

**Guildford Borough Local Plan: strategy and sites
Matters and Issues for Examination**



M&G Real Estate Hearing Statement

**Matter 11. Site Allocations
A5 (Jewsons site), A6 (North Street Redevelopment), and
A7 (Guildford Station), A9 (Walnut Tree Close)**

11.1 Could the plan be more ambitious in the number of dwellings it might achieve on these sites? Should site A8 (Land west of Guildford railway station) be residential?

11.2 Should the plan allow for student accommodation on any of the above sites, given the proximity to the University?

1. This hearing statement on Matter 11 Site Allocations has been prepared by Terence O'Rourke Ltd on behalf of M&G Real Estate (M&G) in connection with M&G's interests at the existing Friary Centre in Guildford town centre and adjoining North Street redevelopment site (site A6).
2. Guildford Borough Council stated the following in relation to site A6 in its response to Initial Questions by the Inspector (ID GBC-LPSS-001):

6.7 The Council intend to propose further modifications to the wording of policy A6 (as shown at the bottom of this response), which will respond to points made in M&G's representation about the need for flexibility to accommodate economic changes not anticipated in the plan, as advised in paragraph 21 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Allocation

The site is allocated for a comprehensive mixed use redevelopment with an additional:

- (1) ~~Minimum of~~ Approximately 41,000 sq m (gross) comparison retail floorspace or a figure that is consistent with subsequent updates to the Guildford Retail and Leisure studies
- (2) Approximately 6,000 sq m food and drink (A3) and drinking establishments (A4)
- (3) ~~Up to~~ Approximately 400 homes (C3)
- (4) Provision of 1 gym (D2)

3. M&G supports a policy approach that provides for a balance of uses at the North Street site, reflecting its suitability for mixed use redevelopment and offering sufficient flexibility to ensure a successful and financially viable scheme. In principle, therefore, M&G supports the further modifications as set out above which will help to provide greater flexibility for the planning and delivery of site A6.



4. M&G very much sees site A6 as a mixed use development site for mutually compatible retail, residential and leisure activity, providing multiple benefits from the redevelopment of underused urban land in the town centre. Nevertheless, M&G identifies that the retail market and wider economic conditions have been, and may continue to be, subject to rapid change in terms of need and demand. This could have significant implications for project content and therefore there will continue to be a need for flexible and responsive policy making and decision taking.
5. In terms of the Matter 11 Examination hearing questions (ID-003) M&G notes that, subject to confirmation of the proposed policy wording change to be put forward through further modifications, the site A6 policy guide of 400 homes will be expressed as an approximate figure rather than an upper limit. This is welcomed. Residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres and in the context of the North Street site residential use has an essential role in achieving a successful balance of uses in the development scheme.
6. M&G does not consider the A6 site to be a key site for the provision of student accommodation given its location within, and proposed contribution to, the town centre. Nevertheless M&G wouldn't wish to completely rule out the possibility of a small element of student housing being provided on the site as part of a mixed use approach.