

Comments on Revised Policy GD2 – Sworders for Mr & Mrs Crane

Many thanks for the opportunity to comment on the re-wording of Policy GD2. I must apologise that this email has come through later than the deadline of this morning; it was simply a matter of timing and other commitments. I really hope you are still able to accept this. I would be grateful if you are able to confirm.

Upon discussion with my clients, Mr and Mrs I Crane, I would like to register an objection to this policy as re-drafted as it is not sound.

The effect of the re-wording, in conjunction with policy H1, is to severely constrain development in settlements with a housing target of zero, specifically Broughton Astley. It is, in fact, more restrictive than the wording proposed in the Council's hearing statement which allowed a 10% increase over the residual housing requirement, which equated to only 62 dwellings. The effect of this new re-wording is to restrict any development outside of the built up area, other than in accordance with an updated housing needs survey, or in the event that the District has a housing land supply shortfall. This second eventuality is already provided for through the NPPF (paragraphs 49 and 14 NPPF 2012 and paragraph 11d and footnote 7 NPPF 2018) so this is not an effective policy.

The policy will restrict potentially suitable sites from coming forward in this sustainable settlement. Broughton Astley is designated as a Key Centre, having all the key services, is capable of sustaining expansion and a substantial amount of housing land is available. Restricting development in this location does not contribute to the objective of achieving sustainable development, which according to both NPPF 2012 paragraph 151 and section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the council must do when exercising their plan making function. Therefore this policy is unsound in the context of NPPF paragraph 182 as it is not consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

This restraint is also in conflict with the spatial strategy which designates Broughton Astley as a Key Centre, making it unclear how a decision maker should react to development proposals, which does not comply with NPPF 2012 paragraph 154 and is therefore unsound in the context of paragraph 182.

We do not consider this was the intention of the re-wording; our understanding was that the intention was to increase the flexibility of the Plan to allow development in sustainable locations, not constrain it further. A possible solution discussed in the hearing session was to link the quantum of development to the existing housing stock which we would support, provided part 2b) of the re-worded policy were omitted. Another solution is to return to the original wording of part 2, which only placed a quantum restriction on the lower order settlements. We support the change from the original policy to split it into two parts; within and without the built up area, which I understand was the original reason for the re-wording of the policy, with the significant restriction this placed on sustainable settlements with a housing target of zero, being an unintended consequence.

As such, we propose two options for the re-wording of part 2 of the policy, the first in line with the original wording (but split into two parts) and the second to link to the existing housing stock:

Proposed modification to Policy GD2 Part 2 (more in line with original wording):

2. In addition to sites allocated in this Local Plan and neighbourhood plans, development adjoining the existing or committed built up area of Market Harborough, Key Centres, the Leicester Principal Urban Area (PUA), Rural Centres and Selected Rural Villages, but excluding Green Wedges, will be permitted where:

- a. it does not, cumulatively with other commitments, significantly exceed the individual settlement target for the delivery of dwellings in Rural Centres and Selected Rural Villages specified in Policy H1 Provision of new housing; or it comprises the redevelopment , or conversion, of redundant or disused buildings, or the development of previously developed land of low environmental value, and enhances its immediate setting; and*
- d. its scale, individually or cumulatively with existing and committed development, reflects the size of the settlement concerned and level of service provision within that settlement;*
- e. it is physically and visually connected to and respects the form and character of the existing settlement and landscape;*
- f. as far as possible, it retains existing natural boundaries within and around the site, particularly trees, hedges and watercourses; and*
- g. it does not harmfully diminish the physical and/or visual separation of neighbouring between settlements.*

Proposed modification to Policy GD2 Part 2 (link to existing housing stock):

2. In addition to sites allocated in this Local Plan and neighbourhood plans, development adjoining the existing or committed built up area of Market Harborough, Key Centres, the Leicester Principal Urban Area (PUA), Rural Centres and Selected Rural Villages, but excluding Green Wedges, will be permitted where:

- a. it does not, cumulatively with other commitments, significantly exceed the existing housing stock of the settlement; or it comprises the redevelopment , or conversion, of redundant or disused buildings, or the development of previously developed land of low environmental value, and enhances its immediate setting; and*
- d. its scale, individually or cumulatively with existing and committed development, reflects the size of the settlement concerned and level of service provision within that settlement;*
- e. it is physically and visually connected to and respects the form and character of the existing settlement and landscape;*
- f. as far as possible, it retains existing natural boundaries within and around the site, particularly trees, hedges and watercourses; and*
- g. it does not harmfully diminish the physical and/or visual separation of neighbouring between settlements.*

Kind regards

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