

Bassetlaw District Council

Publication Core Strategy and Development Management Policies:

The following comments on Bassetlaw District Council's Publication Core Strategy are submitted on behalf of Galliford Try Strategic Land (GTSL), which also represents the interests of Stamford Homes. Please note that they follow similar comments made at the Preferred Options stage in June 2010.

GTSL's principal interest in the Core Strategy and Development Management policies lies in the future scale, direction and nature of housing development within Bassetlaw and the comments which follow primarily relate to the options for housing development in Retford. The starting point for the allocation of housing in Bassetlaw district is the advice in *Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing* states that housing developments should be in suitable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure. *Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* states that away from larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to ensure that these facilities are served by public transport and provide improved opportunities for access by walking and cycling. These centres (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages) should be identified in the development plan as the preferred location for such development.

We therefore support the "Vision" for Bassetlaw as set out in paragraph 3.2, particularly the reference to Retford's role

"Retford will continue to provide an attractive range of homes and a good concentration of services and facilities, allowing it to maintain its role in supporting surrounding rural communities without compromising its market town character. Development in Retford will, therefore, protect the town's retail and service role, delivering growth of a scale that respects the town's heritage assets and, where appropriate, supporting the increased use of the Chesterfield Canal"

We also support the Strategic Objectives set out in paragraph 3.3

We have previously expressed our support for a Spatial Strategy based on a Settlement Hierarchy and with the identification of Retford as a Core Service Centre as this reflects the importance of the town in the settlement hierarchy in Bassetlaw (policy CS1).

POLICY CS 2: RETFORD CORE SERVICE CENTRE (paragraph 7.24): As previously stated in our response on the Preferred Options, we do not object to this policy per se, but we are concerned that the identified housing numbers will not be

achieved if there is a heavy reliance on currently approved and allocated sites and other sites within the tightly defined settlement boundary. A significant part of the housing target for Retford is to be met by existing approvals and allocations, with less than 400 houses to be provided on other sites within the settlement boundary. We consider that a greater range of sites is likely to be required to meet this target, otherwise there will be shortfall of housing sites being developed, with a consequential shortfall in affordable housing. It would assist decision-making if the approved and allocated housing sites which are intended to provide 1076 houses were to be identified on the plan of Retford so that landowners, residents and developers can understand how and where this housing figure is to be achieved. However, we maintain our objection to the exclusion of the Tilm Lane site from the Development Boundary and to the over-reliance on currently approved and allocated sites and other sites within the tightly defined settlement boundary. We have commented on the proposed settlement boundary below.

POLICY DM 4: DESIGN: We support the emphasis on good design which reflects the character of the natural and built environment and which makes clear links to the existing settlement and surrounding area.

POLICY DM5: HOUSING MIX AND DENSITY: we support the policy that development proposals will be expected to deliver housing at densities that reflect the specific characteristics of the site and its surrounding area (in terms of both built form and landscape national guidance. However, the reduced emphasis on high density housing may, however, require the identification of additional housing land if the allocated and approved sites cannot deliver the housing targets.

POLICY DM10: RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY: We welcome the acknowledgment that the reduction in carbon emissions in buildings is best achieved through the use of Building Regulations, rather than planning conditions

POLICY DM11: DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION: No objection provided the Council uses this policy and seeks contributions in a reasonable manner based on, where appropriate, a viability assessment for a specific application and that contributions are proportionate to the scale of the development and are based on a clearly identified need. We welcome the acknowledgement in this policy that the Council accepts that there may be times when development viability may prevent proposals from meeting all of their necessary Planning Obligations and that where such a case is being made, applications will need to be accompanied by a detailed viability assessment.

PUBLICATION PROPOSAL MAPS: In general terms, we understand and accept the criteria used to define settlement boundaries. However, the tightly defined boundary for Retford will, we consider, hamper the provision of housing within the identified housing targets as they will provide a presumption against the

development of additional sites which may be necessary to meet those targets. In this respect we consider that the site which we have promoted on behalf of Stamford Homes/Galliford Try, on the western side of Tiln Lane, at the northern end of Retford should be identified as a future housing site as it abuts residential development to the south, is close to the centre of Retford, and follows the pattern of development on the western side of the valley. Whilst it is currently open countryside, a well designed development on this site with substantial landscaping on the northern and western boundaries, would create a softer edge to the settlement. We object to the identification of this land as "Protected Open Space" as we believe that the lack of additional, well located and suitable sites will hamper and obstruct the delivery of the Council's spatial and housing strategy.

I would be grateful if these comments could be taken into account.

Head of Town Planning