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Newark and Sherwood Allocations & Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) – Consultation on Additional Modifications – Retail

In terms of the information contained in the Additional Modifications document and subsequent information provided by the Council I would make the following further comments which supplement my earlier response.

The Council has now published additional viability information based on a number of development scenarios for the mixed use allocation at the NSK site. In the most viable scheme, the viability margin is reduced from the draft allocation from £14,514,131 to £7,457,898 and in the worst case to £5,305,589. I would also question the residential values assigned within the appraisals as these are unreasonably high for this location.

As previously pointed out, the nature and scale of the NUA/MU/3 Policy is predicated on the significant regeneration benefits that will be derived from the scheme and the wider economic benefits that it will deliver. The policy is identified as a strategic policy directly designed as a key tool in delivering the wider Core Strategy vision. Therefore, a significant reduction in the value of between £7 million to £9 million will have a major influence on the regeneration of a deprived part of the town and the opportunity to secure significant long term investment by a major multinational engineering company. Regrettably this reduction in value can only result in a commensurate drawing back of aspiration for the wider regeneration benefits.

The NSK policy requires retail development proposals to assess the impact on the town centre and this would remain a safeguard no matter what level of retail floorspace is proposed. The modified policy as proposed will only inhibit investment decisions and will do nothing to promote regeneration.

The Council's proposed changes are unnecessary and have made the site viability marginal.

The Council argues that Final Proposed Modification 17 proposes that the District Council will carry out a review of retail provision in 2015/16 to enable the District Council to respond to the latest retail provision information. At this point the Council notes it will be able to act to address any issues identified and amend the strategy accordingly. Clearly this argument applies equally if the draft policy is unmodified. If retail provision in 2015/16 suggests that the level of retail floorspace at NSK should be reduced, that is the time to do it. The Council's revision seeks to mend a policy that has not yet been proven to be broken, in reaction to a development proposal that might well not happen. As such the changes are an entirely unnecessary knee jerk reaction which jeopardises the Council's entire aspiration for regeneration of the town. The policy changes are a panic reaction rather than a considered review of the evidence.

Our previous suggestion for wording of the policy will secure investment and regeneration, will maintain a safeguard against adverse impact on the town centre, which otherwise will suffer by virtue of a lost potential for £9 million worth of inward investment