For official use only
Respondent Ref:
Date Received:

MELTON LOCAL PLAN – ADDENDUM OF FOCUSED CHANGES (JULY 2017)

The focused changes being proposed in the Melton Local Plan have been split into the main themes that are being addressed since our last consultation in November 2016:

FOCUSED CHANGE DESCRIPTION	FC NUMBER
1. Spatial strategy FC1.1 to FC1.3 (see schedule of the proposed focused changes)	FC1
2. Sustainable neighbourhoods FC2.1 Policy SS4 FC2.2 Policy SS5	FC2
3. Growth strategy	FC3
4. **Housing site allocations**** FC4.1 Section 5.4, C1 (A) & C1 (B) FC4.2 Appendix 1	FC4
5. Housing mix	FC5
6. Affordable housing	FC6
7. Gypsies and travellers	FC7
8. Economy	FC8
9. Indoor sports & recreation	FC9
10. Infrastructure delivery plan	FC10
11. Melton transport strategy	FC11
12. Developer contributions	FC12
13. Policies map 13.1 Revised boundary of southern sustainable neighbourhood 13.2 Addition of corridor of investigation/interest for the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road	FC13

****PLEASE SUBMIT 1 REPRESENTATION FORM PER FOCUSED CHANGE (FC)****

****To comment on HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS, please scroll down to the end of this form****

To view more specific policy numbers, please refer to the relevant FC number using the reports on the website at: www.meltonplan.co.uk/focussed-changes-to-plan

What 'soundness' means

The Local Plan will be examined by an independent inspector whose role is to assess whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is sound. A local planning authority should submit a plan for examination which it considers is "sound" – namely that it is:

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and

- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

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MELTON LOCAL PLAN – ADDENDUM OF FOCUSED CHANGES (JULY 2017)

Melton Borough Council proposes to submit the Melton Local Plan (MLP) to the Secretary of State of Communities and Local Government for independent examination. Before submitting the MLP, the Council is required to publish the document and invite the public to make representations on its 'soundness'. An addendum of 'Focused Changes' (FC) has been published since the last consultation in November 2016, and the Council is now consulting on this addendum. The MLP, once adopted will be the development plan for Melton Borough.

This form has two parts:

- Part A: Personal Details
- Parts B and C: Your representation(s).

When making representations, **please use a separate Part B form for focused change you wish to comment on**. **Before completing the form you should read the accompanying Guide to Making Representations.** Please ensure that your representation relates to the correct test of soundness (details can be found in the Guide to Making Representations)

Completed forms should be returned to the address below no later than **23rd August 2017. Representations received after this deadline will not be accepted.**

Planning Policy Team
Regulatory Services
Melton Borough Council
Parkside, Station Approach
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire
LE13 1GH

Alternatively, you can access this form on the Council's website https://www.meltonplan.co.uk/focussed-changes-to-plan & print it out or complete it electronically and e-mail your response to planningpolicy@melton.gov.uk

Representations can also be made via the Council's on-line consultation portal - https://meltonboroughcouncil.citizenspace.com/planning-policy-team/copy-of-focussedchanges-addendum-consultation-s/

PART A: ABOUT YOU/YOUR ORGANISATION *(If you are an agent, please complete the personal details of your client in 1 and complete agent's details in 2).*

Personal Details	**2. Agent's Details** *(If applicable)*
Full Name:	Full Name & Company:
	Andrew Gore, Marrons Planning
Organisation (if applicable)	Organisation/Client Representations on Behalf Of
	Barwood Homes Ltd
Address:	Address:
	[redacted]
Postcode:	Postcode:
	[redacted]
Email:	Email:
	[redacted]
Contact Number:	Contact Number:

Number of Representations Enclosed:	1

Signature: Andrew Gore

Date: 22 August 2017

(PART B)

PART B: YOUR REPRESENTATION *(This section will need to be completed for each representation made. Please photocopy or download from the council's website Part B of the form as required.)*

Which part of the Melton Local Plan: focused changes addendum does your representation relate to? *(Please enter the policy number)*

FC number: 4 Policy number: C1A

Do you believe that this policy/section of the Melton Local Plan focused change is? *(Please tick the appropriate box)*

	Yes	No
1. Legally Compliant:		
2. Sound:		✓
3. Complies with Duty to Co-operate:		

**The considerations in relation to the Local Plan being "sound" are explained in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework. If you have entered "No" in relation to 4(2), please go to question 5. In all other circumstances, please go to question 6*

Do you consider that the focused change is unsound because it is not any of the following? *(Please tick the appropriate box)*

1. Positively Prepared ☐ 2. Justified ✓ 3. Effective ☐ 4. Consistent with National Policy ✓

Please give details of why you consider this focused change is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the Duty to Co-operate. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of this policy or its compliance with the Duty to Co-operate, please use this box to set out your comments. *(Please continue onto a separate sheet if you require more space)*

Please see comments below.

