

Matter 8 Hearing Statement
ECL (Mr Dean Harrison)
Representor ID 4646
Representation ID 6184

**Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031 Examination
Matter 8 Site Allocations
MH4 Airfield Farm**

Question 8.15: Is it necessary to be specific about the location of the site access? Would this preclude a better solution?

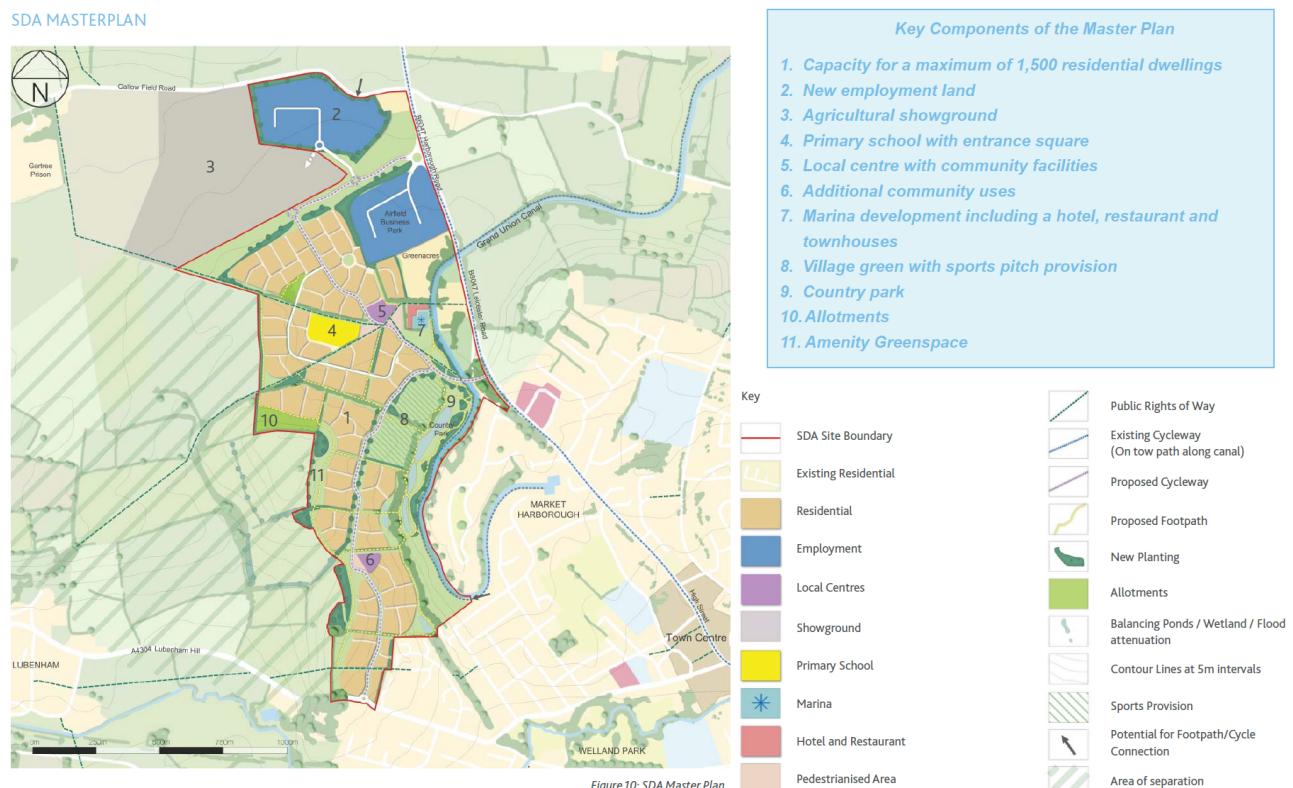
This statement has been prepared to assist the Inspector with regard to Matter 8, Policy MH4 Airfield Farm. ECL is the landowner/promoter of the proposed employment allocation. ECL supports the allocation of the site and are committed to the delivery of it during the plan period to 2031.

Question 8.15 relates to ECL comments made at the Regulation 19 stage regarding the employment allocation Policy MH4 at Airfield Farm. Specifically, the reference at limb 1a of Policy MH4, requiring vehicular access to be taken from Gallow Field Road only. This is too prescriptive and not properly evidenced.

The site is located to the north of the committed North-West Market Harborough SDA (NWMH SDA). The land at Airfield Farm is promoted by ECL and is identified as employment land in the Council's approved NWMH SDA Masterplan dated 2013 (2013 Masterplan). Of note, limb 1b of Policy MH4 requires the development of the site to be in general accordance with the 2013 Masterplan.

