Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 Examination

Council Responses to the

Matters and Issues

- Statement 7 -

7th September 2018

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MATTER 7.1

7.1.1. The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that local planning authorities should secure design quality through the policies adopted in their local plans. Good design is indivisible from good planning, and should be at the heart of the plan making process. The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Plans to develop robust and comprehensive polices setting out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. By establishing sound, clear and easy to follow design policies and processes for use by both developers and local communities, local planning authorities can make design a more transparent and accessible part of the planning process. (Reference ID: 26-003-20140306)

7.1.2. The Local Plan attempts to do this not only through Policy GD8 but also through the guidance given in site-specific polices, in particular L1 and SC1. Both of these policies require the SDAs to be developed in accordance with a masterplan informed by key design principles, an independent design review and community consultation. This accords with the advice in the PPG that: 'To achieve good design the use of expert advice from appropriately skilled in house staff or consultants may sometimes be required. But design should not be the preserve of specialists, it is also important to seek the views of local communities.'

7.1.3. The masterplans will be material considerations against which, together with Policy GD8, the Council will assess the design quality of planning proposals for the SDAs. Other material considerations for the SDAs and strategic allocations will be:

- The national PPG, which includes detailed guidance under the headings of:
  - What planning objectives can good design help achieve?
  - What is a well designed place?
  - How should buildings and the spaces between them be considered?
- national best practice design tools as referred to in paragraph 4.15.2 of the plan;
- Existing Supplementary Planning Guidance (see IMP2, particularly SPG1 on Design Principles and, SPG2 on Residential Development – Major Housing Sites) and proposed Supplementary Planning Documents as referred to in paragraph 4.15.5;

7.1.4. On smaller sites, GD8 will apply, together with, depending on the scale and location of the proposed development, the other material considerations above, as well as:

- Conservation Area statements, appraisals and management plans (see paragraphs 8.1.8 - 8.1.9); and

- Countryside Design Summaries, Village Design Statements and specific policies in neighbourhood plans, as referred to in paragraph 4.15.6.

7.1.5. The national PPG asks local planning authorities to evaluate and understand the defining characteristics of the area as part of its evidence base, in order to identify appropriate design opportunities and policies. This was done in SPG1 referred to above, although in practice there is a wide range of different characteristics throughout the District, such that more localised contexts such as Conservation Statements, Village Design Guides and neighbourhood plans are probably more useful.

7.1.6. Policy GD8 combines with other general and site-specific polices (as described in paragraph 4.15.2) to aim to deliver well-designed places. Together these policies address all of the planning objectives set out in the national PPG that design can help achieve as follows:

- **Local character** is covered by Policies GD8 (1)(a)(b)(c)&(d), RT4(1)(c), HC1(1)& (3), MH5(1)(m), MH6(1)(k)&(l), F2(1)(g), and K1(1)(j), with **landscape setting** also covered by Policies GD5 (as proposed to be modified by the Council's response to the Inspector's Initial Question 17), SC1(3)(s), MH1(1)(k), MH2(1)(j), MH3(1)(h), MH4(1)(l), L1(3)z and L2(1)(j)

- **Safe, connected and efficient streets** are a requirement of Policies SC1(3)(j)&(o), MH1(1)(e), MH2(1)(c), and L1(3)(m)(n)(o)&(p) which relate to the larger strategic allocations, PolicyGD8(1)(i) relating to new residential development, and of Policies IN2(2)(a)(b)&(c) and GD8(1)(m) which apply to all residential and commercial development.

- **Networks of greenspaces (including parks) and public places** are covered by Policies GD8(1)(i)&(j), GI1 (as proposed to be modified), GI2(4)(b), GI5(7) (to be re-numbered GI5(3) to correct a numbering error), SC1(3)(h)(r)(t)&(x), MH1(1)(i)(j), MH2(1)(h), L1(3)(j)(i)-(iii), L2(1)(h), F1(1)(j), and K1(1)(h).

- **Crime prevention/ security** is addressed by Policy GD8(1)(h)

- **Access and inclusion** is dealt with under Policies GD8(1)(k), H4, and RT3(3)

- **Efficient use of natural resources** is covered by Policies GD8(1)(f), CC1(a) –(e) and IN4(2).

- **Cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods** are the aim of Polices SC1 and L1, relating to SDAs, specifically to create "a sustainable and high quality living environment" (Scraptoft North) and "a sustainable, high quality and largely self-sufficient settlement and an attractive environment for living, working and recreation" (East of Lutterworth).

7.1.7. Other matters addressed by Policy GD8 are residential amenity, individual and innovative design, minimising light pollution and dealing with contamination.

7.1.8. With regard to the effectiveness of Policy GD 8, there are always difficulties in formulating policies to ensure good urban design, because words in policies are inadequate to describe what constitutes good design in every situation, and will in any event always be subject to interpretation by development management officers and decision-makers. For this reason other forms of design guidance, including illustrative material, local examples of vernacular buildings, best practice models, and detailed local guidance/ policies are useful in supplementing policies and acting as other material considerations as described in paragraphs 4.15.2 to 4.15.6. Nevertheless the policy is considered to be a comprehensive and clear framework against which planning applications can be judged.

7.1.9. However, Policy IM1(1) and Appendix K (no. 9, page 280) sets out a mechanism, based an annual assessment of randomly selected developments against Building for Life Criteria, by which any 'red light' elements will be addressed.

7.1.10. In conclusion it is considered that the planning objectives of good urban design are well covered by Policy GD8 as well as by some other general polices and, as relevant, site-specific polices, most notably the requirement in the SDA policies for a masterplan that includes key design principles, an independent design review and community consultation. The plan as a whole is therefore likely to be effective in the promotion of good urban design on all sites.

MATTER 7.2

7.2.1. Together with a proposed modification to Policy HC1(2), as set out in IC4, and further modifications proposed in IC7, the Council considers the plan to be sound in respect of its approach to heritage assets, being both a positive and new NPPF compliant approach.

7.2.2. Policy HC1 Build Heritage is considered to be a positive approach towards development affecting heritage assets and conservation areas, permitting development subject to criteria. The proposed amendments set out in IC4 and IC7 repeat para 195 of the new NPPF, identifying separate criteria to be applied to development that would result in substantial or less than substantial harm as set out in representations 7425, 7364 and 7609.

7.2.3. Policy HC1(5), together with amendments proposed in S4 to the explanation to Policy RT4, seeks to set out a positive approach to development at Foxton Locks, reflecting its local and regional role as a tourism and recreational facility and consisting of a Grade II* flight of locks, surrounding listed buildings associated with the Grand Union Canal, and the Inclined Plane Scheduled Monument.

7.2.4. Further information with regards to enabling development is set out in para 8.1.12 of the explanation to Policy HC1, with criteria based on Historic England guidance (Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places, 2008).

7.2.5. In addition to Policy HC1 Built Heritage, Policy GD8 Good design in development (1)c seeks to ensure that development proposals reflect the special characteristics of areas of high heritage value.