

**HEARING STATEMENT
FOR MATTER 6:
SPATIAL STRATEGY
AND COUNTRYSIDE
PROTECTION
ON BEHALF OF DAVIDSONS
DEVELOPMENTS LTD**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations are prepared by Bidwells LLP on behalf Davidsons Developments Ltd in response to the updated Matters and Issues set out by the Inspector on 24th August 2018. The Statement should be read in conjunction with our representations to the pre-submission Local Plan consultation dated 17th November 2017.

2.0 Matter 6: Spatial strategy and countryside protection

Issue 6.1 - Is the spatial strategy as set out in Policies SS1 and H1 and their supporting text soundly based? Is the settlement hierarchy soundly based?

- 2.1 In our Hearing Statements on Matters 2 and 3, we have raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of the Plan to deliver the housing requirement for the District. These concerns have centred on the overall level of housing allocations made and the lack of flexibility in the plan to ensure housing is delivered in timely manner, particularly in the context of pressure to support delivery of housing need from elsewhere in the Housing Market Area (HMA).
- 2.2 The spatial strategy set out at policy SS1 includes a settlement hierarchy (part 1 of the policy) which sets out that development will be will focused first on the Principal Urban Area around Leicester followed by the Sub Regional Centre of Market Harborough, the Key Centres of Lutterworth and Broughton Astley and then three levels of rural settlements.
- 2.3 In general, we support this settlement hierarchy which logically seeks to focus development around the most sustainable settlements in and adjacent to the District.
- 2.4 However, we have concerns regarding the effectiveness of part 2 of policy SS1 and policy H1, which sets out the distribution of development within the hierarchy. We have concerns with the lack of new development directed to Broughton Astley. The town sits alongside Lutterworth as Key Centre and is classified as one of the top three most sustainable settlements in the district. It is our view that the settlement should be the focus of additional development over the plan period, particularly given concerns raised in our Hearing Statements on Matters 2 and 3 regarding the overall housing requirement and the lack of flexibility in the plan.
- 2.5 The rationale for making allocations at Lutterworth but not at Broughton Astley is set out in the supporting text. The key factors for this approach are the range of facilities in Lutterworth compared to Broughton Astley, the proximity of Lutterworth to Magna Park and the fact that Broughton Astley has a Neighbourhood Plan which allocates 'more than enough housing land to meet its needs' (Local Plan Paragraph 3.1.10).
- 2.6 Whilst Lutterworth is closer to Magna Park and the M1, Broughton Astley is also within 5km of Magna Park and is also in a position to be a sustainable location for Magna Park workers to travel

from. The settlement has a good range of services and facilities and is well placed to support additional growth,

- 2.7 The table on page 31 of the Council's Response to the Inspector's initial questions (question 11) sets out that 621 homes are planned for Broughton Astley over the plan period. This is less than a third of growth planned at Lutterworth, the other Key Settlement. Moreover, the level of growth planned is similar to that at lower order settlements Fleckney (610 homes), Great Glen (532 homes) and considerably less than the 901 homes proposed at The Kibworths. We would therefore question the justification for the conclusion set out paragraph 3.1.10 of the Plan that Broughton Astley has more than enough housing land to meet its needs.
- 2.8 The level of growth planned compared to less sustainable, lower order settlements suggests there is an under provision of housing directed to Broughton Astley given its status in the settlement hierarchy, particularly in the context of the availability of suitable and deliverable sites around the town, such as our clients, and our view, expressed in relation to Matters 2 and 3, that to be effective additional housing land needs to be identified in the plan.

Issue 6.2 - What regard has been given by the SA and the other analyses to the impact on community severance and the difficulties of urban integration arising from allocation L1, which would result in development on both sides of a major motorway? Have these factors been taken account in evaluating the performance of this option against others, and if so, what weight have they been given?

- 2.9 No response as we consider this is a matter for the Local Planning Authority to comment on.

Issue 6.3 - What regard has been given by the SA and the other analyses to the impact on neighbouring communities arising from allocation SC1, which would be remote from a main road such that all movement would be channelled through residential and village streets? Have these factors been taken into account in evaluating the performance of this option against others, and if so, what weight have they been given?

- 2.10 No response as we consider this is a matter for the Local Planning Authority to comment on.

Issue 6.4 - Is policy GD2 a sound approach to allowing additional development in sustainable locations (having regard to any modifications the Council propose to make to the policy as indicated in IC3 in their response to IC2 Q13)?

- 2.11 No response as we consider this is a matter for the Local Planning Authority to comment on.

Issue 6.5 - Are the range of policies GD3 to GD7 governing rural development and the protection of landscape and the countryside sound (having regard to any modifications the Council propose to make to the policy as indicated in IC3 in their response to IC2 Qs 12, 13 and 14)?

2.12 No response as we consider this is a matter for the Local Planning Authority to comment on.