

**Gladman Developments Ltd**  
**Matter 2 Hearing Statement**  
**Mansfield District Local Plan**  
**Examination**

**Vision, Objectives, Spatial Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy**  
**and Distribution of Development**



**April 2019**

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**Question 5: Were alternative options for the level and distribution of development during the plan's preparation and is it clear why alternatives were discounted?**

- 1.1 Whilst clear that the Council has considered how housing needs are to be met at a District level in terms of the approach to be adopted between the rural and urban area, Gladman do not believe that the Council has given the same consideration to reasonable alternative approaches for the distribution of housing at a sub-district level within the Mansfield Urban Area.
- 1.2 The proposed approach to the distribution of housing need within the Mansfield Urban Area has not been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, and alternatives to this strategy for the urban area have not been considered.
- 1.3 Examining the distribution of commitments and allocations it is evident that there is a high concentration of housing growth along the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR). Taken together, committed and allocated sites located in the eight wards<sup>1</sup> which straddle MARR amount to over 4,800 dwellings<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.4 From submitted evidence it would appear that the role of the MARR in delivering housing in the urban area has been automatically assumed by the Council with proximity to the MARR considered beneficial in its appraisal of sites. This is despite the MARR not forming part of the Plan's vision or objectives.
- 1.5 Whilst acknowledged that a primary purpose of the MARR is to encourage investment in the local area, Gladman consider that too much weight has been applied by the Council towards the MARR in determining the spatial strategy of the Mansfield Urban Area without sufficient regard being given to matters such as deliverability and sustainability.
- 1.6 Although the MARR might provide enhanced highway access to the M1 and act as a focus location for new employment investment, Gladman consider that insufficient regard has been given by the Council to the accessibility of sites to existing public transport through its allocation of sites. As a result, areas of the District which benefit from access to the railway network (at Mansfield and Mansfield Woodhouse) and are located on high quality bus routes receive notably less development than those areas in close proximity to the MARR. Gladman consider the approach taken by the Council its distribution of housing need may conflict with Core Principle 11 (see Paragraph 17), and Paragraph 30 of the NPPF which both aim to promote sustainable travel due the emphasis made by the spatial strategy to travel by car utilising the MARR.
- 1.7 As set out in our Matter 6 hearing statement, Gladman also consider that the approach taken by the Council to the distribution of housing need in Mansfield risks the deliverability of the Local Plan owing

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<sup>1</sup> Bull Farm and Pleaseley Hill, Penniment, Brick Kiln, Grange Farm, Oakham, Berry Hill, Lindhurst and Ransom Wood.

<sup>2</sup> Based on Allocations proposed through the Local Plan and Data in the 2018 Mansfield AMR (Examination Document Reference xx).

to the overconcentration of development. Gladman believe therefore that there is need for further sites to be allocated in the wider Mansfield Urban Area to promote the deliverability of the Local Plan.

**Question 7: Is the spatial distribution of housing development in Policy S2 justified? What evidence justifies the split in distribution of housing between the Mansfield Urban Area (90%) and Warsop Parish (including villages) (10%) and is the approach justified?**

- 2.1 Gladman broadly support the proposal by the Council to deliver the majority of future growth needs in the Mansfield Urban Area. The Mansfield Urban Area is the most sustainable area within the District, being home to the widest range of services, facilities, shops and sources of employment. The Mansfield Urban Area therefore represents a suitable location at which to deliver new development over the plan period.
- 2.2 This is not to say however that development within the wider District, particularly at Warsop, would be unsustainable or inappropriate. Indeed, further development in this part of the District is necessary to support the continued vitality and vibrancy of rural services and respond to local housing need as required of planning policy by Paragraph 55 of the 2012 NPPF and as elaborated on in PPG<sup>3</sup>. The facilitation of an appropriate scale of development in the rural area is therefore required in the Local Plan in order to ensure that it is consistent with the NPPF.
- 2.3 In general terms, there is an absence of evidence available to support the proposed percentage split between the urban and rural area. A spatial portrait of the District and its sub-areas is notably missing from the Local Plan. Its absence means that it is harder to understand how the strategic approach to development outlined has been arrived at.
- 2.4 What evidence does exist would suggest that there may be a higher level of housing need in the Rural Area than is currently provided for through Policy S2. For example:
- The Mansfield Housing Technical Paper 2018 outlines that at the 2011 Census, the population of Warsop Parish amounted to 11.5% of the population of the District. If population was deemed the driving factor behind the distribution made through the Local Plan, the number of dwellings required in Warsop Parish would increase to 748 dwellings based on the proposed housing requirement<sup>4</sup>;
  - The 2015 SHMA splits the affordable housing need identified for the District to the rural and urban area<sup>5</sup>. This split results in the need to accommodate an average of 10 affordable dwellings per year in the Rural Area and 55 affordable dwellings in the Urban Area. This represents a ratio of roughly 85:15 urban to rural for identified affordable housing need;