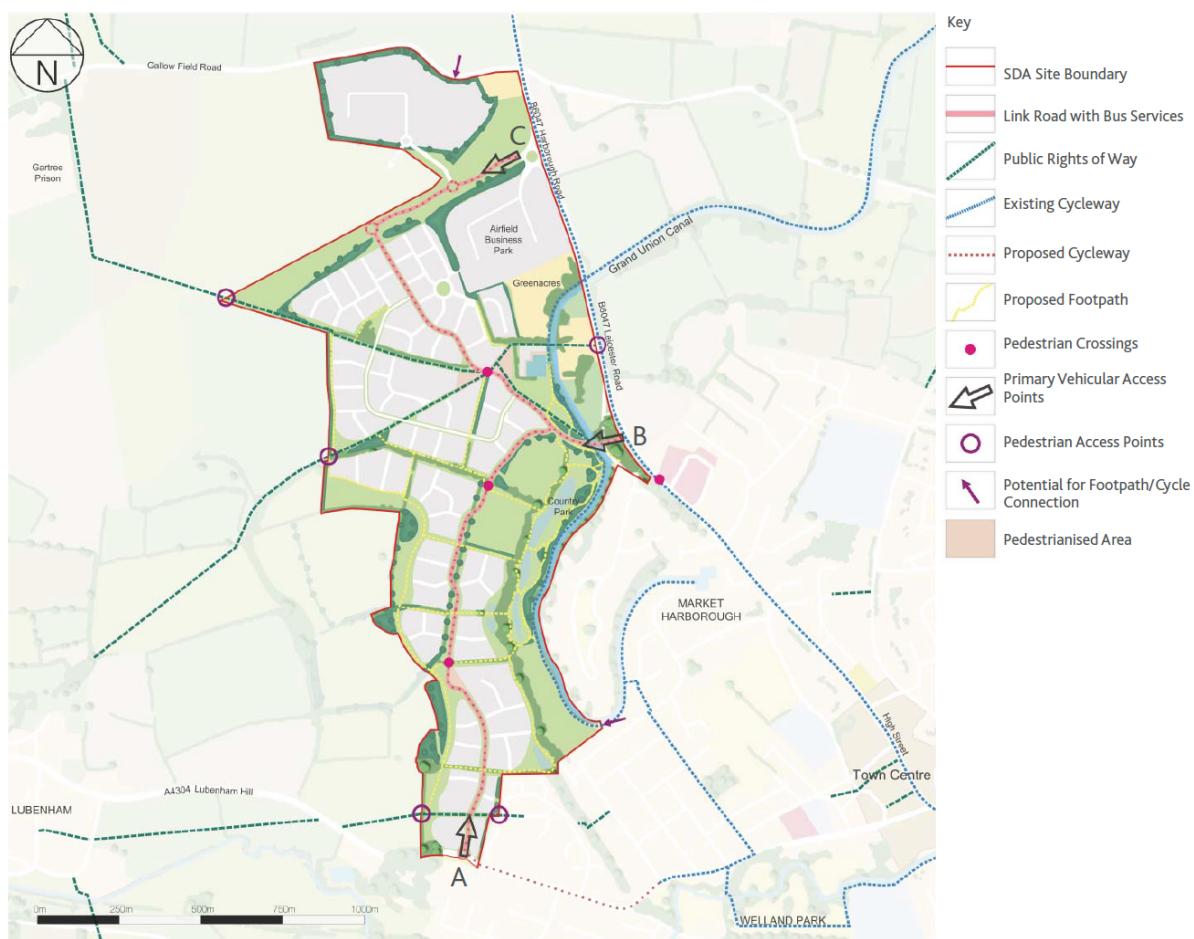
Figure 1 below reproduces Figure 10 of the 2013 Masterplan. It shows the principle access off the B6047 Harborough Road/Leicester Road roundabout. Similarly, paragraph 4.13 of the Masterplan states that the Airfield Farm employment area will be accessed from this link road, supplemented with a pedestrian access to Gallow Field Road. As currently drafted, Limb 1a of the policy is unsound as it directly contradicts the provisions of Limb 1b of Policy MH4 and the principles within the 2013 Masterplan.

Figure 1: Extract of Fig 10 of the 2013 Masterplan



Limb 1c of Policy MH4 seeks footpath and cycle links to the NWH SDA. This principle is also reflected in the approved Masterplan 2013 which states at paragraph that the link road to be designed for cycle and pedestrian access to the employment site at Airfield Farm. Figure 2 below refers. This is further evidence to support our request that limb 1a of Policy MH4 requires updating for consistency.

Figure 2: Extract of Fig 24 of the 2013 Masterplan



The employment site forms an integral part of the NWMH SDA. The March 2018 Business and Employment Topic Paper [Doc ref TPC3] reinforces the locational links between the site and the NWMH SDA. As part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, the Leicester County Council Highways advice set out in the Strategic Employment Land Availability Assessment [Doc ref EMP1] suggests that access for this site (E/009M/15) should not be specific to Gallow Field Road. To achieve better connectivity to the wider SDA and local highway network the policy should be changed to be justified and effective.

Proposed Modification:

We restate that the option to access the site should be determined through detailed transport assessment as part of a future planning application for the site. This requirement is set out in paragraph 5.78 of the Transport Topic Paper [Doc ref TPC4]. Accordingly, Policy MH4 should remain flexible and we seek the following changes to make Policy MH4 sound:

"Access to the site to be from Gallow Field Road and/or Leicester Road..."

A consequential change will be required to the explanatory text paragraph 14.8.1 to delete "~~the site will be accessed off Gallow Field Road to the north of the site as opposed to the existing roundabout from Leicester Road to the residential development~~".

To achieve this alternative access option the land between the identified employment site and the link road is also in the control of ECL. Figure 3 below shows the additional area of land owned and promoted by ECL to demonstrate that the above proposed modification to limb 1a is achievable.

The HSE gas buffer zone to the south of the site does not prevent site access being gained across it.

To enable the policy to be effective, it is also suggested that the policy map be modified to include this additional area of circa 3.6 hectares (9 acres) shown coloured red at figure 3 below. This would create a logical boundary to enable a more comprehensive scheme to come forward to deliver the future access strategy and give effect to the landscaping requirements of limb j of Policy MH4.

Figure 3: Additional land under ECL ownership (outlined and shaded in red)