Please set out what change(s) you consider necessary to make the focused change legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified at 5 above where this relates to soundness. (NB Please note that any non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why this change will make the suggested focused change legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible. *(Please continue onto a separate sheet if you require more space)*

Please see comments below.

FC4 HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS COMMENTS

The following questions will relate to housing site allocations. Please only use 1 form for each site you wish to submit a comment on. You may copy this page for additional site representations.

Please note: site references may have changed since the previous Local Plan edition, so please use this document to quote any references to sites:

Table 1: Schedule and Summary of the proposed Focused Changes FC4: Housing site allocations, reserve sites and site specific policies				
FC4.1	Section 5.4 Policy C1(A) Policy C1(B)	Reflecting and referencing the findings on suitability, sustainability, site capacity, availability and deliverability, which are set out in updated site and sustainability assessment work. Affects the reasoned justification and policy on housing allocations overall and the associated site specific policies and preamble. Includes deletions, additions, revised site boundaries and capacities, and some recategorisation.	- 11 site allocations deleted - 3 reserve sites deleted - 16 site allocation boundaries amended - 22 allocated sites with capacity changes - 1 reserve site with a capacity change - 8 new site allocations, and 2 extended existing sites - 2 new reserve sites - 14 allocated sites and 2 reserve sites renumbered.	
FC4.2	Appendix 1	Amended site specific policies. New reasoned justification and site specific policy for Scalford and Great Dalby.	- Reflects FC4.1 above. - Amended criteria setting out development conditions for some site specific policies.	

SITE SETTLEMENT *(Please select the site that you interested in (additional sites will need to be entered on another form)*

SITE					
Ab Kettleby		Asfordby		Melton Mowbray	
Asfordby Hill		Croxton Kerrial		Old Dalby	
Bottesford		Easthorpe		Scalford	
Frisby		Harby		Somerby	
Gaddebsy		Hose		Stathern	
Great Dalby		Long Clawson		Thorpe Arnold	
		Wymondham		Waltham	✓

PLEASE INDICATE THE SITE REFERENCE HERE (If you wish to comment on the approach or policy as a whole please do so in the boxes below):

Do you believe that this policy/section of the Melton Local Plan focused change is? *(Please tick the appropriate box)*				
1. Legally Compliant:	Yes		No	
2. Sound:	Yes		No	✓
3. Complies with Duty to Co-operate:	Yes		No	

**The considerations in relation to the Local Plan being "sound" are explained in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework. If you have entered "No" in relation to 4(2), please go to question 5. In all other circumstances, please go to question 6*

1. Do you consider that the focused change is unsound because it is not any of the following? (Please tick the appropriate box)

1)	Positively Prepared		2) Justified	✓	3) Effective		4) Consistent with National Policy	✓

Please give details of why you consider this focused change is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the Duty to Co-operate. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of this policy or its compliance with the Duty to Co-operate, please use this box to set out your comments. *(Please continue onto a separate sheet if you require more space)*

Marrons Planning has been instructed by a number of clients to make representations in respect of the Focused Changes consultation. In respect of representations made in relation to sites at Long Clawson and Harby, separate issues are raised and over the soundness of the plan and it's compliance with national policy; these concerns are set out clearly in separate submissions.

In respect of the representations before you that have been prepared on behalf of Barwood Homes in relation to its interest on land east of Melton Road (WAL3 RESERVE (MBC/192/15)), there are a number of concerns raised with the Focused Changes and indeed the Focused Changes evidence base, which give rise to wider concerns that the Local Plan is not justified and not consistent with national policy.

As noted in previous representations made on behalf of Barwood Homes Ltd in respect of land east of Melton Road WAL3 RESERVE (Appendix 1), the site is exceptionally well related to the existing pattern of built form in Waltham, as well as being easily accessible on foot to the centre of the village and the services/amenities that the village has to offer. An outline planning application was prepared and submitted to Melton Borough Council (ref: 16/00971/OUT) for the erection of up to 124 dwellings with associated infrastructure and public open space (all matters reserved except means of access) on the site. The application was reported to a recent Planning Committee meeting with a recommendation to approval by officers.

The Focused Changes evidence base (specifically MBC FC4 – Part 2 Service Centres Site Update MBC May 2017) provides an update to the site assessments, including information on availability of land, suitability of the site, viability and deliverability timescales. In respect of WAL2 (Preferred Allocation) and WAL3 (Reserve Site) Marrons Planning has prepared a summary table (below) of the Council's *Suitability* assessment schedule found on pages 439-457. The summary table demonstrates that despite being the preferred allocation, WAL2 is outperformed by WAL3 (Reserve Site) in three areas of consideration, namely *Heritage Assets; Biodiversity* and *Visual Impact*. WAL3 (Reserve Site is outperformed by WAL2 (Preferred Allocation) in just one area of consideration – *Noise and Other Pollutants*.

