

BASSETLAW LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Comments on Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 2 – Vision & Objectives, Spatial Strategy & Location of New Development and the Site Selection Process

Paragraph 2.4

The questions raised here regarding distribution of development and the methodology requires clarification as there appears to be little allowance or understanding of the need for growth to support new service provision whilst at the same time retaining existing service provision in our villages which in turn would be compliant with the aims and direction in paragraph 79 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 2.5

Settlement boundaries in nearly every case appear to have been drawn up somewhat arbitrary rather than with an understanding of how our villages have grown over the decades and centuries. There should be justification for these lines drawn on a plan.

Matter 3 – Employment Land

This part completely ignores (despite numerous enquiries by landowners and myself) the great potential at Markham Moor.

This location is the first meaningful opportunity for users of the A1 to leave the road and enter into Bassetlaw. There is a slip road off into Tuxford approximately 1 mile south but this leads solely to the village and is somewhat restricted.

Markham Moor, on the other hand, is a welcome location with numerous service provision, together with several high standard existing employment locations including an excellent hotel. There is sufficient land available to make the employment offer much greater. This location has excellent road network links, north and south A1, the A57 to Lincoln and the A638 to Retford.

The area is capable of accommodating various uses, some related to agriculture, tourism and of course the highway network, with the great possibility of EV charging and other non-fossil fuel energy provision.

The LPA appear to have completely overlooked this opportunity and this should not be the case.

Matter 5 – The Housing Requirement

Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3

These raise important questions particularly in terms of the baseline figure. The LPA have struggled since 2014 to show a 5 year housing land supply then suddenly in approximately 2020/2021 this supply “leaps” to over 12 years and now settles at approximately 10.5 years.

This appears to be an amazing feat.

Matter 8 – Meeting Housing Needs of different groups in the community

Paragraph 8.1

It is unclear as to how the LPA arrived at these percentages, this certainly requires clarification and should be all to do with housing needs and not what Councillors etc consider suitable.

In this industry we are all charged to provide homes for a huge swathe of the population who are considered, for various reasons, to be homeless.

Our international responsibilities also create greater demand. The provision of specifically targeted suitable sites both in major towns and larger rural settlements should be promoted.

This LPA recently granted planning permission for an 80+ housing development in Tuxford which I understand provides 100% affordable housing in one way or the other.

There should be a proactive policy to follow further this initiative which could see sites being brought forward and considered under a more favourable regime.

The onsite provision of affordable housing is always preferable to offsite contributions. However, if offsite contributions could be collected and ringfenced for new housing provision by the LPA that would, in my view, be preferable. This should be enshrined in the legislation for offsite contributions such that money can be actually used and targeted towards new housing provision by the LPA or their appointed social housing provider.

Paragraph 8.4

It is extremely difficult for members of rural communities to witness and understand how large sites for both temporary and permanent dwellings for gypsies and travellers on the edge of villages is acceptable when applications for residential development within the village is so restricted and is usually met with a negative decision and usually citing “unsustainable location” as one main reason, yet 15-20 units can and are sited adjacent to villages, all without a rural location justification.

These groups, just like first time buyers and young couples needing to rent, should all be treated in a proactive manner and initially focus on a sustainable location should be the main issue, not some glorious rural location.

Matter 13 – Transport and Connectivity

Bassetlaw is a District Council with a large rural area, it was after all made up of 2 No. Borough Councils and 2 No. large District Councils.

There is one single item that has not been addressed for decades and that is the provision of public transport. Rural bus services are not the best and do not therefore encourage sustainable travel.

There needs to be a complete rethink in terms of rural services provision and this needs to involve Notts County Council.

School bus provision is generally very good but the day to day provision is not.

Investment is needed and it is needed now with ever increasing fuel prices.

A simple look at the buses employed for the school runs shows that 90+% are old diesel engine double decker buses. These will soon become uneconomical to run, let alone the polluting aspect they bring.

The investment in newer vehicles, either electric or hydrogen powered, will involve considerable costs to either the local authority or private enterprise and of course if it falls to the private sector to find the replacements then they will need to see an increase in costs and return.

Community buses could be the answer, these have been provided in more isolated locations within the UK and they are both used and appreciated as they can be lifelines.

This LPA should start the ball rolling and commence work on policies that would encourage this facility.