

Examination into the Newark & Sherwood Allocations and Development Management DPD

Matter 2: Urban Area Policies, Site Selection, and Housing Site Allocations

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Representor: Lindens Farm Ltd Agent Organisation (if applicable): TOWN-PLANNING.CO.UK Representor Number: 006 Representation: 0010 Person Appearing: Anthony Northcote <i>HNCert LA(P), Dip TP, PgDip URP, MA, FGS, ICIOB, MIoL, MCMI, MRTPI</i>
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MATTER 2: URBAN AREA POLICIES, SITE SELECTION, AND HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS

Issue 2 - Site selection

MIQ 2.8 Are the amendments to the Urban Area Boundaries and Village Envelopes justified by evidence?

The Sutton on Trent Village Envelope in the Allocations and Development Management DPD is considered to be unsound.

Planning Practice Guidance (Reference ID: 61-038-20190315) is clear that policies need to be justified. It goes on to advise that:

“The evidence needs to inform what is in the plan and shape its development rather than being collected retrospectively. Strategic policy-making authorities may wish to consider ensuring that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take account of relevant market signals.

Wherever possible, assessments can share the same evidence base and be conducted over similar timescales, but strategic policy-making authorities need to take care to ensure that the purposes and statutory requirements of different assessment processes are respected.

Assessments should be proportionate, and should not repeat policy assessment that has already been undertaken. Wherever possible, strategic policy-making authorities should consider how the preparation of any assessment will contribute to the plan’s evidence base. The process should be

started early in the plan-making process and key stakeholders should be consulted in identifying the issues and any relevant data that the assessment must cover.”

At no time has the Council published any methodology or evidence to explain how the Urban Area boundaries and the Village Envelopes have been defined. As such there are no criteria against which interested parties can test the consistency of application or assess individual boundaries for compliance with a methodology. The evidence base is fundamentally deficient in relation to this matter.

As part of the Allocations and Development Management DPD there has been no systematic and thorough review process undertaken of the Urban Area boundaries and the Village Envelopes. Yet Urban Boundaries of the Sub-Regional Centre and Service Centres and the Village Envelopes of the Principal Villages, as defined on the Policies Map are integral as to how policies in the DPD (and indeed in the Amended Core Strategy) are to be implemented and applied.

The Council has been resistant to wanting to explore the issue of Village Envelopes at all in the DPD Review, for example in paragraph 5.1.2 of the document OR1 Options Report (2021) the LPA stated: *“Detailed alterations to the Sutton-on-Trent village envelope were also proposed but are not considered appropriate as this is a Review rather than a new DPD.”*

This is a nonsensical statement because the DPD is a full review and will replace in full the existing Newark & Sherwood Allocations and Development Management DPD (2013) (CD17).

Sutton on Trent is a village of unusual character in that it is a settlement made up of numerous but distinct parts. Whilst it has a main core that has been defined for many years, that core is punctuated by a number of large open areas. Although the recent development by Charles Church on ST/MU/1 has removed one of the largest open areas.

The main core is surrounded by a large number of open areas, including traditional orchards beyond which there are then large areas of village which are currently considered part of the open countryside. These areas are home to large parts of the village community and their exclusion from the village boundary potentially prevents their redevelopment or consolidation through appropriate infill.

Approximately 100 dwellings and commercial premises form the part of the village outside of the defined village envelope; this accounts for just under a fifth of the number of premises in the overall village.

It is considered that the character, form and layout of Sutton on Trent as a village is unique within the District and as such it requires a modified approach to the designation of a village boundary. These more outlying parts of the village include residential, industrial, recreation, tourism and agricultural uses. These are integral land uses to the future success of the settlement as a defined Principal Village.

The current village envelope means that in fact parts of Sutton on Trent are deemed unsuitable for development; where in fact if the village was otherwise classed as an 'other settlement' under Spatial Policy 3 of the Core Strategy then such areas would be likely to be deemed suitable for development. This is an inconsistent approach which should be addressed. At present the outlying parts of Sutton on Trent as a Principal Village but outside of the settlement boundary are treated more harshly in policy terms in relation to new development to outlying parts of villages and hamlets covered by Spatial Policy 3 in the Amended Core Strategy. This is resulting in perverse planning decision making as in sustainability terms the outlying parts of Sutton on Trent which are more sustainable for example in relation to infill housing are less favourably considered than a similar infill proposal would be considered in a village without any services or facilities.

