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Planning Policy
Melton Borough Council
Station Approach
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Our ref: 3.944079.1.AG
Your ref:

25 August 2017

By email

Dear Sir/Madam

Clawson, Hose & Harby Neighbourhood Plan – Submission Version Representations in respect of land at Back Lane, Long Clawson

I write on behalf of the landowners at Back Lane, Long Clawson. This letter should be read in conjunction with representations made to the Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan, submitted to Clawson, Hose and Harby Parish Council on 8 May 2017 (enclosed with this letter for completeness).

These representations set out detailed and strong objections to the identification of my clients' site at Back Lane Long Clawson as a proposed Local Green Space (Neighbourhood Plan reference T127), on the basis that it did not meet the 'demonstrably special' test at paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is noted that the Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan continues to identify the site as a Local Green Space, and that the justification at Appendix 1 has not been amended or updated to respond to the representations previously made on behalf of my clients. Our clients therefore wish to maintain their objection to the Local Green Space designation of T127, on the basis that it does not meet the basic condition of having regard to national policies and advice.

It continues to be our clients' position that the site is not demonstrably special in historic terms. We have enclosed the Desk Based Assessment and further letter prepared by CGMS in support of the current planning application at the site, which clearly sets out our position in these terms. Furthermore, a site visit meeting with Historic England and representative of CGMS took place in June 2017. Whilst there were differing views about the proposals, it was agreed that they represented "less than substantial harm" to the surrounding heritage assets. In such circumstances, paragraph 134 directs that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is within this context that the pending planning application should be determined.

Further to the above, it continues to be the Steering Group's case that the site is special "due to its historic and visual significance in the village providing the last remaining separation between the historic settlements of Clawson and Claxton" (NP, page 31). It should be noted that this specific point did not form the basis of Historic England's objection to the current planning application, and there is no further evidence within the Neighbourhood Plan or its evidence base to substantiate this. In visual terms, the recent Melton Borough Council *Service Centres: Update to site assessments including information on availability of land, suitability of site, viability and deliverability*

timescales (Part 2 of 3 – 30 May 2017) concludes that “there will be little visual impact as a result of development” (p.264) and the site is “well related to the existing built-up form of the village” and is “contained by the village hall to the south” (p.269).

It should also be noted that the application has been amended since the previous representations were submitted. The proposals are now for up to 19 dwellings and incorporate 0.25ha of open space in the south of the site, to be retained as grassland and managed via an appropriate management regime. The county ecologist is satisfied with the proposals and has recommended that a condition for a Biodiversity Construction and Management Plan is attached to any planning permission. The application proposals will therefore ensure the protection of an area of grassland on the site which currently has no statutory protection and which would not be protected via a Local Greenspace Designation.

In addition to the above, it is my clients’ position that the central location of their site would contribute to the NP objective of avoiding “characterless estates on the fringes of village more typical of suburban developments” (NP, p.39). Furthermore, its location in close proximity to existing facilities and services (particularly the school and those amenities on The Sands) means that future residents would be more likely to walk to and sustain local facilities than those proposed housing allocations on the fringes of the village (the issue of car dependency and the potential for this to have a negative impact on local amenities is commented upon at p.71 of the NP).

In summary, it is our view that the Neighbourhood Plan would not meet all of the basic conditions in its current form and that the Local Green Space designation should be deleted before the Plan can proceed to referendum. It is also considered that the site should be a proposed housing allocation as it offers a sustainable option for future housing growth in the village, thereby contributing to the basic condition of contributing to sustainable development.

On a more general point, it is noted that the NP seeks to utilise the HEDNA evidence to underpin the Plan. However, a further piece of evidence for the Melton Local Plan was prepared by GL Hearn in January 2017 entitled *Towards a Housing Requirement for Melton Borough*. The report considers additional economic factors at play within the borough, as well as local social factors, and concludes that “*The evidence thus provides a clear justification for planning for between 5,750 – 7,000 dwellings over the 2011-36 period (230-280 dpa)*”. It is therefore considered that the full and objectively assessed figure of 245 dwellings per annum that is proposed to be adopted by Melton Borough Council is the most accurate and robust reflection of housing need within Melton Borough and should be incorporated into the CHH NP.

Yours faithfully

Marrons Planning

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