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<sup>3</sup> See Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 50-001-20160519

<sup>4</sup> Existing commitments/completions in the Rural Area amount to 201 dwellings, with 447 dwellings planned for through the Local Plan.

<sup>5</sup> See Table 62 2015 SHMA

- At 10 dwellings per year, affordable housing need in the Rural Area amounts to over 30% of the development currently planned for/committed in this area. Policy H4 of the Local Plan however only seeks 5-10% of future development in the rural area to be affordable housing depending on the type of development proposed; and
  - The SHMA concludes that the general housing needs of the rural area (based on the assessed OAN) is 36 dwellings per year<sup>6</sup>. Whilst representing 9% of the OAN, over the 20-year plan period this level of housing need would still nevertheless not be met by allocations and commitments provided by the Local Plan in the rural area.
- 2.5 Reflecting on the above, it is likely that the housing needs of the rural part of the District may not be met if Policy S2 (and other policies of the Local Plan) is applied in a rigid manner. A more flexible approach should be considered.
- 2.6 Having examined Policy S2, Gladman is concerned that percentages expressed in the policy may be treated by decision makers as a target and cap to development, which could be used, through active monitoring, as a reason to refuse an otherwise sustainable development. Such an approach would fail to respond to factors of housing need identified in above in Paragraph 3.3 of this Hearing Statement, and as such would be contrary to Paragraph 54 of the 2012 NPPF.
- 2.7 To avoid this scenario, Gladman consider that the wording of Policy S2 should be revised to relate only to housing numbers. The revised wording of the policy should reference only the need for at least 5850 dwellings in the Mansfield Urban Area and at least 650 in Warsop Parish.
- 2.8 The adoption of this approach would ensure that the housing requirement is met as a minimum, whilst safeguarding the Council's preferred spatial approach to the distribution of development in the District. The removal a percentage-based approach in Policy S2 would be to provide greater scope for flexibility in decision making. This would enable a higher level of development to come forward in each area then outlined in the Local Plan where it is needed and determined to be sustainable.
- 2.9 Gladman believe the adoption of this approach would assist in enhancing the general deliverability of the housing requirement, providing a greater degree of certainty that the housing requirement can be achieved in full (see comments made in response to Question 5 above, and our Matter 6 Statement). The application of this revised wording is therefore important for ensuring the effectiveness of the Local Plan.

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<sup>6</sup> See Paragraph 12.16 of the 2015 SHMA

**Question 17: How would small scale residential development in the countryside relate to the spatial strategy in Policy S2? Would it be consistent with the aim in Paragraph 55 of the NPPF to enhance or maintain the viability of rural communities?**

- 3.1 It is unclear how proposals for small scale residential development at smaller settlements in the authority would be treated by the Council through Policy S2 of the Local Plan. Policy S2 advises that only limited development will be permitted at the Warsop Parish Villages but does not expand beyond this. It is therefore assumed that should the site not be already committed or allocated then the development would be subject to the highly restrictive approach of Policy S5, and, depending on its nature, likely be refused.
- 3.2 Gladman do not believe that the Council's approach to the development needs of the Rural Area adequately reflects the requirements of the NPPF. For example, there is no policy enabling the development of rural exception affordable housing where it is justified, notwithstanding Paragraph 54 of the NPPF.
- 3.3 Despite evidence of need in the rural area, there is very limited scope provided for additional development in this part of the District beyond committed and allocated development. Should this development not occur there would be very limited means available for the minimum requirements of this to be addressed by means of alternative sources of supply. Gladman believe that greater flexibility is required in the rural area as set out in our response to Question 18.

