



**BASSETLAW
DISTRICT LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK
CORE STRATEGY
PUBLICATION
DRAFT**

REPRESENTATION

**LAND AT HALL
FARM YARD,
EVERTON**



11326

NOVEMBER 2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1. We have previously submitted representations at the Issues and Options and Preferred Options stages of Core Strategy preparation. Having considered the Publication Draft version of the document, we remain supportive of the principle of housing distribution based on a settlement hierarchy, and also the principle of Everton being classified as a Rural Service Centre.
- 1.2. As previously stated, we consider that the level of development in each of the Rural Service Centres should depend on accessibility to public transport as well as the availability of suitable sites. In determining the capacity of each settlement to take further development, particular consideration should also be given to relative proximity to higher-order centres which provide other key services. In such respects, Everton is a highly sustainable location for development, being located on a regular main bus route between the towns of Bawtry and Retford. It is in fact less than 5km from the former settlement.
- 1.3. In view of the highly sustainable nature of some of the Rural Service Centres, including Everton, we previously contended that there is potential capacity for these villages to take a greater share of the total housing requirement than the 9% of the total which was proposed in the Core Strategy Preferred Options document. We therefore welcome the latest version of the Core Strategy and specifically Policy CS8 which allocates 10% of total development (564 dwellings) to the identified Rural Service Centres. We would however recommend that with reference to that target, the wording of the policy should be amended to refer to "at least" rather than "up to" as this will provide the only guarantee that the necessary proportion of total development requirements is met.
- 1.4. The definition of development boundaries within the Core Strategy is welcomed. However, having studied the Proposals Map, it is not considered that the current boundary for Everton adequately reflects the well established built form of the settlement. To the south of Gainsborough Road, east of the village centre, there is a concentrated group of buildings, many of which are existing dwellings. This area has a distinctly built up character which is immediately apparent when entering the village from the east. It is therefore considered that the development boundary should also include this area. In support of this point, we refer to the planning authority's assessment for the extension to Everton Conservation Area (June 2010), which references the 18th century origins of this part of the village. It is only logical that that the historically established built up area now recognised in the definition of the Conservation Area is also reflected in the defined development boundary.

- 1.5. In estimating the potential development capacity of settlements, due regard should be had for well contained sites which sit within or immediately adjacent to the development boundary. As stated in the previous representation on the Core Strategy Issues & Options and Preferred Options documents, it is considered that the subject site, which lies within the established built up area, constitutes a most suitable development opportunity. It is readily accessible from the existing highway network (specifically the A631).
- 1.6. The site has potential to be sensitively developed for a small number of houses e.g. up to five dwellings, utilising local vernacular layout and design, which would sit comfortably adjacent to existing residential barn conversions, and which would avoid any adverse impacts on the characteristics of the settlement and the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, such a development would support the objectives of PPS5, in significantly improving the setting of acknowledged heritage assets. (The adjacent converted barns are classified as curtilage-Listed Buildings given their historic relationship to the Grade II Listed Hall Farmhouse on the north side of Gainsborough Road). The proposed development would also improve the general appearance of this part of the village, which is immediately adjacent to a key approach from the east. Such matters have been discussed with the Conservation Officers, who have agreed in principle with the potential environmental enhancement offered by a sensitive well-designed development on this site.

2. Accessibility to Public Transport

- 2.1. Government guidance emphasises the importance of accessibility to public transport. No individual village can be entirely self-sustaining, as most residents will need to travel to higher order centres to access certain essential services and for employment. Following on logically from this, the justification of the towns and higher-order villages as development centres, is in part dependent on there being a high degree of public-transport connectivity, and potential for interchange between different modes of public transport.
- 2.2. Accessibility to public transport should therefore be a key factor in determining the growth potential of individual settlements. We have previously recommended that the consideration of accessibility to public transport networks should be made explicit in the phrasing of core strategy policies and supporting text relating to the overall settlement hierarchy and proposals for individual settlements. It appears that for the most part, appropriate and consistent reference to current public transport infrastructure (including both bus and rail networks as relevant) remains lacking in the Core Strategy's identification of settlements within the hierarchy.

