

17 January 2021

Melton Borough Council  
Parkside  
Station Approach  
Burton Street  
Melton Mowbray  
LE13 1GH

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Bottesford Neighbourhood Plan: Pre-Submission Document**

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on the Pre-Submission Draft version of the Bottesford Neighbourhood Plan. This representation is made on behalf of Rectory Land Company.

Rectory Land Company has submitted an outline planning application for residential development of up to 215 dwellings, associated infrastructure and landscaping on land at Devon Farm, Bottesford (BOT3) Reference 20/00388/OUT. Rectory Land Company is promoting the development on behalf of Messrs DR, CS & RE Taylor and Railway Paths Limited.

#### **Policy 1: Sustainable Development and the Village Envelopes**

Rectory Land Company welcomes the draughting of the Bottesford Village Envelope to include the full extent of the above outline planning application. However, on sites not allocated for development in the Local Plan, Policy 1 restricts development within Bottesford Village Envelope to 10 dwellings. This means that on land to the east of the allocated housing site (Bot3) up to the Normanton Land Industrial Estate, development is restricted to just 10 dwellings.

We are sure that is not the intention and is, in any event, contrary to the Melton Local Plan which places no restriction on the scale of development to be accommodated within or adjoining the built-up area of Bottesford.

#### **Policy 2: Protecting the Landscape Character**

We are concerned about the designation of Significant Green Gaps which along with Areas of Separation, Significant Vistas and View Points, and Local Green Space add significant additional constraints to development in the countryside. Most of the identified Significant Green Gaps are of limited landscape value and are simply part of the wider parish landscape. We are particularly concerned about the identification of land at the Railway Triangle as a Significant Green Gap (number 9).

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The Railway Triangle site is formed by the chords of the former disused Newark to Market Harborough railway line and the active Grantham to Nottingham railway line. The Significant Green Gaps Report which forms Appendix F of the draft Neighbourhood Plan identifies this area as 'one of the few wooded areas in the Parish'.

There is no public access to the Railway Triangle, and it has limited visibility within the wider landscape. Tree cover is poor. The western half of the area is rough grassland, which was developing into hawthorn scrub, plus some willow and elder. This part of the site is identified as a Local Wildlife Site. The eastern half of the area is permanent grass; a closely grazed, species poor field (sheep).

The Railway Triangle site's biodiversity value is already protected by National Planning Policy Framework and the Melton Local Plan, so there is no added value in Significant Green Gap protection.

### **Policies 8 and 9**

Please note that qualifying bodies should not set in their emerging neighbourhood plans any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings (Statement made by Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government 2015).

Consultation on the uplift to standards of Part L of the Building Regulations and changes to Part F was undertaken by the Government in 2019. This uplift is the first step in achieving the Future Homes Standards. Chapter 2 considers the issues of certainty and consistency in setting energy efficiency standards. The consultation document accepts that contradictions between the Written Ministerial Statement of 2015 and The Planning and Energy Act 2008 may have led to confusion and uncertainty for both local planning authorities and home builders in setting local energy efficiency standards. However, for neighbourhood plans the situation is clearer because neither the Written Ministerial Statement or The Planning and Energy Act allow Qualifying Bodies to set additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings.

### **Policy 11: Self Build and Custom Build Housing**

Responsibility for keeping a self-build and custom housebuilding register falls to Melton Borough Council. The Register identifies individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the area for their own self-build and custom housebuilding.

There are just 39 people on the Melton Register and there is little or no evidence of need for self-build and custom housebuilding in Bottesford village. Indeed, the greatest preference is for sites within the smaller villages of the Vale of Belvoir. It seems unlikely that needs will be met by the provision of plots within large new housing developments in Bottesford.

The [Revised Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study 2017](#) that was published to accompany the Melton Local Plan, advises caution with regard to the implementation of policies to support prospective self-builders and custom builders. This report was published prior to the coronavirus pandemic.

It follows that there is no justification in terms of either need or development viability, for reducing the threshold for 5% provision of Self Build and Custom Build Housing to 40dw. A more appropriate response to the self-build and custom housebuilding register would be to allocate smaller sites for this purpose in Easthorpe, Muston and/or Normanton rather than require plots to be delivered through larger housing estates.

It is not clear how the 5% self-build and custom housebuilding requirement relates to the 32% affordable housing target (policy 10). We would suggest that any self-build provision is in lieu of affordable housing.

## **Policy 17: Development of BOT 3 Rectory Farm**

The illustrative layout that has been prepared to support the outline planning application has been informed by a series of Masterplanning Workshops held with members of the Bottesford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and pre-application meetings with Melton Borough Council officers. The illustrative layout also responds to site specific constraints. The key features of the illustrative layout reflect the expectations of Policy 17:

### Transport

- Pedestrian/cycle links to Albert Street and Devon Lane
- Existing footpath across site retained providing links to the countryside to the north
- Parking for Methodist Church

### Drainage

- Avoid Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3
- SuDS built into layout

### River Devon

- Recreation corridor
- Key feature

### Heritage

- Views of St Marys Church spire throughout development
- Protection of the setting of the Church of St Mary and sequential views to and from the Church
- Devon Farm: Removal of modern agricultural buildings.

### Housing

- Policy compliant mix of house types and affordable housing. However, the need for self-build and custom housebuilding can be best met off-site

### Design

- High quality
- Reflects character of Bottesford

A planning obligation to secure affordable housing and financial contributions to improve local infrastructure is anticipated. The applicant is prepared to discuss how the need for allotments can be met.

Although the illustrative layout is broadly aligned with the requirements of Policy 17, there are some detailed aspects of the policy and supporting text that are of concern:

1. The numbering of Policy 17 is incorrect or suggests that there may be missing criteria;
2. Criteria 8b and 8e are unnecessarily detailed particularly given the requirements of criterion 8d;
3. The last two sentences of paragraph 333c are misleading as they refer to distances without noise mitigation. Further they do not take account of the more recent Noise Assessment submitted in support of planning application 20/00388/OUT. Melton Borough Council's Environmental Health Officer has stated 'I am confident that a suitable mitigation scheme can be implemented and as such Environmental Health is willing to

## **Conclusions**

Rectory Land Company recognises the role of neighbourhood plans as a tool for local people to shape the development of their local community. However, neighbourhood plans must be consistent with national planning policy and the strategic policies of the development plan for the area.

We hope you have found these representations helpful and we would be happy to provide further information if required..

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Wilkinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Colin Wilkinson  
Director