In respect of *Noise and Other Pollutants*, it is not clear why the Council have assessed WAL3 (Reserve Site) as having a Negative (-) impact on the basis of what it describes as *'potential polluting sources (farm buildings – noise and odour)'* yet have given WAL2 (Preferred Allocation) a Strongly Positive (++) impact on the basis of *'none identified'*. Both sites immediately adjoin one another and both sites share a boundary with the farm and industrial buildings located on Fairfield Industrial Estate. Furthermore, the accompanying technical assessments that accompany both respective planning applications that have been submitted for WAL2 and WAL3 reveal no concern relating to pollution (noise, odour or otherwise). As such, there is NO justification for this discrepancy and thus both WAL2 and WAL3 should be given equate ratings in respect of *Noise and Other Pollutants*. This being the case, WAL3 (Reserve Site) would actually perform better in terms of site *Suitability* than the preferred allocation of WAL2.

Suitability		
Consideration	**Potential Impact** **++ (strong positive); + (positive); 0 (neutral); - (negative); -- (strong negative)**	
	WAL2 (Preferred Allocation)	***WAL3 (Reserve Site)***
Meeting identified need;	++	++
Relationship/connectivity with host settlement;	++	++
Access to services and facilities (by foot (by foot ideally 800m)/ bicycle (2km) or public transport;	++	++
Proximity to employment;	++	++
Availability of public transport;	+	+
Brownfield land;	--	--
Loss of employment or other beneficial use;	0	0
Access/including public footpath access;	+	+
Major infrastructure requirements (transport schemes);	++	++
Infrastructure capacity (schools/GP/etc);	++	++
Heritage Assets;	+	++
Flooding/drainage	++	++
Biodiversity – SSSI/SAC/LWS/Protected habitats and species;	+	++
TPO/Ancient woodland;	++	++
Historic parks;	++	++

Technical constraints (contamination/land stability);	++	++
Landscape designation (influence report designation);	0	0
Visual impact;	+	++
Agricultural land classification;	++	++
Noise or other pollutants	++	-
Total	27	27

In respect of deliverability, both sites are within single ownership, yet WAL2 (Preferred Allocation) is being promoted by a landowner with only partial developer interest in half of the site, whereas WAL3 (Reserve Site) is being promoted by Barwood Homes, a nationally renowned house-builder with an excellent track record for delivering houses. As such, it is considered that WAL3 (Reserve Site) should perform better in this regard.

In respect of the Sustainability Appraisals Summary for each site, WAL3 (Reserve site) is noted as being negatively assessed in respect of an inefficient use of land. However, it is not considered that a negative rating is justified in this instance. For example, the proposals include 3.87 Hectares of Green Infrastructure (including play area and ponds) and will be landscape led throughout. Public open space will be provided in the north western corner of the site and will include a designated Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and a designated area for children's play space. The most easterly portion of the site is also designated for additional allotment land with the intention of linking up with the existing allotments north east of the site. A Village Green is also proposed at the centre of the site and a community orchard is proposed to the east of the site. A high proportion of landscaping will also be provided throughout the development and especially along the boundaries of the site. furthermore, the housing on the site will be at a density of 27 dph; this is considered to be entirely appropriate in a semi-rural village such as Waltham on the Wolds.

Furthermore, the Sustainability Appraisal Summary for WAL3 (Reserve Site) also makes reference to a negative assessment in respect of agricultural land classification. Despite the fact that both WAL2 (Preferred Allocation) and WAL3 (Reserve Site) are identified as having '3b – lower quality' classification (and thus both having a ++ rating under the site Suitability assessment), the same negative assessment is not noted in respect of WAL2 (Preferred Allocation). Again, this points towards yet another discrepancy that results in a clear lack of justification in respect of the Council identifying a suitable allocation for Waltham on the Wolds.

In respect of WAL2 (Preferred Allocation) the Sustainability Appraisal Summary notes a 'significant negative effect' in terms of landscape impact. The summary notes:

'The site is located towards the southern western edge of Waltham on the Wolds and has been identified as being mostly within the LCZ5: Waltham on the Wolds South (a small portion of the site to the north is located within LCZ4: Waltham on the Wolds Southeast) in the Areas of Separation, Settlement Fringe Sensitivity and Local Green Space Study169 commissioned by the Council. The area in which most of the site falls within has medium to high sensitivity to residential development due to the largely intact landscape character, the presence of rare historic landscape elements and the relative intricacy of landscape scale and pattern. As such a significant negative effect is recorded for this SA objective.'

Notwithstanding these comments, WAL2 (Preferred Allocation) receives a Positive (+) rating in the site Suitability assessment, just one point less than the Strongly Positive (++) rating given to WAL3 (Reserve Site). Again, it is considered that this approach lacks clarity and has therefore not been properly justified.

