

Frisby on the Wreake Neighbourhood Development Plan

Public Hearing Statements on behalf of the Hayward family, owners of Mill Lane Fields

I am submitting this statement in response to the Local Examiners request for a public hearing and it briefly summarises the objections raised in my response to the Regulations 14 and 16 consultations. I believe this plan has been developed by a small number of individuals who have secured a place on the PC/NPAG to deliberately use the NP to block potential future development and ensure that no development occurs in their 'backyard'. I have submitted a response to Q10 and Q11 as I believe the two issues are intrinsically linked through the flawed scoring methodology used to prioritise sites as LGS and of environmental significance.

Question 10

Would the Qualifying Body please clarify the sites that are identified in Policy ENV2 will also be covered by Policy ENV4 and is the level of protection offered by Policy ENV2 consistent with Paragraph 113 and 118 of the NPPF?

Response

Whilst I do not object to sites of environmental significance and biodiversity being protected, a systematic and objective review by an independent party of the sites identified in ENV2 needs to take place before a blanket application of policy ENV2/ENV4 is implemented. The sites identified in ENV2 have limited supporting evidence to unquestioningly claim they are of natural and historical significance, but rather local bias appears to be instrumental in which areas are selected for inclusion or not. It is surely not a coincidence that the majority of sites identified as important under ENV2 are sites which have been identified in the SHLAA as potential development sites. Indeed, large areas of Cook's land and again Mill Lane Fields and Dawson's Field have been targeted in their entirety rather than as significant localised areas or 'hotspots'. Many of these areas of land are privately owned and are not visible from local footpaths so it is unclear if and how evidence has been obtained. The scoring system used to identify sites is biased and fundamentally flawed, as highlighted under question 11 in relation to LGS, and therefore to include all the sites identified into this designation without a proper review would be inappropriate.

It should also be noted that the trees identified as being potential wildlife sites between Mill Lane Fields No. 16 and 17 have since been completely removed and should therefore be withdrawn from this designation. It is interesting to note that other sites with far more important wildlife sightings, such as sites 43 and 45 where otters have been observed are not included in the ENV2 designation at all, and this in itself illustrates a huge disparity between sites.

Question 11

Is the proposed designation as LGS of land at Mill Lane Fields and also Dawson's Field justified having regard to the criteria in Paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the advice set out in the Planning Practice Guidance?

Response

The landowners of site 16 do not support this designation and were never engaged or consulted in connection with the proposed LGS designation, despite guidance issued by the County Council which appears to have been disregarded. Indeed there are other examples of this guidance being disregarded and it is unclear why the NPAG/PC have chosen to ignore it. The designation is wholly unjustified and the scoring methodology used to identify sites, and on which this designation is based, is fundamentally flawed. As set out in my Regulation 16 consultation response, the score for bounded has been applied in error and not in accordance with the guidelines. Other examples of disparity in the scoring of sites, particularly in relation to tranquillity, wildlife, and educational and recreational use have also been provided. The PC/NPAG seem determined to impart the highest of preventative measure and have attempted to use the scoring to justify this designation which has over-ridden the need to be fair, transparent and open.

Selection of this site fails the test set out in Para 77 of the NPPF for the following reasons:

This land has been identified in the 2017 SHLAA as a potential site to meet future development need and the LGS designation is not consistent with local planning for sustainable development and is an attempt to block development to meet future identified need.

The site has no special interest to the community any more than the surrounding footpath fields and attempts to provide alternative evidence such as sledging and dog walking with my late mum demonstrates the ludicrousness of the designation. The Planning Practice Guidance gives examples of appropriate green areas such as land where sports pavilions, boating lakes or structures such as war memorials are located, allotments, or urban spaces that provide a tranquil oasis. This site has none of these features, nor is it a local playing field or recreational area, it is an agricultural field identical the surrounding sites. I would like to ask why the cricket field has not been designated LGS.

The designation of site 16 is inappropriate as this large site, which covers an area almost one third of the size of the nearby community, can reasonably be classed as an extensive tract of land. FOTW NPAC have again chosen to ignore detailed guidance on LGS produced by Leicestershire County Council¹ which states that LGS “...*should be small rather than large*“. Although site 16 is in close proximity to the village it does extend some way away from the village and is not local in character. The designation of rural open space outside the village rather than the designation of local sites within the village as LGS, such as sites in blue on p.52 of the NP, seems to be contrary to the purpose of LGS designation. Again, PP Guidance states that *‘paragraph 77 of the NPPF is clear that Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green area concerned is not an extensive tract of land. Consequently blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements will not be appropriate.’* In this case LGS designation is clearly being misused in an attempt to block future development or changes of land use, rather than to ensure appropriate green space provision within the village. As another consultant giving advice on local plans has identified, LGS designation to *‘contain urban sprawl or protect open countryside would not be proper uses of the designation.’*

¹ GREEN SPACES IN LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE: LOCAL GREEN SPACES TOOLKIT AND EXISTING POLICY CONTEXT p8