**Question 18: How would development proposals that do not fall within the categories identified in Policy S5 criteria (a) – (o) be assessed?**

- 4.1 It is assumed by Gladman that proposals which are found to be inconsistent with the type, form or location of development listed through criteria a-o of Policy S5 would be considered by the Council to be contrary to the development plan and thus refused unless material planning considerations would indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 As set out in our response to Question 17, Gladman consider that the approach taken by the Council is far too restrictive leading to conflict with the NPPF and may result in deliverability problems. Gladman therefore suggest that Policy S5 is reworded to provide for a more flexible approach. Gladman suggest the adoption of the wording set out below which broadly reflects that of Policy HOU5 of the Ashford Local Plan which was recently found sound at the examination<sup>7</sup>:

*"Proposals for residential development adjoining or close to the existing built up confines of any named settlement will acceptable.. provided that each of the following criteria is met:*

- a) The scale of development proposed is proportionate in size of the settlement and level, type and quality of day to day service provision currently available, and commensurate with the ability of those services*

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<sup>7</sup> See Ashford Local Plan Inspectors Report 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 Paragraph 184 - 190

*to absorb the level of development in combination with any planned allocations in the Local Plan and committed development in liaison with service providers;*

- b) The Site is within easy walking distance of basic day to day services in the nearest settlement and/or has access to sustainable methods of transport to access a range of services;*
- c) The development is able to be safely accessed from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area;*
- d) The development is located where it is possible to maximise the use of public transport, cycling and walking to access services;*
- e) Conserves and enhances the natural environment and preserves or enhances any heritage assets in the locality; and*
- f) The development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high-quality design and meets the following requirements;*
  - i) It sits sympathetically within the wider landscape;*
  - ii) It preserves or enhances the setting of the nearest settlement;*
  - iii) It includes an appropriately sized and designed landscape buffer to the open countryside;*
  - iv) It is consistent with local character and built form, including scale, bulk and the materials used;*
  - v) It does not adversely impact on neighbouring uses or a good standard of amenity for nearby residents;*
  - vi) It would conserve biodiversity interests on the site and/or adjoining area and not adversely affect the integrity of international and nationally protected sites in line with Policy."*

4.3 Adoption of the policy wording outlined above would provide greater scope for windfall development in rural areas of the District. This is needed to support the vitality and vibrancy of rural areas and is also necessary to enable the delivery of rural housing needs which will not be met by allocations and commitments.

4.4 The Policy includes safeguards within it which help prevent unsustainable patterns of development, and when applied alongside other policies of the Local Plan (for example Policy S2) would ensure that the integrity of the spatial strategy is protected. Gladman therefore consider the policy to fully reflective of the NPPF.

**Question 20: Overall, will the strategic priorities and objective deliver the plan's vision and is the spatial strategy and distribution of development soundly based? Are any main modifications necessary for soundness?**

5.1 Gladman believe that there are three key problems with the Local Plan as submitted:

- The Plan does not seek to meet its objectively assessed housing need in full, adopting a housing requirement which is inexplicably lower than the assessed level of housing need. The Local Plan does not provide for a significant boost in the housing land supply as required by national planning policy, and as such is not positively prepared;
- The rigid application of Policy S2 together with limited scope for development in the countryside provided through Policy S5 means that the Local Plan is unlikely to provide the amount of development which is needed in the rural part of the District. This means that the plan does not adequately support rural vitality and vibrancy of the Rural Area as required by national planning policy;
- The spatial approach to concentrate development along the route of the MARR does not provide for a sustainable pattern of development and risks the general deliverability of the Local Plan. The Council has not considered reasonable alternatives to this strategy.

5.2 To address these Matters, Gladman consider that the following actions are necessary:

- An updated SHMA to provide a more recent account of what the objectively assessed housing needs of the Local Plan are based on up-to-date household and economic projections, as well as taking into account market indicators and affordable housing need. Based on existing evidence, Gladman consider that a higher housing requirement should be adopted than currently proposed;
- Revise Policy S2 and S5 to make them more flexible to permit additional proportionate development where it is sustainable, as well as providing a proactive means of addressing any shortages in supply and delivery which might be experienced over the plan period; and
- The allocation of additional sites within the wider urban area to take the emphasis away from the MARR corridor in meeting a large proportion of the housing requirement. This will ensure that development is provided in all parts of the District with access to public transport and enhance the deliverability of the housing requirement.