Overall, it is considered that there are a number of serious discrepancies in relation to the site assessment process that result in a total lack of justification in terms of the Council's identification of a suitable allocation for the village. It is considered that WAL3 (Reserve Site) is scores higher in terms of suitability and deliverability than the preferred allocation of WAL2.

As set out in earlier representations prepared by Marrons Planning made in respect of WAL3 (Reserved Site) land east of Melton is surrounded by existing development to the north and south, as well as committed development to the west; this has the effect of reducing its sensitivity as a greenfield site. The site is also able to deliver significant benefit to the village in terms of creating new pedestrian/cycle connections between High Street to the north and Fairfield Industrial Estate to the south. As noted above, other benefits include the provision of public open space in the north western corner of the site; a designated Multi Use Games Area (MUGA); a designated area for children's play space; additional allotment land with the intention of linking up with the existing allotments north east of the site; a Village Green area at the centre of the site; and a community orchard to the east of the site. It should also be noted that there is agreement between Barwood Homes and the adjoining landowner of committed development 15/01011/OUT to the west that a vehicular link between the two sites can be created; this will have the effect of providing access from WAL3 (Reserved Site) onto Melton Road to the west.

To summarise, it is considered that WAL3 (Reserve Site) should be reclassified as a Preferred Allocation either as well as (please note comments made in Marrons Planning's Pre-Submission representations in respect of WAL3) or in place of WAL2.

Please set out what change(s) you consider necessary to make the focused change legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified at 5 above where this relates to soundness. (NB Please note that any non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why this change will make the suggested focused change legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible. *(Please continue onto a separate sheet if you require more space)*

There are a number of significant discrepancies in the site assessment process that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the plan is found to be justified. It is considered that in addressing these discrepancies, the Council will consider reclassifying WAL3 (Reserve Site) as a Preferred Allocation either as well as (please note comments made in Marrons Planning's Pre-Submission representations in respect of WAL3) or in place of WAL2. At present, there is NO adequate justification to support the Council's identification of WA2 as Preferred Allocation over WAL3.

Can your representation seeking a change be considered by written representations or do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination? *(Please tick the appropriate box)*

Written Representations		Participate at the Oral Examination	✓

If you wish to speak at the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

There are a number of complex issues that will need to be pointed out to the Inspector, many of which will be informed by previous representations made in support of the site and the technical work accompanying the submitted planning application. Marrons Planning will be well placed to comment on these issues and will be able to assist the hearing sessions in relation to this Service Centre.

Please note: *The Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the oral part of the examination.*

To help us collate the responses to this consultation, we would be grateful if you could tell us which category best describes who you are representing *(Please tick the appropriate box)*

Melton Borough Resident		Planning Agent/Planning Consultant	✓
Developer		Utility/Service Provider	
Government Organisation		Amenity Group	
Other Organisation		Residents Group	
Business		Town/Parish Council	
Other *(Please state)*			

Do you want to have further involvement in the Melton Local Plan? *(Please tick the appropriate boxes)*

If you wish to be notified at the address/e-mail provided in Part A when the Melton Local Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government	✓
If you wish to be notified at the address/e-mail provided in Part A when the Inspector's Report is available to view	✓
If you wish to be notified at the address/e-mail provided in Part A when the Melton Local Plan is adopted	✓
If you/your organisation wish to be included in future consultations on the Melton Local Plan	✓

If you/your organisation **do not** wish to be included in future consultations on the Melton Local Plan ☐

Thank you for taking the time to submit representations on the Melton Local Plan: Addendum of Focused Changes 2017. It should be noted that representations cannot be treated as confidential.

Would you like to be kept informed of other council services? We will not share this data with another provider *(Please tick the appropriate boxes)*

All council services	☐	Community	☐	Tourism & events	☐	Town Centre	☐
Benefits	☐	Local Plan	☐	Online services	☐	Waste and recycling	☐

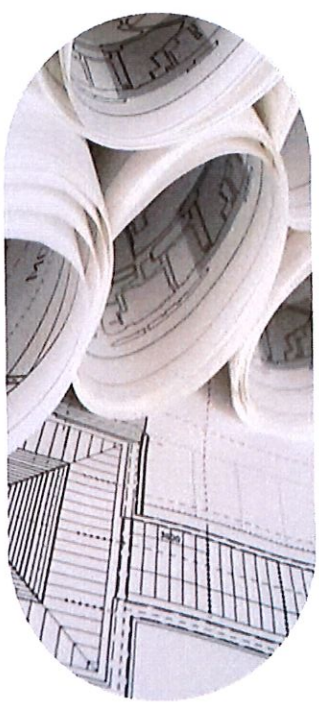
APPENDIX 1

REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE MELTON LOCAL PLAN (PRE SUBMISSION DRAFT) NOVEMBER 2015 ON BEHALF OF BARWOOD HOMES

Marrons Planning

REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE MELTON LOCAL PLAN (PRE SUBMISSION DRAFT) NOVEMBER 2016

On Behalf of Barwood Homes



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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Land to the East of Melton Road, Waltham on the Wolds – Site Location Plan

Appendix 2 – Land to the East of Melton Road – Illustrative Masterplan

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 These representations are made on behalf of Barwood Homes in respect of the Melton Local Plan Pre Submission Draft November 2016 consultation, and specifically in relation to their interest in the reserve housing allocation at Land East of Melton Road, Waltham on the Wolds (MBC/192/15).

