



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

ConnollyNetherBroughtonLP/2

22 August 2017

Dear Sirs

**Consultation on the Melton Borough Council Local Plan 'Focused Changes' July 2017**

**Land off Main Road, Nether Broughton, LE14 3EU**

Further to the above consultation, please find below representations on behalf of Connolly Land and Developments (North Midlands) Ltd who have legal control over the above land via an Option Agreement.

IBA Planning made representations on behalf of our client to the previous version of the emerging Local Plan (the Pre-Submission Version) in which we set out our client's **objection** to the emerging Local Plan as then currently drafted.

In particular, my client objected to the revision of the Settlement Hierarchy from five to four tiers and the (over) simplification of the criteria used to classify settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy, which resulted in the downgrading of Nether Broughton from a '*Rural Supporter*' to a '*Rural Settlement*'.

My client also objected to the restriction in the numbers of housing permitted as small-scale development in '*Rural Settlements*' under draft Policies SS2 and SS3 (up to 3no. dwellings).

My client remains of the view that the revised method for classifying the settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy over-simplifies the approach to housing provision in rural settlements in the Borough and disregards many of the sustainability credentials of rural settlements including Nether Broughton.

My client is also of the opinion that the requirement for 'Rural Hubs' to contain a Primary School is overly onerous and contrary to national planning policy<sup>1</sup>.

For these reasons, Nether Broughton should remain in the higher (fourth) tier of the Settlement Hierarchy.

The above concerns were set out in full in my client's previous representations to the Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft, a further copy of which is attached for completeness.

Notwithstanding the above, my client **welcomes** the removal of the housing limits in Service Centres, Rural Hubs and Rural Settlements in draft Policies SS2 and SS3 as set out in the Focused Change FC 1.2 [Spatial Strategy].

My client **fully supports** the Council's decision to put more emphasis on the benefits that small-scale housing development can bring to meeting housing needs and enhancing the sustainability of rural settlements rather than setting housing number restrictions (e.g. up to 3no. dwellings) which may constrain the delivery of sufficient housing to meet the objectively assessed housing need.

The removal of the housing number limits allows for greater flexibility as needs and circumstances change over time, and better reflects the important contribution of rural housing development to overall housing provision.

It will also help ensure that sufficient housing is provided to preserve and enhance the vitality of these rural communities in line with the aspirations of the NPPF.

Despite the support for the removal of the housing limits in Service Centres, Rural Hubs and Rural Settlements as set out in the Focused Change FC 1.2, my client has **unresolved concerns** about the **lack of a policy** within the *draft* Local Plan dealing with live-work development.

This is despite the fact that live-work units are identified as a specific form of development in the Council's own Planning Application (1app) Form and the fact that the *draft* Local Plan clearly states its intention to provide a mix of dwellings to balance the current housing offer and meet the needs of current and future households in the Borough, having regard to the latest evidence of housing need, market conditions, economic viability, and site-specific circumstances (draft Policy C2).

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<sup>1</sup> paragraph 55 of the NPPF

It is clear that there is a growing demand for home-working and the mixed use of single properties to fulfil both residential and employment functions.

The *'Tomorrow's Property TODAY - sustainable live/work development in a low carbon economy'* document published by the Live Work Network in 2008 confirmed that the 2001 census showed that more than two million people in England (9.16% of the working population) worked mainly at/from home, with this figure being higher in rural districts at 11.79%<sup>2</sup>. This was twice the number in 1991<sup>3</sup>.

Furthermore, live-work units are a form of housing clearly supported by the NPPF. Paragraph 21 of the NPPF states that in drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit. This should be reflected within the *draft* Melton Local Plan, its silence on the issue raises questions as to its consistency with national policy and means that it is unclear how live-work units will be provided for during the plan period, with no policy guiding how applications for live-work units should be determined.

As such, the Council is asked to further review its *draft* Local Plan to **include support for (and include a specific policy to facilitate the provision of) live-work units** as part of its overall housing supply and in line with its stated commitment to provide a mix of dwellings to meet the needs of all current and future households in the Borough.

In the above connection, my client would like to highlight the particular suitability of Nether Broughton for live-work units. The village benefits from one of the fastest broadband speeds in the country, with trials of new technology with BT Open Reach having already started which will increase speeds even further over time.

Furthermore, having regard to site-specific circumstances as advocated by *draft* Policy C2, my client's site off Main Road, Nether Broughton is itself a **highly suitable site for live-work units** and/or other small-scale development being directly connected to the village centre via the public footpath which runs across the site and having been identified both as good employment land and suitable for housing (see the Employment Land Study (2010) and the Melton Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2015)<sup>4</sup>).

As such, the development of the site for a live-work development would combine the employment and residential uses considered suitable on the site to help increase the provision of a type of residential development clearly in growing demand and for which there is currently no provision in the existing or emerging Local Plan, whilst offering greater protection to the amenity of surrounding residents than a solely employment development.

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<sup>2</sup> page 61 of the *'Tomorrow's Property TODAY - sustainable live/work development in a low carbon economy'* document

<sup>3</sup> page 2 of the *'Tomorrow's Property TODAY - sustainable live/work development in a low carbon economy'* document

<sup>4</sup> SHLAA Site IDs: MBC/042/13 and MBC/042/15

I can therefore confirm that as a consequence of their unresolved objections, my client considers the *draft* Local Plan does not meet the tests of *soundness* on the basis that the Plan (as presently drafted) **cannot be regarded as being effective, justified and/or positively prepared.**

Their unresolved objection can (as previously suggested) be **remedied** by the reinstatement of Nether Broughton within the higher (fourth) tier of the Settlement Hierarchy and the further review of the *draft* Local Plan to include support for (and include a specific policy to facilitate the provision of) live-work units as part of its overall housing supply.

I trust the above is helpful in progressing the *draft* Local Plan and look forward to being notified of the Examination details and each and any subsequent consultation stage leading up to adoption.

Should you require any further information about the site in the interim, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nick Baseley  
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Director