

2018

MELTON LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

MATTER 8: EMPLOYMENT, RETAIL, TOWN CENTRE AND TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT

PLANIT-X ON BEHALF OF ASFORDBY PARISH COUNCIL

PLANIT-X TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING SERVICES | info@planit-x.co.uk

Do Policies EC1, EC2 and EC3 provide clear, justified and deliverable proposals for employment land development in Melton Mowbray and the Rural Areas and for the protection of existing employment sites?

What is the distinction in policy terms, if any, between the 'Employment facilities listed for retention' and 'Other key employment sites'? Does Policy EC4 provide appropriate guidance and encouragement for development outside existing or allocated employment sites?

Asfordby Parish Neighbourhood Plan

1. Planit-X Town and Country Planning Services Ltd has supported Asfordby Parish Council (APC) throughout the preparation of the Asfordby Parish Neighbourhood Plan (APNP).
2. The APNP relates to the Parish of Asfordby and has been prepared by APC who are the Qualified Body. The Plan Area was formally designated by Melton Borough Council (MBC) on 30 January 2013. The APNP covers the period to 2036 and has been prepared following extensive consultation with the local community and others with an interest in the area.
3. The Draft APNP was submitted to MBC in October 2016 for publication. The Draft APNP was sent to an Independent Examiner in February 2017.
4. On 5 June 2017, the Examiner recommend that the APNP be modified to meet the 'Basic Conditions' and then submitted to a referendum. The Examiner was Brian Dodd, who was formerly a Director responsible for all development plan and transport casework at the Planning Inspectorate.
5. The APNP was passed by referendum on 28 September 2017.
6. In October 2017, Jelson Ltd gave notice to MBC of its intention to apply for judicial review regarding the APNP. Pending final disposal of the legal challenge, MBC has agreed to take no further steps to progress the APNP.
7. APNP Policies A25-27, concern employment development at the following locations:
 - Asfordby Business Park and Old Dalby Test Track (Policy A25)
 - Holwell Works (Policy A26)
 - Holwell Business Park (Policy A27)

MLP Policy EC3

8. These three sites in Asfordby Parish are identified by MLP Policy EC3 as existing employment sites for retention:

- EC3(ii): Asfordby Business Park, Asfordby Hill
 - EC3(iii): Holwell Works (Melton Mowbray Business Park), Asfordby Hill
 - EC3(iv): Stanton Plc (St Gobain), Asfordby Hill
9. All three sites are the subject of a 2009 report by Roger Tym & Partners 'Major Employment Sites: Potential Use of Holwell Works and Asfordby Business Park' (MBC/EL3) and are also addressed by the 2012 'Melton Mowbray Employment Growth Area Delivery Statement Final Report', Paul McKim Consulting Ltd. (MBC/EL4).
10. APC has several concerns relating to the clarity of Policy EC3, its justification, and deliverability especially in relation to these three sites. Each is addressed in turn below.

EC3(ii): Asfordby Business Park, Asfordby Hill

11. Located to the North of Asfordby Hill Village and 1 mile to the west of Melton Mowbray, Asfordby Business Park is the site of the former Asfordby mine. The site measures some 28 hectares and is owned and managed by Harworth Estates, the property arm of UK Coal plc.
12. Coal mining at Asfordby ceased in 1997 due to adverse geological conditions. In the three years following the closure of the mine, some of the buildings and plant on the site were cleared. Planning permissions were granted for employment use of the remaining buildings. The extent of the permitted site is shown on the APNP Policies Maps- it is shown incorrectly on the MLP Policies Map and MLP Figure 8. The site is the subject of APNP Policy A25.
13. During the preparation of the APNP, made representations seeking to extend Asfordby Business Park to include land to the north-west of the current site, in accordance with the Land Use Plan at Appendix 1 (area of expansion shown in blue).
14. Aware of nearby heritage interests¹, APNP consulted Historic England (Appendix 2) and, based on its advice, rejected the proposal to extend the site.
15. The proposed extension site remains without planning permission for employment development and is undeveloped agricultural land.
16. It should also be noted that the Asfordby Business Park site is also home to the Melton Rail Innovation & Development Centre (RIDC), a facility that supports both high and low speed testing of railway vehicles and infrastructure using 11 miles of 25kV overhead line equipment and 3rd/4th rail DC equipment. The Melton facility provides two separate test tracks: a high-speed facility between Melton Junction and Edwalton, incorporating 13 miles of track up to 125mph – 11 miles of this with overhead line equipment – and a slow-speed test track from Old Dalby to Stanton Tunnel, with four miles of track up to 60mph.