1.2 In summary, these representations seek to wholly support and endorse the classification of Waltham on the Wolds as a Service Centre, but they also seek to increase the percentage level of growth intended for the Service Centres/Rural Hubs, re-classify the largest four Service Centres to recognise their importance in the Borough, re-evaluate the distribution of development between centres, and promote Land East of Melton Road, Waltham on the Wolds (MBC/192/15) as a preferred housing allocation rather than a reserve allocation.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 For a plan to be adopted it must pass an examination and be found to be 'sound'.

2.2 Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) refers to the presumption in favour of sustainable development and makes specific reference to plan making stating that:

- Local Planning Authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;

  Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:

  – any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or

  – specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

2.3 Paragraphs 154 and 157 of the NPPF identify (amongst other criteria) that Local Plans should be aspirational but realistic and should plan positively for development to meet the objectives, principles and policies of the NPPF.

2.4 Paragraph 182 of the NPPF also sets out that the plans will need to be prepared in accordance with the duty to cooperate, legal and procedural requirements and that they must be 'sound'. There are four tests of 'soundness', which are that each plan must be:

- *Positively prepared* – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;

- *Justified* – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- *Effective* – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities;
- *Consistent with national policy* – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework (NPPF).

3. REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE MELTON LOCAL PLAN PRE SUBMISSION DRAFT NOVEMBER 2016 CONSULTATION

3.1 This section of the representations contains our detailed response, prepared on behalf of Barwood Homes, in relation to the Melton Local Plan Pre Submission Draft Plan November 2016 (PSD).

General Level of Growth and Policy SS2

3.2 The overall level of housing and employment growth to be planned for within Melton Borough to 2036 is under review as part of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment for Leicester and Leicestershire. Until the results of this exercise are published, and the Councils (particularly Leicester City) have demonstrated and agreed to accommodate their needs within their administrative area, it is not possible to comment on whether the 6,125 homes proposed for the plan period is robust.

3.3 Notwithstanding this, Policy SS2 identifies that provision will be made for at least 6,125 homes between 2011 and 2036, and also references that at least 3,980 of these homes are to be built in the Melton Mowbray Main Urban Area (MMUA). However, this flexible approach is not reflected throughout the policy with reference to a proposed rigid percentage of growth to be allocated to MMUA (65%) and the Service Centres and Rural Hubs (SCRHs) (35%) and the reference to "remaining need (1,822) on a proportionate basis" in relation to the specific allocation for SCRHs.

3.4 With reference to paragraph 182 of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) should be demonstrating synergy between each aspect of the policy approach and, above all, consistency with the overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development identified in Policy SS1 and the NPPF. To propose such a rigid percentage breakdown and remaining need figure of 1,822 for the SCRHs is contradictory to the

flexibility provided in the phrase "at least" when referring to the overall provision of homes and the number that will be directed to the MMUA. This is not in accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF and such inflexibility in their approach to development in the SCRHs does not provide the "sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change".

Rather, the LPA should provide more flexibility for development to be delivered across the Borough if required. It is not disputed that most development should be directed to the MMUA using phraseology such as "at least" but this approach also needs to be reflected throughout the policy. "At least" should also be noted for the housing target for the SCRHs and the references to percentage growth should equally reflect this approach by stating "circa 65% and 35%" rather than a definitive split.

3.5 Notwithstanding the above, it is submitted that the SCRHs should be allocated more growth in any event. The NPPF states, that "*to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*" (paragraph 55). The Planning Practice Guidance provides further guidance on this issue, stating:

"A thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. Rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities" (Rural Housing: Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 50-001-20140306)

Rural housing is therefore best directed to settlements where it can help sustain and enhance facilities and services. That is not to say that development in the lower order settlements should be completely restricted (also in line with national guidance), but the Council should consider redirecting rural growth to the more sustainable rural settlements, where it can be demonstrated that growth can be sustainably accommodated.

3.6 Moreover, there are various references in section 2.3 of the PSD to the importance of supporting business development in rural areas. Specifically paragraphs 2.3.1 and 2.3.3 highlight the importance of business start ups in rural parts of the Borough where there is a growing trend for home working. It is also importantly acknowledged in paragraph 4.2.3 that a positive approach will be taken to the rural economy and states that,

"Plan policies should support the long term sustainability of the Boroughs villages, building on and furthering the attractiveness of the Borough for homeworking and small business start-ups…"

Providing a higher proportion of homes in the SCRHs will provide the support needed to allow this sector to further expand and secure the long term sustainability of these businesses.

