plan – Policies/Proposals re: Land off A53 and Betton Road, Market Drayton (Policy MDNDP1) and Land off Maer Lane, Market Drayton (Policy MDNDP4)**

**Introduction**

We understand that Seabridge Developments Limited (SDL) has an Agreement with all of the relevant landowners to promote the above proposals and that since its recent involvement, SDL has liaised closely with Market Drayton Town Council and its appointed consultants and also Shropshire Council, in order to agree appropriate wording to facilitate the delivery of the desired development.

We understand that Advance Land & Planning Limited (ALP) intends to make a formal representation in respect of the emerging Submission Draft Market Drayton Neighbourhood Development Plan (eMDNDP) before the deadline of 24 July 2018. We have been instructed to consider the potential viability and deliverability of the proposals, having regard for opportunities and constraints and potential market interest, etc.

**JLL**

JLL is a multi-disciplinary property practice, well known as residential and commercial property agents throughout the UK, Europe and beyond. JLL is an active agent throughout the West Midlands property markets in both the residential and commercial sectors, and advises a wide range of stakeholders including occupiers, developers/house builders, investors, funders and land owners. JLL merged operations in the UK and Europe with King Sturge LLP in May 2011. This merger brought greatly enhanced strength and depth of surface capabilities across Europe and the UK. The UK business has approximately 2,500 employees across 15 offices.

JLL is also an active agent in the Shropshire and Staffordshire property markets. JLL sold Market Drayton Magistrates' Court on behalf of Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Services (HMCTS). JLL marketed the Copthorne Barracks site in Shrewsbury in 2017 for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). In addition, we are also marketing the Former Aga Range Master Site for Aga in Coalbrookdale, and have also recently submitted planning permission on behalf of Homes England (HE) for approximately 60 dwellings in Ellesmere, Shropshire.

We also have experience in canal and marina associated developments in the Midlands, having secured outline planning permission in 2016 for Measham Waterside, Measham, which comprised the reinstatement of over 1km of the Ashby Canal and up to 450 residential dwellings. JLL is therefore very well placed to advise on the market potential of the allocations.

## The Market Drayton Neighbourhood Plan

The eMDNDP acknowledges that Market Drayton must be a focus for economic development and regeneration if it is to realise its objective of revitalising the Town in order to encourage more young people to remain in, or move to the area, and to build a strong, diverse and prosperous economy and (paragraph 2.6). It also acknowledges that tourism, cultural and leisure development has a vital role to play in the local economy and should be enhanced wherever possible and appropriate, including in association with the Shropshire Union Canal, upon which the Town sits. (paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9)

The Plan sets out its vision for Market Drayton to:

- be a good place to live and work;
- have an enterprise culture which attracts investors and supports existing and vibrant new businesses;
- provide good employment opportunities supported by skills and training facilities;
- continue to support improvements and developments to the town centre;
- ensure that the infrastructure e.g. housing, education facilities, transport, IT etc. is developed to meet local needs;
- support improvements to the environment and facilities, including the canal area;
- provide excellent sports and leisure facilities;
- support high quality, accessible health and care services with a focus on wellbeing; and
- encourage tourism and visitors to a thriving and prosperous town.

It states that these and other issues to be identified and prioritised should form the basis of detailed plans and proposals and in this respect, we note that the proposed marina and associated tourism and leisure based proposals form an integral and very important part of the Plan.

The eMDNDP proposes a new marina, with associated new visitor attractions, including retail development and accommodation as well as improved accessibility (pedestrian/cycle) to the Town centre. We suggest that this objective is positive and suitably ambitious and if delivered, should generate considerable benefits for the local economy as well as recreational and other benefits for the local community.

The Plan rightly identifies potential constraints and the need for infrastructure improvements and these matters will clearly have an impact upon the costs associated with delivery of the proposals, but, the housing allocation (MDNDP4) and reference to residential development on the main site (**MDNDP1**) are very important and should serve to underwrite the viability and deliverability of marina-based scheme.

## Land East of the Shropshire Canal – Proposed Marina and Associated Tourism and Leisure Development

**Policy MDNDP1 – Proposed Marina and Associated Tourism, Leisure and Related Development** identifies a significant area of land to the north-east of the Town, where a comprehensive proposal based upon a master plan including a range of uses and development, including residential development (points 1-5) will be supported.

