

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

Day 5
19 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 5 which raises the following questions among others
 - Do the policies include adequate and appropriate safeguards with regard to the potential effects of development on the Green Belt, biodiversity, historic environment and flooding? Has satisfactory provision been made in respect of transport and other infrastructure requirements?
 - Are the housing sites deliverable given the requirements of the Core Strategy policies relating to affordable housing and the development management policies set out in the Plan?

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3. Sites affecting Green Belt land are reviewed in the 'Newark and Sherwood Green Belt Study' 2011. While we endorsed such a review in our submissions to the Core Strategy examination, we stated that 'such a review must be fully independent and open to public scrutiny and consultation'. It is our view that The 'Newark and Sherwood Green Belt Study' 2011 was not robustly prepared, is not an objective assessment aimed at accommodating growth and we question its suitability as evidence. In particular, it is not clear how site BI/Ho/1 is so distinct from other sites in its contribution (or lack of) to the Green Belt e.g. land west of BL/Ho/3, to make it more capable of accommodating local housing needs. Put another way, if the exceptional circumstances exist to justify removing this site from the Green Belt, why not other sites, which are less visible and better contained. The allocation of this site in isolation neither preserves the Green Belt from encroachment nor satisfies objectively assessed local housing needs. The identification of this site, appears to be justified as a two dimensional 'rounding off' of the settlement, rather than based on an objective assessment of visual impact, Green Belt Impact and sustainability. Plan making should respond to historic morphology and sustainability principles, rather than being an exercise in neatening the village edge by filling in the gaps. It is not clear how the identification of this site takes into account the potential impacts on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument to the east of Haywood Oaks Farm.

Are the housing sites deliverable given the requirements of the Core Strategy policies relating to affordable housing and the development management policies set out in the Plan?

4. BI/Ho/1 is a visible and attractive greenfield site. The site has potentially significant surface water drainage issues, which have caused flash flooding onto the adjoining road carriageway. The site is remote and disconnected from the village centre (800m to shops), and would also result in prominent encroachment of the settlement into the open countryside. We are unaware of any evidence having been produced relating to Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal, Ecological Impacts or Transport Assessment for this site. It is not clear how the identification of this site takes into account the potential impacts on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument to the east of Haywood Oaks Farm.
5. Site BI/Ho/4 is currently in use as allotments and will require suitable alternative provision before it can be released as a housing site. No timetable or certainty is given to ensure that the site is deliverable within the plan period.
6. The BI/Ho/3 New Lane site has been reduced in size in order to reduce the potential impact on the Conservation Area. The site area reduction amounts to 0.71 ha. The site lies directly adjoining the highly sensitive Conservation Area boundary and will require a generous buffer / landscape screening in order to minimise the visual impact on the heritage asset. It is understood that a water main runs directly across the site and will require a broad easement. The accompanying appendix contains a series of photographs of the BI/Ho/3 site taken on the weekend of 26 November 2012. A consequence of a wet summer and heavy rainfall lead to significant pooling in the centre of the site at its natural drainage point. The photos demonstrate that to take account of the storm event, and to avoid flooding elsewhere, a significant area of the site will need to be taken up with balancing ponds. Taking account of these significant constraints, the site is only likely to achieve a maximum of 70 to 80 units. On this basis, the site in its current form cannot deliver the housing numbers anticipated and will further restrict the ability of allocated sites in Blidworth to meet objectively assessed local housing needs.
7. The shortfall in numbers on site BI/Ho/3 can be readily replaced / substituted, by a modest and well designed incursion into the adjoining New Lane site to the west. By substituting the housing numbers originally intended within the Conservation Area, to be accessed from New Lane, there will be no additional adverse traffic impact on New Lane itself .
8. The site lies immediately to the west of the BI/Ho/3 allocation and is identified in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The assessment concluded that the site was not suitable for development due to potential impact on the highway i.e. a narrow access from New Lane, and the potential for impact on views in and out of the Conservation Area. However, notably, site BI/Ho/3, was also found to be unsuitable on highway issues, putting significant doubt on the usefulness of the SHLAA as evidence for assessing site suitability. It is also clear that our client's site could have no greater impact on views into or out of the Conservation Area than the adjoining land, as they are viewed in precisely the same context. In terms of its proximity to services site 08_0007 was considered to be suitable and sustainable within the SHLAA. On the basis of the allocation being taken forward, under BI/Ho/3 and in the context of the need for Green Belt boundary adjustment, there can be no sound reason for excluding our client's site as a potentially suitable housing site to assist in meeting local need.
9. In order to allocate additional / remoulded land at BI/Ho/3 to include additional land to the west, which is available, suitable and deliverable. While this land is also Green Belt, the Core Strategy justifies the exceptional circumstances relating to Blidworth, and there are no significant physical constraints that would prevent the site's

development as part of a wider scheme. Green Belt land south of New Lane, and to the west of site Bl/Ho/3 is available, and represents a visually discreet and enclosed areas of land, within close walking distance of all village services and facilities. As such it represents a sustainable suitable location for development in order to assist in meeting the housing requirements for the village

10. The site has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal and is included in Appendix F to the Sustainability Appraisal Report carried out by WSP. Against each identified objective, the site is equally or more sustainable than the corresponding proposed allocated sites. This makes it even more surprising that the site has not been included to assist in meeting needs.