3.7 In addition, with specific reference to Waltham on the Wolds, it is noted that there are a number of businesses located in Waltham on the Wolds such as the local shops and services noted in the Review of the Settlement Roles and Responsibilities Report May 2016 (SRRR). However, there are a number of businesses that have not be acknowledged in the review such as the variety of Bed and Breakfasts, Chocolate Flip Flop Shop, Concept Controls IT Assistance, a car dealership/garage, the Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition, and various builders/joiners/plumbers etc.

3.8 Put simply, the SCRHs, and especially Waltham on the Wolds (which clearly has not been given the correct sustainability rating to date), should be allocated a larger proportion of dwellings in order to support business development in the rural areas. This would wholly accord with the strategic housing objective of the PSD in developing a housing stock to provide for the future aspirations for the local economy.

3.9 Paragraph 2.3.5 of the PSD identifies that aside from Melton Mowbray, Waltham on the Wolds is one of the most sustainable SCRHs and acts as a local service centre alongside other villages such as Asfordby,

Bottesford, and Long Clawson. In addition, Map 1 of the Settlement Roles and Relationship Study 2015 shows how the settlement roles are spread across the Borough. The Study concludes that generally settlements to the north of the Borough perform better than those to the south in terms of sustainability. Map 3 of the Study shows the average service score for each community aggregated by Parish Area. The areas on the Map shaded purple, of which Waltham and the Wolds is included, show locations where access to services and employment are highest highlighting the north and west as the better served parts of the Borough.

3.10 Waltham on the Wolds is considered to be a sustainable location for new development due to the availability of those local facilities and services which reduce the need to travel. The settlement is reasonably well served by public transport to enable journeys to higher order centres to be undertaken as an alternative to the motor car. Consequently, Waltham on the Wolds therefore performs a key role in the Borough and as such it is considered that the settlement is an appropriate location to which a higher level of growth should be directed.

3.11 Therefore, it is submitted that the four largest SCRHs should be acknowledged for their high levels of sustainability and should be set above other SCRHs as higher order centres in the settlement hierarchy as previously proposed in the emerging Local Plan. They should in turn be allocated more development where it can be demonstrated that they have the capacity to do so.

The Proportionate Approach to Distribution of Housing

3.12 Parallel to the above point, it is noted that, whilst Bottesford and Asfordby have been allocated higher levels of development than other villages (23% and 16% respectively), this is not reflected in the approach to Waltham on the Wolds and Long Clawson. We acknowledge that this is because the approach to development has been based on settlement size and population numbers rather than on sustainability credentials and land availability. It is submitted that the current approach is flawed as

does not allow for higher levels of development in the most appropriate and sustainable locations.

3.13 Rather, the distribution of housing should be allocated based on levels of sustainability and the capacity of SCRHs to accommodate further development. A key soundness test of Local Plans is that they must be justified (NPPF, paragraph 182), meaning they must be based upon **appropriate** and **proportionate** evidence.

3.14 In this respect, a review of the SRRR identifies that some villages are substantially less sustainable than others, yet they have been allocated relatively high numbers of dwellings due to higher population levels. This is especially evident in SCRHs such as Wymondham, Croxton Kerrial and Asfordby Hill which are to receive 6.1%, 5.1% and 5.7% of proposed development respectively but only fulfil 6, 7 and 8 of the 43 categories of the SRRR respectively when assessing the sustainability of each village. In comparison, Waltham on the Wolds, for instance, is to receive only 8% of the proposed development but fulfils 15 of the 43 categories in the SRRR (when recalculated to take account of the correct village services and facilities).

3.15 In relation to capacity to accommodate further development, it is noted that the tables at Policy C1 (A) of the PSD identify a capacity of 405 dwellings in Bottesford but it is proposed to allocate 427 dwellings at this location. Again, in the case of Wymondham there is capacity for 63 dwellings but it is proposed to allocate 68 dwellings to this village. Whilst settlements such Waltham on the Wolds have a capacity to accommodate 132 dwellings but it is proposed to allocate a mere 91 dwellings to this centre.

3.16 Put simply, this approach to the distribution of housing is clearly flawed and could lead to the plan being found unsound. Local Plans also need to be effective in order to meet the soundness tests at paragraph 182 of the NPPF. This means that Plans should be **deliverable** over the plan period, and in accordance with NPPF paragraph 47, need to identify a supply of deliverable and developable sites for housing. Overestimating

housing number and deliverable or developable sites means the Local Plan is in danger of being considered unsound. Fundamentally, this approach will lead to issues when dwellings are delivered as villages could become akin to housing estates with unsustainable patterns of travel to other villages for services and facilities rather than being self sufficient villages in their own right. In addition, allocating more development to villages with less land capacity could lead to a shortfall in development, especially if developers seek to provide low density schemes on those allocated sites to assimilate with the character of surroundings.