The costs associated with delivering the aspirations of this policy, including the excavation and construction of the marina and associated buildings; the provision of necessary infrastructure (services, utilities and vehicular and pedestrian access), etc, should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, we consider that the suggested mix of tourism, recreational, commercial and very importantly, residential uses, provides scope for an attractive and highly beneficial scheme that is capable of being delivered, subject to appropriate cross-subsidy housing to help underwrite the development and allow for contingencies.

**Policy MDNDP4 – Land off Maer Lane** is proposed to come forward for housing as part of a comprehensive development scheme in connection with the proposed Marina (MDNDP1). The site appears to us to be logical in that it is positioned in an accessible location adjacent to the existing built-up area of the Town to the south, existing and proposed employment to the west, the canal to the north and the proposed marina development to the east.

We note that the allocation is intended to help to cross-subsidise the marina development but it is important to note that the western part of the proposed housing site to the west of Maer Lane is indicated as Flood Zone 2 and/or 3 and therefore potentially unsuitable for housing. Furthermore, it will be necessary to extend footpaths and key services northwards from the existing urban area, over the bridge and up to the site entrances. These factors will have cost implications that will have some impact upon the value of the proposed housing allocation, thus reducing (but not eliminating) the contribution that can make to the delivery of the marina based development (**MDNDP1**).

### **The Cost of the Marina**

The delivery of a significant new marina is a key policy aspiration in the MDNDP. Although the precise cost of delivering such a facility will need to be worked up in detail with key stakeholders such as the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT), the cost of delivering the facility will be significant, as it will require the excavation of a significant amount of soil, construction and lining of the marina, and potentially the exportation of materials off site. This will be in addition to the cost required to service the site (such as infrastructure works to change the junctions to the local highways and flood attenuation etc.). It is therefore likely that such a facility will require significant cross-funding by residential housing development in order to meet the cost of construction.

In addition, the delivery of a wider residential element in the master plan will be key in order to enhance the long-term vitality and viability of any marina development, and support any retail/leisure offer that can be provided under the allocation (as the marina itself may not be able to create sufficient critical mass in order to support the required level of retail and leisure aspired to in the MDNDP). Conversely, the retail and other uses have the potential to enhance the sustainability of any new housing development on the main site

### **The Residential Market**

Although there has been significant improvement in the UK housing market in recent years, prices and house price growth started to ease throughout 2017. Notwithstanding this, house builders have gained confidence over recent years based on relatively stable economic backdrop. The housing market has remained reasonably strong over a number of consecutive years, with government support such as Help to Buy and a general pro-growth housing policy which encourages the industry to construct more units.

It is expected that, provided that long term economic stability remains, the UK housing market will continue to experience further rises (albeit these are likely to be more gradual over the forthcoming years) in housing starts over the years to come.

### **Local Market**

#### ***Residential***

Market Drayton is a town in a rural location in Shropshire with a recorded population of approximately 11,800 (2011). The residential development market is relatively proportionate to its size and situation within Shropshire, although it is also accessible to southern Cheshire in the north and the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation to the north-east.

The area statistics comprised by Zoopla show that the following average price paid for dwelling in the Market Drayton market in the last 12 months (as at 4 July 2018).

- Detached - £294,124
- Semi-detached - £167,064
- Terraced - £202,515
- Apartments - £112,374

There are however relatively few new build developments currently under way. The only residential development that we are aware of significant scale is being undertaken by Barratt/David Wilson Homes and is known as 'Drayton Meadows'. The development comprises dwellings ranging from two, three, four and five bedroom homes and was launched in Summer 2017. Four bedroom dwellings are currently available from asking prices between £305,000 to £330,000, with five bedrooms available for £350,000. We understand from our discussions with the developer that take up to date has been good.

There are currently only a limited number of employment opportunities in the town, Muller being the largest employer employing approximately 750 people. Demand for new build residential development in Market Drayton is therefore likely to arise primarily from those commuting to Stoke, Telford and Shrewsbury, unless new job opportunities are created and in this respect, we note that both parcels of land are almost adjacent to an existing employment area and proposed allocation. Consequently, the prices achievable in Market Drayton are likely to be at a discount to those achieved in Telford and Shrewsbury.

