

Newark and Sherwood District Council
Site Allocations and Development Management DPD Examination in Public

Day 1
11 December 2012

Statement on behalf of Mr N Dean – Site at New Lane, Blidworth

Introduction

1. This statement has been made on behalf of Mr N Dean in respect of his land south of New Lane, which adjoins land recommended for allocation in the Site Allocations Plan under Site Ref: BI/Ho/3.
2. This statement relates to the Inspector's Examination Agenda Matter 2 which raises the following questions among others
 - Is the Plan consistent with the Core Strategy and is it capable of meeting its objectives?

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3. The Core Strategy identifies Blidworth as a Principal Village with an assessed housing requirement of 299 new dwellings to 2026. It is identified as a settlement that would benefit from regeneration and it is well served by local education facilities, shops, local services and local employment opportunities.
4. The Site Allocations and Development Management document, which seeks to identify specific sites for this requirement, identifies sufficient land for only 210 dwellings. Notably, the Site Allocations and Development Management Document must be in accordance with the Core Strategy if it is to be found sound.
5. The document states that having undertaken a review of the Green Belt around Blidworth, the Council considers that the settlement is unable to accommodate 299 dwellings and they consider that this growth will be met elsewhere in the district. It is not clear where or how this growth will be met elsewhere, or how that is justified in terms of meeting local need.
6. A review of the allocated numbers, reveals an overall shortfall in allocated sites in the magnitude of 600 dwellings overall, with Newark accounting for a significant proportion. However, with reference to lower order settlements, there remains an overall shortfall in allocated sites of 27 dwellings. As such, the underprovision at Blidworth has not been fully redistributed to other parts of the district. On a Mansfield Fringe, sub-area level, the overprovision at Rainworth of 3 dwellings and at Clipstone of 16 dwellings do not compensate for the shortfall in local provision at Blidworth. The overprovision at Ollerton and Boughton or in other areas will not sufficiently meet local need in Blidworth. On this basis, the document fails to meet objectively assessed housing needs in direct conflict with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Core Strategy
7. The Council's report into the production of the Site Allocations document contains the consultation response of the County Council who state that a small scale under-provision may be acceptable, but that over-provision should be preferred.

8. The Core Strategy Inspector's report noted that 'There areimportant CS objectives of meeting local housing needs, including for affordable housing, and facilitating economic regeneration in former mining communities to be considered.' Together these provide the necessary 'exceptional circumstances', in accord with national guidance in PPG 2, to properly justify the need for a localised boundary review immediately around these settlements.' The emphasis in the inspector's report is on meeting local housing needs, which justifies a local review of Green belt boundaries. In the light of the inspector's report, it is not appropriate to redistribute Blidworth's local housing need to other parts of the district, where it will not address the housing requirements of local people and will not contribute to the regeneration of the village. The inspector's support for local provision was clear and in his words constitute 'exceptional circumstances' that demand provision at the point of need.
9. The inspector also noted that the Core Strategy levels of housing growth at Blidworth were justified 'so that it continues to play a role in providing services for the rural area around.' If growth based on an assessment of local need is not developed here but elsewhere, the strategy is undermined and two of the key principles of the spatial strategy, and enshrined in the Core Strategy are ignored for the sake of convenience. Blidworth is the only Principal Village in the Mansfield Fringe Area and it is therefore essential that it meets its commitment to local housing provision in accordance with its status in the adopted heirarchy. To fail to meet locally identified and objectively assessed housing needs is an abdication of responsibility that does not comply with the Core Strategy and directly contradicts the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.