The Preferred/Reserve Sites for Allocation

3.17 In respect of the proposed site allocations, in line with the above comments, we submit that more development should be allocated to Waltham on the Wolds. In addition, reserve site allocation plan reference WAL3 should not be classified as such but should be a preferred site for development alongside the two already identified preferred allocations. This flexible approach would be more consistent with the overarching aims of national planning policy and the comments made in respect of the various SCRHs as identified above.

3.18 However, should the council disagree with this approach, WAL3 has a number of factors in support of its allocation as a preferred site for development over and above the currently proposed WAL2.

3.19 WAL3 is being promoted by Barwood Homes who has a strong track record for delivering residential development in the East Midlands region; and the site should thus be considered deliverable in the context of footnote 11 to paragraph 49 of the NPPF. A planning application for the development of WAL3 is in preparation and a pre-application enquiry is being considered by Melton Borough Council's Development Management team.

3.20 However, on the contrary, it is unclear if a developer is committed to

WAL2 which raises questions surrounding its deliverability.

In addition, the number of houses that could be achieved on WAL3 is higher than that which could be achieved on WAL2. In light of the Borough's deficit in housing land supply, development of WAL3 could meet the village's housing requirement in its entirety (and also make up for some of the shortfall from other villages) whilst also providing the opportunity to secure community benefits that other smaller developments in the village might not be able to deliver.

3.21 With specific reference to the suitability of WAL3 the following comments are made:

The Site and Surroundings

3.22 The site is located to the south east of Waltham on Wolds which is bordered by existing residential development to the east and west, and existing development to the south comprising of the Fairfield Industrial Estate and a number of farm buildings as well as abutting an area of land to the north with a resolution to grant planning permission for 26 dwellings. Consequently, whilst the site is a parcel of greenfield land, it is surrounded by existing and proposed built development which reduces its sensitivity as a greenfield site. The location is shown on the Site Location Plan at **Appendix 1** of these representations.

3.23 The site currently comprises a grass field of some 9.06 hectares with vehicular access being provided onto High Street, due south east of the site. The site is roughly rectangular in shape. A number of Public Rights of Way (PROWs) either border or run through the site.

3.24 The site is well connected to the village which in itself is wholly sustainable and has a number of local facilities including a village shop and post office; delicatessen; public house; primary school with pre-school nursery; doctor's surgery; village hall; and a church. It also has good access to public transport, given its rural location.

3.25 The site is close to the existing Waltham on the Wolds Conservation Area and a number of listed buildings. There are a limited number of trees along the boundaries to the site and a number of existing hedgerows on the site. There is also an existing pond on the north western boundary. The site is not located in an area at risk of flooding. As the name suggests (wold - a piece of high, open uncultivated land or moor) the village is location on high ground. Most of the settlement doesn't exceed 175m AOD with a high point of 177m AOD to the immediate south of our site boundary.

Proposed Development

3.26 An indicative Masterplan of the proposal is provided as part of these representations at **Appendix 2**. The proposal identifies development of the site to provide a low density scheme of circa 124 dwellings together with associated site infrastructure, open space (including a Multi Use Games Area and new play area), allotment/community orchard land, a village green and a high level of landscaping.

3.27 The development would primarily be accessed from an improved existing access onto High Street to the east. A second pedestrian/cycle and emergency vehicular access point will also be provided in order to connect with the approved development due north of the site. The existing PROW's will be retained and enhanced providing links with various points of the High Street and also the industrial estate due south of the site.

3.28 The proposed layout would incorporate areas of public open space and landscape buffers along the boundary, which will reduce any impact of the development upon the adjacent Conservation Area or nearby Listed Buildings. The proposals would also seek to retain and enhance existing landscape features such as hedgerows, ponds, and trees possibly creating a net gain in biodiversity. In addition, to assist drainage of the site, two new retention ponds are proposed which will also become an important ecological feature of the site.

3.29 Unlike WAL2, the proximity of this site to the existing urban area and the location of the retained PROW's will mean that the proposed community uses are likely to be genuinely well used by the local community for recreational purposes and navigating through the village.