- 2.3. Planning Policy Statement 1 "Delivering Sustainable Development" was published in 2005. This notes in paragraph 27 that in preparing Development Plans, planning authorities should take into account issues such as accessibility and sustainable transport needs when bringing forward land for development and should provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car. Planning should actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport.
- 2.4. Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 "Transport" was published in 2001 and represents current government policy on the relationship between development and transport. Paragraph 3 notes that by shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, planning can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking, and cycling. It therefore states, in paragraph 19 that, in preparing their development plans, local authorities "should give particular emphasis to accessibility in identifying the preferred areas and sites where such land uses should be located".
- 2.5. National planning policies are therefore calling upon local planning authorities to ensure that new development is accessible by public transport. This approach must therefore be carried forward into the Local Development Framework, and made explicit in related spatial policies and explanatory text. If it is not, then the justification for related policy choices is unclear and the plan is unsound.

3. Settlement Hierarchy & Distribution of Development

- 3.1. It is considered that the proposed settlement hierarchy, as set out in policy CS1 is logically structured, and generally fit for the intended purposes of the Spatial Strategy. The general principles of the strategy appropriately take into account the geographic and socio-economic characteristics of Bassetlaw.
- 3.2. We specifically support Policy CS8 which allocates 10% of total development (564 dwellings) to the identified Rural Service Centres, including Everton. However, with reference to the target, it is considered that the wording of the policy should be amended to refer to "at least" rather than "up to" as this will provide the only guarantee that the necessary proportion of total development requirements is met.

3.3. As a Rural Service Centre, Everton is a particularly sustainable location for new development. It is a thriving historic village which includes a number of services. Currently they include a primary school, two pubs, a hairdressing salon, a picture-framing and gift shop, village hall, church and recreation ground. The proposed development would help to sustain the vitality of these local facilities and would encourage the provision of further facilities, so being of benefit to new and existing residents. In addition, the site is less than 5km east of the town of Bawtry, a thriving market town, which provides a broader range of retail and other facilities. Everton is also conveniently located on the A631, along which regular buses travel between Bawtry and Retford (approximately twice hourly), and also Worksop and Gainsborough (twice daily).

4. The Site

Physical Context

- 4.1. The site identified at Appendix A, measures approximately 0.52 ha. It constitutes a farmyard which is no longer required for agricultural purposes. The site contains two modern utilitarian agricultural storage buildings which are of poor aesthetic quality and impact adverse on the setting of nearby historic buildings and the general appearance of this part of the village.
- 4.2. The site benefits from an existing vehicular access, currently serving its unregulated use for the storage and distribution of agricultural materials and machinery. The established use has the potential to generate significantly more vehicular traffic of an obstructive nature than the proposed development. It should be noted that there is also potential to serve the site by an additional means of access within the control of the site owners - that being the driveway from Gainsborough Road further to the west, which currently serves the existing adjacent residential barn conversions.
- 4.3. The site stands immediately next to a number of existing residential properties comprising Hall Farm Cottage, the Stables, and dwellings within the barn conversion referred to above. The planning authority has to date considered the adjacent former agricultural barn and stables buildings as curtilage-listed buildings by virtue of their historic association with the Grade II Listed Hall Farmhouse on the north side of Gainsborough Road. A sensitively designed redevelopment of the site would therefore significantly enhance the setting of those heritage assets.
- 4.4. The development would also significantly improve the general appearance of this part of the village, which is immediately adjacent to a key approach from the east.

- 4.5. The southern and western boundaries of the site, and the rear portion of the eastern boundary, are well defined by existing gappy hedging, which would be supplemented or replaced as part of any redevelopment.

Development Potential

- 4.6. It is envisaged that the site could be viably developed for five larger dwellings, utilising built forms reminiscent of traditional barns, a farmhouse and cottage, which would help to meet the diversity of housing demand in rural parts of Bassetlaw. Such a development would be relatively low density, but this would be fully compatible with the existing pattern of development in this part of Everton, and the sustainability credentials of the settlement.
- 4.7. There is sufficient space within the site to facilitate the provision of driveways and garages for each proposed dwelling.



Development Concept - Hall Farm Yard

Positive Attributes

- 4.8. The sustainability credentials of the site are enhanced by the fact that it lies within 5 minutes walk of the bus route that passes through Everton.
- 4.9. The site does not suffer from any physical constraints. It lies outside any designated flood zone and is free-draining. It lies at above 10m AOD, and rises marginally to the rear (southern) boundary. The site's established use is unlikely to have caused any land contamination.

