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Leader of the Council

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Dear Scrutiny Panel Members

### **Re: Meridian Water Scrutiny Workstream Response**

We note the response to our letter, shared by Cllr Achilleas Georgiou. Regrettably, a number of misleading statements in the original report have been repeated in this letter, so we have clarified the facts below.

#### **Overseas and Private Investors**

Enfield Council is committed to ensuring that the residential private sale homes are not marketed overseas. Private sale homes will only be marketed within the UK to contribute to addressing the chronic undersupply of homes nationally.

The letter refers to the “Meridian Water Phase 2 Financial Viability Assessment” which is a supplemental piece of evidence to support a planning application for the Phase 2 land. The document explains that developments of that nature would typically target overseas investors to acquire private sale dwellings. It is exactly for this reason that we took the decision in 2018 for the Council to assume the role of Master Developer to prevent this type of activity. It is misleading to suggest that a supplemental piece of evidence for a planning application compiled by consultants in any way represents the overall housing strategy for Meridian Water, as it does not.

The private housing at Meridian Water, which is required to pay for the affordable housing and social infrastructure, will include both private sale and private rented homes to meet the diverse needs of people in the Borough and beyond. The private rented homes will all be owned and managed by a single institutional landlord so that we can hold them to account. All of the private rented homes at Meridian Water will only be marketed within the UK.

#### **Housing Affordability**

The affordability of homes is determined by market forces outside of the control of the Council, so it is bizarre to suggest that Enfield Council is responsible for the national housing affordability crisis. As is the case across the country, the local authority cannot control the amount and cost of the Affordable Housing. Further evidence will be published to support an upcoming Cabinet Report that will demonstrate the affordability of the Affordable Homes to the people of Edmonton and the rest of the Borough.

#### **Employment**

The response reiterates your concerns about how the Meridian Water site can accommodate 10,000 homes and 6,000 jobs. This has already been proven within the existing Meridian Water

masterplan. We are preparing the second version of the Meridian Water masterplan which also demonstrates how these housing and employment targets can be achieved. The next version of the masterplan will be subject to public consultation and we would welcome your feedback at that stage.

### **Publicly Accessible Parkland**

The Edmonton Leaside Area Action Plan (ELAAP) does not provide an accurate reflection of the current plans for Meridian Water. The new masterplan, guided by the Meridian Water Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS), sets out ambitious plans for Meridian Water to have 30% quality green open space which is considered best practice within London. The 30% target has been identified through the study of comparable new and existing places in London and across Europe. Some examples of this include:

- Woodberry Down: 25% publicly accessible open space
- Kings Cross St Pancras 28% publicly accessible open space
- Elephant Park 34.9% publicly accessible open space
- East (former Olympic) Village: 24.5% publicly accessible open space

The amount of open space per person is another measure of open space. The current masterplan is achieving approximately 9m<sup>2</sup> per person. Some comparable figures from other London developments are:

- East (former Olympic) Village: 8.7m<sup>2</sup> per person
- Elephant Park: 6.6m<sup>2</sup> per person
- Woodberry Down: 5.1m<sup>2</sup> per person
- Kings Cross Central: 10.5m<sup>2</sup> per person
- Wood Wharf: 2.3m<sup>2</sup> per person

When taken together these measurements show the new Meridian Water masterplan is exceeding the publicly accessible open space quantum of most comparable contemporary developments in London.

Additionally, the ESS identifies a requirement for every household to be no more than a 2 minute (100m) walk from green open space thereby delivering on our 'Parklife on your Doorstep' placemaking pillar.

### **Housing Density**

You repeat the point that the plans for Meridian Water would make it one of the most densely populated areas in London. This is not correct.

The plans for Meridian Water achieve an average of 198 dwellings per hectare (dph), however when compared to other large-scale developments in London the densities at Meridian Water are lower. For example:

- Tottenham Hale Village Plot T8 = 260 dph
- Tottenham Hale Village Plots TH4/5/10 = 460 dph
- Woodberry Down = 229 dph
- Elephant Park = 309 dph
- Keybridge House, Vauxhall = 573 dph

The housing densities proposed for Meridian Water are lower than other major developments within London and are entirely appropriate for the level of public transport that will be achieved at Meridian Water. The Department for Transport has approved the Meridian Water Outline Rail Business Case which made the case for additional rail infrastructure to deliver 4-6 trains per an hour by 2024. That level of rail service, combined with new bus routes, supports the housing

density proposed in the new masterplan. Planning Policy requires all development sites to achieve optimum levels of homes to address the chronic shortage of homes nationally. The new Meridian Water masterplan demonstrates how the optimum level of density can be achieved within a high-quality environment.

### **Conclusion**

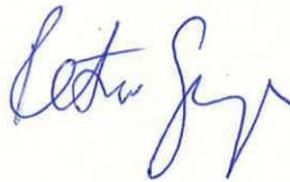
It is helpful to the development of any council scheme if commentary and analysis from elected members is based on credible evidence and not simply opinion pieces deriving contrary to facts.

We hope this letter now provides you with the further clarity on the points you have raised. We note that you have additionally provided statements in response to the Appendix to our letter. The Chairs of the newly formed Scrutiny workstreams may decide to use some of these points in future Scrutiny meetings.

Yours sincerely



**Cllr Nesil Caliskan**  
**Leader of the Council**



**Peter George**  
**Meridian Water Director**