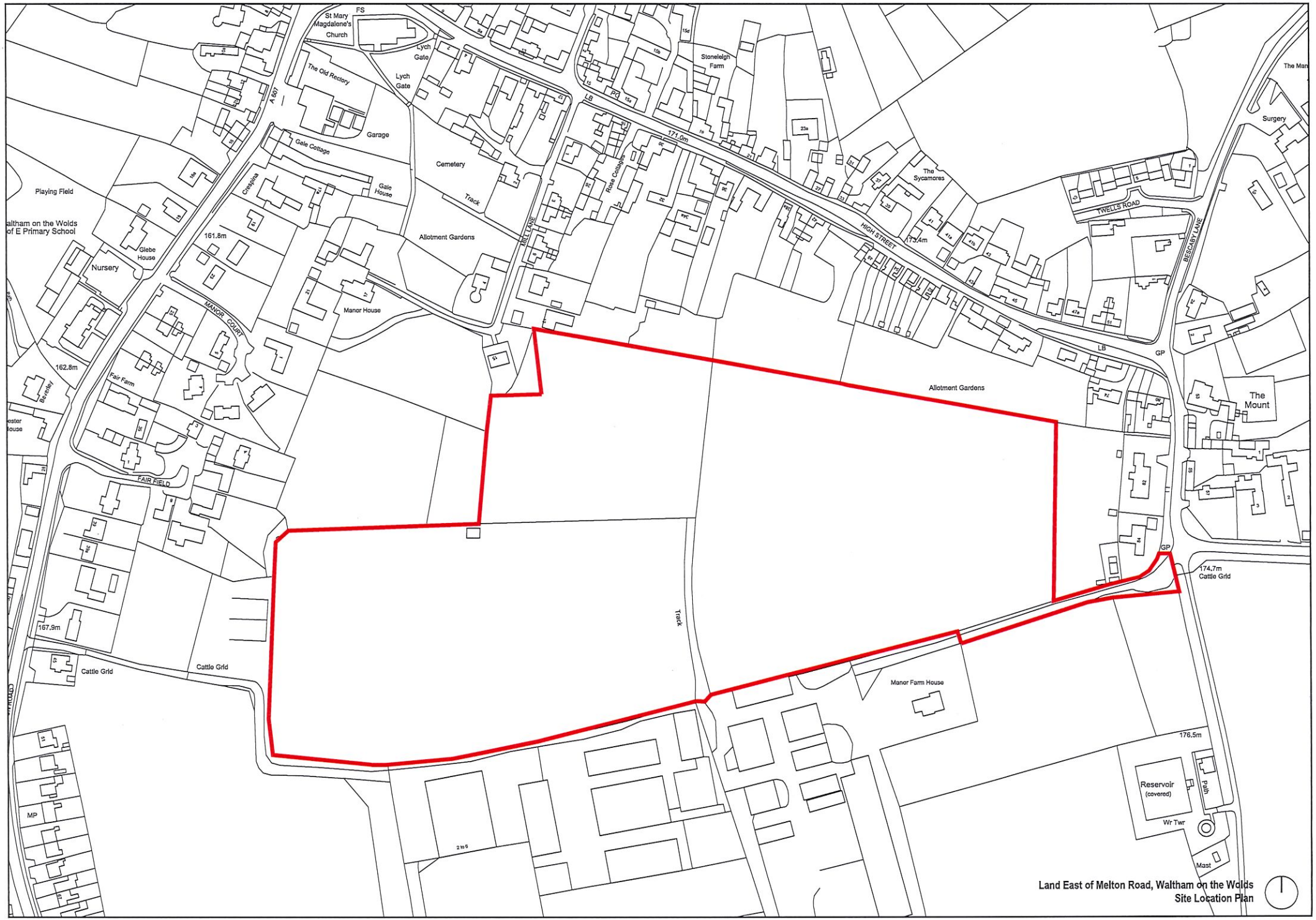
3.30 Also, unlike WAL2, given the surrounding land uses, this site will not expand the urban edge of the village into the more visually sensitive surrounding countryside. Put simply, the overall affect of the proposed development is that in visual terms, it would provide a logical addition of much needed homes in the village without great affect on the wider countryside.

3.31 The proposal would make provision for policy compliant levels of affordable housing to assist meeting the needs of local people in the area. This is especially important in the context of paragraph 2.2.4 (which identifies that delivery of affordable homes has been challenging in recent years with no affordable homes being delivered in 2013/14), strategic housing objective 1 and section 5.8 of the PSD.

3.32 In summary, it is considered that WAL3 is deliverable now, and is more sustainable and less environmentally sensitive than WAL2. Thus WAL3 should become a preferred site for development in the Melton Local Plan.

3.33 It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted within weeks for the proposed development of the site and a full suite of technical reports will be submitted as part of the application.

APPENDIX 1



Land East of Melton Road, Waltham on the Wolds
Site Location Plan

APPENDIX 2

Notes :

A1

Rev	Details	Date	Checked By
A	Layout amended and areas updated to suit	12.12.16	

PLANNING

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Client	Barwood Homes Ltd
Project	Land East of Melton Road, Waltham on the Wolds
Title	Indicative Site Plan

Scale	Date	Drawn By	Checked By	Drawing Number	Revision
1:1000@A1	Nov 16	FS	NW	3098.020	A

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