¹ 16. Appeal by Peel Wind Farms: Former Asfordby Mine/Existing Asfordby Business Park Application Ref: 10/00951/FUL (APP/Y2430/A/13/2191290)

17. Network Rail regard the test facilities as strategically very important because it provide a safe environment where new and modified rolling stock, plant, on-track machines, infrastructure, equipment and technology can be tested – either by us or the rail industry.
18. There are several communities situated along the length of the rail test track affected by rail noise and disturbance, including Asfordby Hill and Asfordby Valley. These issues are controlled by planning conditions that limit the frequency that the test track is used and hours of operation.
19. Melton RIDC, its related infrastructure and impact on local communities is not mentioned by the MLP.

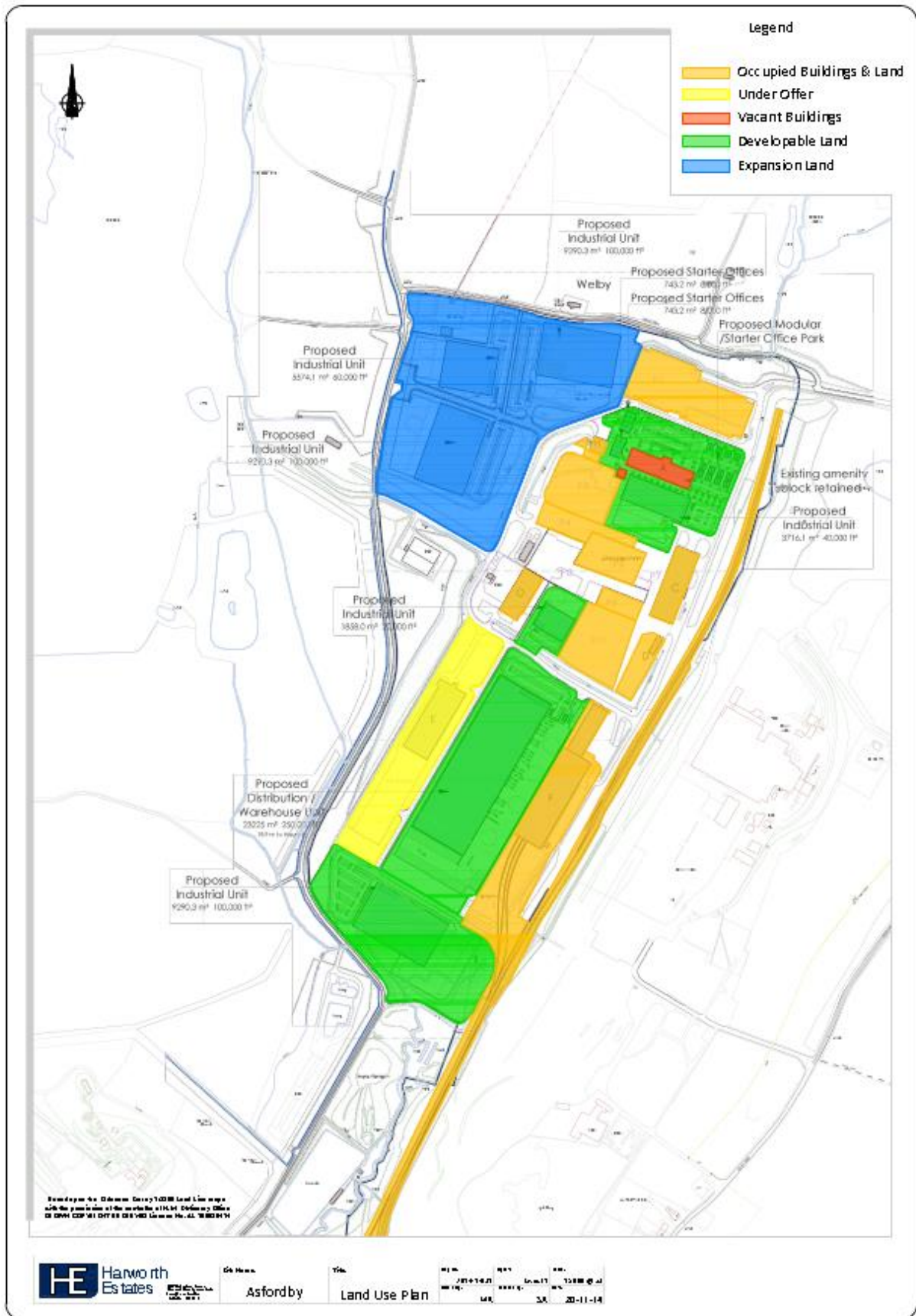
EC3(iii): Holwell Works (Melton Mowbray Business Park), Asfordby Hill

