

MATTER 5: BEARING IN MIND ANY CONCLUSIONS TO MATTER 4, DO SPATIAL POLICIES 1 AND 2 REPRESENT A SENSIBLE APPROACH?

- 5.1. This Matter Statement has been prepared by Tetlow King Planning on behalf of David Sparks of the Minster Veterinary Centre in relation to his land interests to the east of Southwell.
- 5.2. Our statement on **Matter 4** concludes that an increase is required in the plan's housing target in order to significantly increase the overall level of delivery across the district and thereby significantly increase the level of affordable housing that can be delivered. These matters are required to address the acute affordability issues preventing local people from accessing housing that is appropriate to meet their needs, including the acute need for social and affordable rented and intermediate affordable housing.
- 5.3. Spatial Policy 1 sets out a clear settlement hierarchy for the district which recognises the importance of Newark as the district's Sub-Regional Centre and the focal point for growth. This is not disputed. The identification of Edwinstowe as a Service Centre and the emphasis placed on the proposed redevelopment of the former Thoresby Colliery for mixed uses to support the regeneration of the settlement is however not properly justified or effectively mitigated.
- 5.4. At Issues and Options stage (**CS.23**) Edwinstowe was identified as a Principal Village, and promoted thereafter in the Preferred Approach (**CS.20**) to a Service Centre. The Council has produced little evidence to support this change in the designation of Edwinstowe, besides the assessment of options in the Integrated Impact Assessment (**IIA.001-005**).
- 5.5. That assessment raises the need to assess the impacts of development on the village infrastructure, landscape and environmental designations, and any additional services and facilities that would be required to support that specific development, but this has not been carried through to additional evidence gathering to support the change.

- 5.6. The assessment also raises the issue that an increase in housing delivery at Edwinstowe will have a commensurate impact on the level of housing targeted elsewhere, including at Blidworth and Lowdham, with the potential that the housing needs of those settlements may go unfulfilled. This adds to our concerns raised on **Matter 4** that the plan is not being ambitious enough in seeking to meet housing needs across the district.
- 5.7. As set out in our statement on **Matter 25** insufficient assessment has taken place on the impacts of developing Thoresby colliery to justify its allocation within the Core Strategy, and this has clearly skewed the way in which the spatial strategy has been amended. The impact of raising the designation of Edwinstowe in the amended Core Strategy to Service Centre will not simply be to specifically enable the regeneration of the colliery.
- 5.8. There are concerns that the village status will irreversibly elevate the importance of the village in the settlement hierarchy and encourage additional development which will lead to coalescence with neighbouring Ollerton. These impacts have not been properly assessed in the Plan evidence.
- 5.9. There is a clear and pressing need to protect the natural environment at and surrounding Edwinstowe, and the village's historic character, to ensure the area continues to support its residents and its burgeoning tourist industry. Designating the village as a Service Centre based on the planned development of one site allocation is inappropriate, and will, without specific changes to the housing target, specifically prevent development from coming forward elsewhere in the district due to the emphasis on development at Edwinstowe. As with our comments on **Matter 4**, the clear and pressing need for increased housing delivery across the district makes the allocation of high quality deliverable sites for housing critical to the success of the plan.
- 5.10. The decision to promote Edwinstowe is to the detriment not only of the village itself but to the detriment of other settlements across Newark and Sherwood, and should be viewed as failing to plan effectively for the achievement of sustainable development.

- 5.11. Failing to plan for the long-term achievement of housing for all the district's communities means that Spatial Policies 1 and 2 are flawed and should be reconsidered.
- 5.12. As also specifically raised in our statement on **Matter 4** the housing requirement set out in Spatial Policy 2 is insufficient. The Council should be seeking to increase its overall housing target and to allocate additional residential development sites in order to deliver this, meeting a greater level of overall need across the district.
- 5.13. In addition to this, the way in which the level of growth is attributed to individual settlements has the potential to be interpreted rigidly by decision makers when determining individual planning applications. In our experience this can cause difficulties whereby the achievement of, say 10% of Service Centre growth at Southwell, will have the effect of restricting further development that would be beneficial at that settlement.
- 5.14. This is particularly difficult when taking into account the long-term nature of the Core Strategy, and the differing rates at which development will come forward over the whole plan period which is not likely to match the Housing Trajectory. A more flexible approach should be set out which allows for development beyond the percentages, or for a range to be set to account for changes over the plan period.
- 5.15. To deliver an ambitious plan changes must be made to Spatial Policies 1 and 2 that have been properly justified by robust evidence. We ask that the Inspector seek changes to reflect the evidence that has been produced; as with our comments set out in the other Matter Statements, our client's land is well situated to provide a mixed use employment and residential development scheme in a sustainable location to help deliver the increased level of housing and affordable housing that the Council must plan for.