

Matter 5: Climate and Environment

Issue 2: Heritage and Rural Character

Question 5

Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Development Area / Site OA1: Land South of Gartree Road

- 1.1.1. Part 2 of Policy DS04 proposes an “area of separation” between Oadby and Great Glen. The policy wording states that development within the Areas of Separation must avoid coalescence and preserve the existing visual and physical between those areas. Paragraph 4.47 of the Plan states that the reason for creating the Areas of Separation is to ensure that towns and villages maintain their unique identity and that the overall landscape character of the area is maintained, with that character being described as *“countryside interspersed with distinct towns and villages”*.
- 1.1.2. It is therefore clear from the Policy wording and its reasoning that the purposes of the Area of Separation are not just to prevent the physical coalescence of settlements, but to protect and preserve the character of distinct towns and villages.
- 1.1.3. Great Glen is a distinct settlement, set apart from Oadby by an intervening undeveloped area of approximately 1.6 km in distance. Within that gap, is Stretton Hall, a small cluster of homes built around the Grade II* Listed Stretton Hall, which itself is a distinct hamlet with its own character, separated from Oadby and Great Glen by a surrounding rural area. The Areas of Separation Assessment (Examination Library Ref: LAN-NLP3) is clear that Great Glen has a distinct identity and openness on the slopes of the valley of the River Sence.
- 1.1.4. Any erosion of the gap between Oadby and Great Glen would significantly alter the character of Great Glen and Stretton Hall as individual settlements, even if that gap is not fully closed. Both would lose their individual character and become a continuation of the built-up area of Oadby, which is very much suburban in

character, contrasting sharply with the rural and semi-rural characters of Stretton Hall and Great Glen respectively.

- 1.1.5. It is noted that Part 7(a) of Policy SA03 requires the development at the Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Site to respect and maintain a physical and visual separation between Great Glen and the urban area of Oadby. The Proposed Submission Plan Policy Map Inset 72 (Examination Library Ref: S-NLP2) shows an Area of Separation being proposed immediately to the north west of Great Glen and immediately to the south east of Stretton Hall. The developable area of the proposed Strategic allocation fills the rest of the gap between Great Glen and Oadby.
- 1.1.6. It is considered that the Areas of Separation shown on Inset Map 72 are insufficient for the Area of Separation to have an effective impact in maintaining a sufficient gap between the settlements to protect their character as individual settlements. In particular, Stretton Hall would be completely surrounded by development and would physically and visually be subsumed by development that would effectively be an extension to the built-up area of Oadby.
- 1.1.7. Great Glen would also be physically and visually connected to Oadby as a result of development along London Road. The Areas of Separation shown on Inset Map 72 at the southern extent of the proposed Strategic Allocation relating to existing built development (Leicester Grammar School) and would be completely ineffective in preventing coalescence of the settlements.
- 1.1.8. Even if, as part of the masterplanning process for the Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Allocation (as required by criterion 4 of Policy SA03) should greater areas of undeveloped land within the Strategic Site than the Areas of Separation shown on Inset Map 72, it is not considered that those gaps would be effective in maintaining the character of Stretton Hall in particular, as development within the Strategic Allocation will inevitably result in the character of the settlement being altered from a standalone, isolated hamlet. As referred to above, the purpose of the

criterion 2 of Policy DS04 is to protect the character of the settlements, not just prevent compete coalescence.

- 1.1.9. STNT therefore considers that the criterion 2 of Policy DS04 would not be compatible with the delivery of the Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Allocation. It would not be possible to deliver the allocation without conflict with the aims of Policy DS04. Policy DS04 would not therefore be an effective policy and cannot be considered sound. Similarly, and as explained in response to Matter 7, Question 12, Criterion 7 of Policy SA03 also cannot be considered effective as it is not possible for the Strategic Allocation to be developed whilst maintaining the separation and preserving the character of Stretton Hall and Great Glen. Policy SA03 must therefore also be considered unsound.
- 1.1.10. It is considered that the approach taken to identifying Areas of Separation and the Strategic Allocations is flawed. The Area of Separation Assessment is an evidence base document that should have informed the site selection process. However, it is clear from the wording of the Area of Separation Assessment, and most notably paragraphs 4.27 to 4.29 that the Area of Separation has considered how Areas of Separation can be defined around the Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Allocation, as it is seeking to identifying areas around the allocation that would have the result in the least harm. The Assessment should have been considering whether a Strategic Allocation in this location would result in an unacceptable intrusion into an Area of Separation and therefore whether this is a suitable location for a Strategic Allocation, which STNT maintains it is not.