The perverse planning position is amplified by the LPA choosing to continue with a separate Core Strategy and Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD. This is because in the examination of the Amended Core Strategy, the Inspector was rightly focussed on the overall policy approach in Spatial Policy 2, with the actual defining of the Village Envelope to be a matter for this DPD Review. This is resulting in the two complementary aspects being explored in isolation with no appropriate oversight as to whether Spatial Policy 2 and the Urban Area Boundaries and Village Envelopes actually are fit for purpose collectively.

The LPA has sought to argue that as this is a local plan review it is inappropriate to review the settlement boundary. This is illogical as the purpose of a local plan review is to amend and review appropriate parts of the DPD. Settlement boundaries for other settlements have been amended.

The village boundary should include the areas shown in the plan below in order to properly reflect the actual defined settlement of Sutton on Trent.

Whilst the village has a main core that has been defined for many years, that core is punctuated by a number of large open areas that form an integral part of the overall form, structure, character and appearance of this Principal Village.

To the north of the main core is an area of recently enhanced and expanded employment, beyond which is the village Sports facilities. Sutton on Trent as an overall village does not have a nucleated

form, it is an expansive settlement measuring around 1.8km from the southern extent along Great North Road to the northern extent around the Sports Ground. It measures some 1.5km from the western extent around Mercia Garden Products to the Holmes to the east. A footprint of some 2.7 square km is a large footprint for a settlement of the population that Sutton on Trent has.

The area of Sutton on Trent focussed on Main Street, Great North Road, Shires Way, Floral Villas and Carlton Lane forms the southern 'gateway' into the village. This area contains Roy Walker Furniture, the Lindens Farm Caravan Site, the Lindens Fishing Lake, Hadleys Fine Meats, the Petrol Filling Station and MOT Garage along with some 50+ dwellings. The number of dwellings in the village excluded from the current settlement boundary at around 100 in total is the scale of a settlement in itself. That southern gateway to the village contains historic parts of the village as identified by the Conservation Area. Areas of the village outside of flood zones 2 and 3 are extremely limited.

It is considered that the character, form and layout of Sutton on Trent as a village is unique within the District and as such it requires a modified approach to the designation of a village boundary and to the choice of any site(s) for future development. The more outlying parts of the village include residential, industrial, recreation, tourism and agricultural uses. These are integral land uses to the future success of the settlement as a defined Principal Village. The village boundary should include these areas in order to properly reflect the actual defined settlement of Sutton on Trent.

Sutton on Trent has a low density of development due to its spread-out nature, that density has been increased in some parts through infill development and through development in rear gardens. This windfall infill nature of development has been a typical feature of the village and this is what accounts for the relatively high level of commitment over the years.

The DPD has no published settlement boundary methodology against which the settlement boundary can be tested. Consequently, the settlement boundary is not justified or effective in delivering the role of Sutton on Trent as a Principal Village. As such the DPD is inconsistent with the Amended Core Strategy and conflicts with the NPPF and in particular paragraph 79 as it fails to promote sustainable development in rural areas by allowing housing to be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of the rural community of Sutton on Trent as a Principal Village. The NPPF requires planning policies to identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. The settlement boundary conflicts with the NPPF in this regard.

