

**Land Adjacent to
Market Harborough
and Great Bowden**

**On Behalf of the Trustees
of the Bowden
Settlement**

**Response to Issues and
Matters Questions**

**Matter 6 Spatial Strategy
and Countryside
Protection**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This representation has been submitted by Bruton Knowles on behalf of the Trustees of the Bowden Settlement to address the Matters and Issues raised by the Inspector, in his letter dated 15th August 2018. Our responses are printed in italic text following the specific Issue and Matter below.

2. ISSUES AND MATTER 6 SPATIAL STRATEGY AND COUNTRYSIDE PROTECTION

2.1 Issue and Matter 6.1

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

2.3 *The authority has sought to place the principal urban areas of Leicester at the top of the settlement hierarchy. Whilst these areas fall within the administrative area of Harborough, it is considered that Market Harborough –being the principal settlement within the district should be placed equally as high as these other areas surrounding Leicester.*

2.4 *By not allocating Market Harborough at the top of the settlement hierarchy the Local Plan is potentially limiting the growth and sustainability of the District's largest settlement*

2.5 Issue and Matter 6.5

2.6 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).

2.7 *The Area of Separation Review 2017 which was commissioned by the Council and undertaken by The Landscape Partnership in Spring 2017 is a welcome addition to the Local Plan review, and brings a considerable volume of factual data and information to the process.*

2.8 *However, neither the basis of the Review nor the subsequent report and its findings or recommendations have been the subject of any public consultation or peer review prior to inclusion of the recommendations as settled policy within GD6. Much of the evidence within the Review is factual, but there are some detailed elements of landscape character, form and appearance which have either been overlooked or omitted from the report and its recommendations. In particular significant areas of vegetation and tree cover have been omitted from the published plans within the Review document, the identification and existence of which might lead to alternative conclusions or boundaries being adopted for the Area of Separation.*

- 2.9 *Given that the 2017 Review is a considerable step forward from the previous 2011 document, we recommend that the Inspector should give strong consideration to either a further detailed public review of the Area of Separation within the early years following adoption of the Local Plan 2011 to 2031, or a public consultation in respect of the 2017 independent study which was undertaken by The Landscape Partnership. However we fully support the existing study becoming adopted Policy prior to that early review or public consultation in order to protect the areas which are highlighted in the existing report.*