Any house builders looking to develop the subject site will need to carefully consider the values that are achievable in Market Drayton, given that these dwellings will need to compete with surrounding areas. When assessing viability, it will be particularly important to consider the extent of infrastructure and other costs that may be required, as referred to above.

In the circumstances, we support **Policy MDNDP4** and we also welcome the reference to housing development on the proposed marina-based mixed use site at point 5 of **Policy MDNDP1**. Together, these opportunities should serve to ensure the viability and deliverability of the proposal, which might otherwise be jeopardised.

### ***Retail, Leisure and e-Innovation Offices***

The demand for retail and leisure uses proposed in the emerging allocation is less tested. Market Drayton Town Centre typically provides local shops to meet the convenience needs of local people and in common with a national trend, the town centre has suffered in recent years.

Although the provision of the Marina will attract retail and leisure uses, the ability to deliver a significant amount of retail and leisure may be constrained by Market Drayton's perception as a relatively rural location in retailing terms. The following set out several case studies where marinas have been used to attract retail and leisure uses.

- **Branston, Barton Under Needwood Marina** - An example of where this has been achieved is at Branston, at Barton under Needwood Marina. This marina was first constructed in 2001, and is situated just to the south of Branston and Burton upon Trent. It includes a marina of approximately 300 berths, along with a wide range of retail / leisure occupiers. The majority of the tenants are of local and perhaps some sub-regional covenant strengths, the most notable being 'John Partridge', a Staffordshire based country clothing retailer. There is also an independent cinema in this location. Cameron Homes are now currently developing residential units in this location. The retail and other commercial development around the marina will serve the new development, which in turn should help to sustain the commercial uses.

- **White Mills Marina, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire** - This marina comprises 141 berths which opened in April 2016. At present, there is very little, if any development around the Marina, other than a boat house which provides a café/small restaurant. We understand that this boat house was awarded 40% grant funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) which has provided the necessary funds in order to construct the café/restaurant, which it is hoped will in turn ‘kick-start’ the development of additional retail/leisure uses in this location following the delivery of the initial marina.
- **Diglis Basin, Worcester** - Diglis Basin was developed by Taylor Wimpey and is situated on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, to the south west of Worcester City Centre. It provides a range of shops and leisure facilities, along with apartments. Despite its prime position in Worcester City Centre, the area was originally known as the ‘Stubborn Acres’, given that in the past, the site had proved hard to develop. Planning approvals were granted in 2006 for 250 new homes; a community centre; gym; offices; and a café. The overall **development** comprised a significant amount of housing growth of approximately 451 homes, along with retail and commercial leisure uses. Notwithstanding this significant housing growth, we understand that it took a significant period of time for the retail and leisure uses to be delivered by Taylor Woodrow (now Taylor Wimpey), given that the development involved repairing and restoring the canal basins, as well as revitalising various areas of public realm.

Therefore, whilst there certainly is scope for retail and leisure uses as part of any marina to be provided at Market Drayton, the market demand for such uses will need to be carefully considered. It is also likely, as the case studies demonstrate, that such uses will involve significant capital investment that require funding support (rather than being able to generate significant revenues in their own right).

## Conclusion

The policy/proposals are admirably aspirational and they have the potential to become a destination attraction that will be highly beneficial to the local economy and enhance the vitality and viability of Market Drayton, including the Town Centre, through additional footfall and spending, plus social and community benefits associated with leisure etc.

In order to underwrite the viability and deliverability of the scheme, we consider it is inevitable that market housing will be required to cross-subsidise the initial infrastructure and development costs, although until more detailed costings are available, it is difficult to confirm precisely how much housing will be required.

Given the potential constraints and costs associated with the delivery of **MDNDP1** it is likely that additional housing in addition to that proposed by **Policy MDNDP4** will be needed, but the policy wording is sufficiently flexible to allow scope for an appropriate mix-use development of a scale and form that the Local Planning Authority and the local community should be able to support.

We trust that these comments are helpful and assist you in your consideration and subsequent representations of the eMDNDP.



If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details set out above.

Yours sincerely

**Nigel Simkin**  
Director  
For and on behalf of Jones Lang LaSalle