Outcome Sought

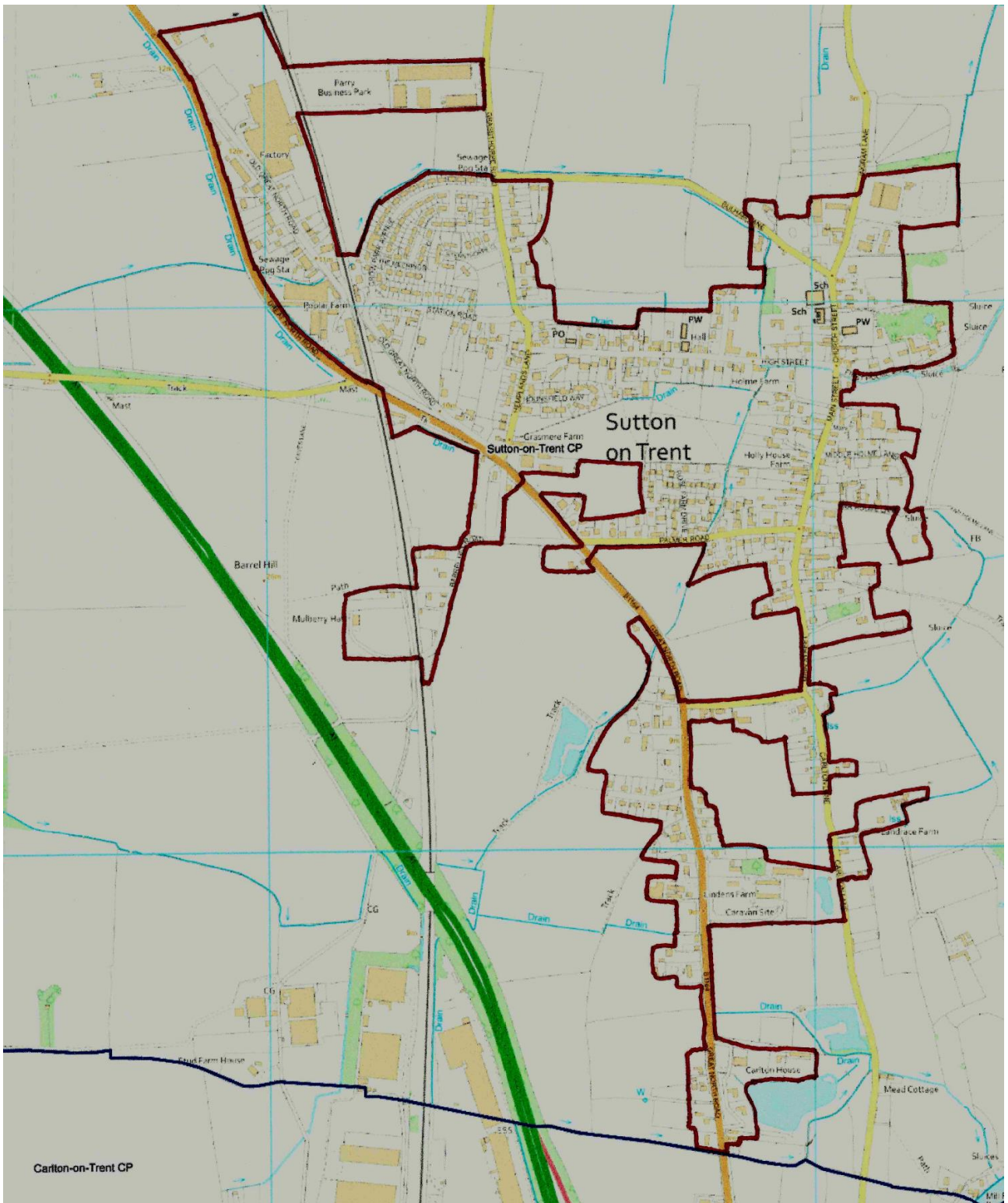
The legislative requirements for the examination are contained in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) (PCPA) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Some guidance on procedure is also provided in Planning Practice Guidance.

The legislation in sections 20(7),(7A),(7B) & (7C) of the PCPA allows for three possible outcomes to the examination:

- The Inspector finds that the plan is sound and legally compliant as submitted: in these circumstances the Inspector must recommend that the plan is adopted;
- The Inspector finds that the plan is unsound and/or legally non-compliant as submitted, but that it is possible to make it sound and legally compliant by making main modifications to it. In these circumstances the Inspector must recommend the necessary main modifications, if requested to do so by the LPA. The main modifications must relate directly to the reasons why the Inspector has found the plan unsound or legally non-compliant;
- The Inspector finds the plan unsound and/or legally non-compliant as submitted, and that it is not possible to make it sound and legally compliant by making main modifications to it. In these circumstances the Inspector must recommend non-adoption of the plan. In practice, the LPA would be asked to consider withdrawing the plan before any such recommendation was made.

In my view the only way to address soundness is for the LPA to produce a comprehensive methodology or evidence to explain how the Urban Area boundaries and the Village Envelopes have been defined. This should be against appropriate and robust criteria against which interested parties can test the consistency of application or assess individual boundaries for compliance with a methodology.

With regard to Sutton on Trent we consider that applying a suitable methodology that contains suitable criteria the settlement boundary should be amended to cover the existing physical extent of the village as shown on a scan of the suggested alteration to the settlement boundary we suggest indicated in the plan below.



Anthony Northcote *HNCert LA(P), Dip TP, PgDip URP, MA, FGS, ICIOB, MIoL, MCMI, MRTPI*
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