- 4.10. Since June 2010, the site has been included within Everton Conservation Area. It is recognised that Hall Farm on the north side of Gainsborough Road, with which the farmyard was originally associated, is a Grade II listed building, and the converted barns are regarded as being curtilage-listed for their group value. While the proposed redevelopment would enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and improve the setting of the above heritage assets which fall within it, the site is not in a position where its development would have any direct effect on the visible setting of Hall Farm itself. Potential development concepts were discussed with Oliver Scott (Conservation Officer) in early 2010, who has agreed in principle that the development envisaged would improve the setting of existing historic buildings.
- 4.11. It is considered that access to the site for the modest development envisaged could be achieved without any significant impact on the highway network. Two potential means of vehicular access exist.
- 4.12. While one current function of the site is as a means of through access for agricultural vehicles to the fields beyond, it should be noted that this land may be alternatively accessed from Mill Lane to the south. The proposed development would therefore have no adverse effect on the accessibility and workability of the adjacent agricultural land.

Form of the Settlement

- 4.13. A key advantage of the subject site is that while it is not currently defined as being within the development boundary, it is contained to the north and east by existing residential development. Redevelopment of the subject site for residential use would thus be more compliant with existing adjacent uses, and would improve amenity for existing residents.
- 4.14. Due to the site's well contained nature, it can reasonably be regarded as an opportunity for rounding of the existing area of residential development. Development of the site for housing would therefore not intrude into the surrounding countryside. Rather, it would consolidate the existing form of the settlement.

5. Proposals Map

- 5.1. In recognition of the fact that the currently Local Plan has not been formally adopted and nearly two decades have elapsed since its inception, it is considered appropriate that the LDF Core Strategy and Proposals Map should seek to redefine development boundaries - not least because many existing envelopes relate very poorly to physical features on the ground.

- 5.2. However, it is considered that the proposed development boundary for Everton does not accurately distinguish between land which is of a clearly built up or associated character as opposed to that which is undeveloped and agricultural.
- 5.3. Appendix A shows a suggested revision to the settlement envelope for Everton which would include the built up area to the east of the village centre and south of Gainsborough Road. The area defined purposefully includes buildings and their associated curtilages - used as hardstandings, gardens and storage areas, which clearly differentiate from the character of the surrounding countryside. The differences in character are observable both from aerial views, and on site.
- 5.4. It is considered that the suggested envelope line relates appropriately to physical features on the ground. While it is recognised that Bassetlaw District Council may not wish to promote the concept of 'backland development', it is felt that this could be adequately controlled by Development Management policies, and the priority for the Core Strategy should be to ensure that the development boundary is in the most legible and logical position reflecting the characteristics of different land uses.
- 5.5. In June 2010, Everton Conservation Area was redefined to include the subject site and adjacent areas of development. The written justification for this refers to the 18th Century origins of this built up part of the village. The built-up character of the area is therefore historically established, and in conformity with the assessment and redefinition of the Conservation Area, logically it should also be included within the defined development boundary.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. It is considered that the proposed settlement hierarchy is logically structured. The classification of Everton as a Rural Service Centre in the Core Strategy Preferred Options is also strongly supported. However, the spatial policies and supporting text should be reworded in a way which more precisely and clearly identifies the specific criteria applicable to each echelon of the hierarchy, and particular emphasis should be given to accessibility to regular public transport and, for all tiers below Worksop and Retford, proximity to higher order centres.
- 6.2. The proposed allocation of 10% of housing growth to the Rural Service Centres is supported. The apportionment of development to individual Rural Service Centres should depend on the availability of suitable unconstrained sites (as proposed) and pay particular regard to accessibility by public transport to higher order centres.

- 6.3. The definition of development boundaries on the Proposals Map should relate clearly to observable differences in land-use character on the ground. Garden land, hardstanding and storage areas clearly derive their character from the uses of the buildings with which they are associated. This is different to cultivated agricultural land, pasture or woodland, for example. In this context, it is considered that the development boundary for Everton should be amended to reflect the boundaries of the Conservation Area as it now extends eastwards along Gainsborough Road.
- 6.4. The subject site at Hall Farm Yard, presents a viable, deliverable and highly sustainable development opportunity. It also provides a significant opportunity for enhancement of the Conservation Area, the setting of heritage assets within it, and the eastern approach to the village generally. It is therefore suggested that the subject site should be favourably considered in making an assessment of potential development capacity in Everton, particularly with regard to the need to meet the diversity of rural housing needs and to maintain the vitality and viability of community life and existing services in the village.
- 6.5. In the hope that the development opportunity presented is of interest to the Local Planning Authority, we would be keen to engage in further discussions concerning the site's development potential. It is intended that we will in due course develop the concept in more detail, and will be happy to submit representations on the Site Allocations document to this effect in due course.

APPENDIX A - SITE PLAN