20. Holwell Works, in Asfordby Hill, was constructed in 1878 and was originally operated by the Holwell Iron Company and later expanded to include a foundry. During the 1950s and 1960s there was a steady decline in the use of the blast furnaces at the site, much of which became redundant. Although some of the site (EC3(iv)) is now part of Saint-Gobain Pipelines plc specialising in the manufacture of highway products, the derelict and contaminated area to the south of the site remains undeveloped.
21. There have been several proposals for the redevelopment of the site. In 2009, a planning application (09/00356/OUT) was submitted by Rotherhill (Asfordby) Syndicate for the development of 36,152m² of industrial and warehouse units called Holwell Business Park. Planning permission was granted in 2010 and an extension of time was agreed in April 2013, but now expired.
22. The redevelopment of this site has therefore been difficult to achieve. This is consistent with the conclusions of MBC/EL3 which warned that if 'allocated for employment but the market is oversupplied, the site may not be taken up for a long time, or at all'.
23. For over 50 years the site has been derelict. It is the subject of fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour. APC want the site be redevelopment for employment uses so that it can provide job opportunities for local people, but it recognises that new housing development is required to enable this to happen. Consequently, APNP Policy A27 proposes that the site should be used for business, industrial, storage and residential purposes (up to 100 dwellings).
24. Persimmon Homes are now progressing towards an option agreement with the landowners to bring forward a planning application for the early part of 2018. They are committed to delivering a scheme in early 2019 that is consistent with APNP Policy A27, which they fully support (Appendix 3).
25. Persimmon Homes support APC's view that the MLP should be amended so that it is consistent with the APNP to avoid potential conflicts between the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan.

EC3(iv): Stanton Plc (St Gobain), Asfordby Hill

26. Although EC3(iv) is broadly consistent with APNP Policy A26, the later provides more detailed development management. The MLP should be amended so that it is consistent with the APNP to avoid potential conflicts between the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan with regard to the development of this site.

Appendix 1: Asfordby Business Park Land Use Plan



Appendix 2: Historic England



Historic England

BY EMAIL:

colin@planit-x.co.uk

Our ref: 1072

Your ref:

Telephone: 07769 242872

09 September 2015

Dear Mr Wilkinson

Asfordby Neighbourhood Plan – Employment allocation at Asfordby Business Park

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the above 11 August 2015.

There are heritage assets nearby, including the Grade II* listed Church of St Bartholomew to the north and a scheduled monument, Sysonby Grange to the north east. The field opposite the Grade II* church is of particular importance to its setting and non-designated remains within it support the significance of the church. Historic England would **object** to the proposed extension to the employment land allocation shown in blue on the land use plan submitted by Harworth Estates as part of their representation to the Neighbourhood Plan, as this development would result in substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II* Church.

The proposed employment allocation in its entirety (as shown within the Asfordby Parish Neighbourhood Plan and not including the area shown in blue described above) may impact upon heritage assets and further assessment will be required to determine the impact upon the significance of these heritage assets; we would recommend that you are guided by the advice of your Conservation and archaeology specialists. Without more detailed information

relating to the detailed design and layout of the allocation it is not possible to comment comprehensively; however, there may be concern if the buildings within the business park were of significant height, bulk and / or scale. The quantum of harm upon nearby heritage assets should not be increased as a result of the development.

Notwithstanding the advice given in this letter, we reserve the right at a later stage to comment or object to any proposals that come forward as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any of these comments.

Yours sincerely



Emilie Carr (Mrs)

Historic Environment Planning Adviser

E-mail: Emilie.carr@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Appendix 3: Persimmon Homes

Statement of Interest

Policy A27 – Asfordby Business Park

Persimmon Homes (North Midlands) can confirm that we are progressing towards an option agreement with the landowners of Holwell Business Park, Asfordby Hill; in order to bring forward a planning application for the early part of 2018. We are fully committed to delivering a scheme in early 2019 that incorporates industrial, commercial, retail and community uses, along with up to 100 residential dwellings. As such we support the Asfordby Neighbourhood Plan's Policy A27 allocation of the Holwell Business Park and believe that the Melton Local Plan should rely on it to deliver a residential led mixed use development. Furthermore, relevant policies within the Neighbourhood Plan should be included in the Site and Allocations and Policies section of the emerging Melton Local Plan, in order to avoid potential conflicts between the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan.

The site has been allocated for employment use for nearly two decades (Saved Policy EM4 of Melton Local Plan 1999), with lapsed outline permission (09/00356/OUT) for employment development in 2016, following an extension for implementation in 2013. Throughout this period the site has been marketed for employment use with no success. As a result, it can be shown that the delivery of employment development at Holwell Business Park is unrealistic during the Plan period.

Persimmon Homes believes that this scheme would be extremely successful if allocated for mixed use development, and would positively contribute to the wider growth within the Melton Borough. We are a national house builder that is unrivalled in its ability to provide large scale housing schemes that promote sustainability and high quality design. We lead the industry in introducing developer-produced timber frames and brick production, which not only increases our build rate, but provides employment and supports the local economy. Furthermore, our involvement at the forefront of governmental policy formation reflects our commitment to reducing the nationwide housing shortage and improving the areas for our future generations.