

Barton Willmore, now Stantec on behalf of Howard (Retford) Limited

Examination into the Bassetlaw Local Plan

Matter 2: Vision & Objectives, Spatial Strategy & Location of New Development, and the Site Selection Process (Policies ST1 and 2)

Issue 2 - Are the provisions of the plan in relation to the Spatial Strategy and Location of New Development justified and consistent with national policy?

Q2.1. Is the proposed spatial strategy and the distribution of development (as set out in policies ST1 and ST2) supported by robust and up-to-date evidence and otherwise soundly based? In particular:

a) Does it reflect the vision and objectives of the plan?

b) To what degree is the spatial framework in Policy ST2 based on the settlement hierarchy in Policy ST1? Is the focus on strategic allocations in the larger urban settlements justified and soundly based?

c) Would the pattern of development proposed meet the needs of larger settlements in the district?

1. The Council's vision for Retford, as set out at paragraph 4.7 of the Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020-2038: Publication Version Composite (Local Plan), sees the settlement grow appropriately over the plan period with a wider range of new housing available. To deliver this vision, the Council set out a range of Strategic Objectives at paragraph 4.17, including locating new development in sustainable locations to support a sustainable pattern of growth, whilst ensuring the District's housing stock better meets local housing needs and aspirations of all residents.
2. The Council's spatial strategy for the district as set out at Policy ST1. Policy ST1 sets a minimum housing requirement for the District of 10,476 dwellings over the plan period and identifies Retford as a Main Town, which is the top tier of the settlement hierarchy. The Council will manage development and growth to ensure it is commensurate with the settlement's position in the settlement hierarchy, whilst reducing the need to travel for work, education, and leisure. Our Client is in support of this spatial strategy.
3. It is considered that Policy ST1 reflects the vision and objectives of the plan, for it seeks to direct the majority of Bassetlaw's housing need to the District's main towns including Retford.
4. However, in relation to housing delivery in Retford, it states 'approximately' 2,272 dwellings will be delivered over the plan period. Our Client is of the view that 'approximately' should be amended to 'minimum' to reflect Retford's position as a Main Town at the top of the settlement hierarchy. Unless 2,272 dwellings are delivered in Retford as a minimum, housing sites would need to be found elsewhere in the District in order for the Council to meet its minimum housing requirement of 10,476.
5. It is appropriate to direct significant housing development to Retford as it is one of the most sustainable locations in the District. Retford benefits from significant public transport infrastructure including Retford railway station with regular services to London Kings Cross, Lincoln, Hull, and Doncaster. The settlement is also ideally located in relation to the highway network, providing convenient and swift travel to locations of employment along the A1 and beyond. Retford also has significant existing social infrastructure such as schools, health facilities, and leisure centres which reduces the need to travel.
6. It is therefore considered entirely justified by Howard (Retford) Limited (the / our 'Client') to focus strategic allocation in larger urban settlements like Retford for it reduces the need to travel, there is already the physical and social infrastructure provision to accommodate development, and would result in less pressure on facilities and infrastructure elsewhere in the District in less sustainable

locations.

7. Moreover, the delivery of large-scale development through strategic allocations enables housing to come forward alongside new and improved infrastructure. This means that development proposals can contribute to meeting the wider needs of larger settlements. For example, as set out in Site Selection Background Paper Bassetlaw Local Plan (2018-2037) (2020) (document reference: SS-017), the southern area of Retford has limited open space provision. The delivery of the Ordsall South allocation provides an opportunity to meet this need as it is a large enough development where a comprehensive landscaping strategy can be incorporated.

Q2.2 What is the evidential basis for the settlement hierarchy in policy ST2? Does this accurately reflect the pattern of settlements across the district? Is this up-to-date? How does this inform the development strategy? What other factors influenced the strategy, such as physical and environmental constraints?

8. Our Client has no further comment in relation to this particular question.

Q2.3 What other spatial strategies and distributions of growth were considered during plan preparation, and why were they discounted? Where is the evidence for this? Were alternative approaches tested in the Sustainability Appraisal work?

9. The Local Plan Spatial Strategy Background Paper (updated dated August 2021) (document reference SS-004) sets out the different spatial strategies and distributions of growth considered by the Council. The paper details the process through which the spatial strategy evolved and the different stages of plan preparation culminating in the proposed approach to housing and employment growth detailed in the Submission Plan.
10. The Council considers that the Spatial Strategy set out in the Submission Local Plan, based on the sub-area distribution of growth as shown in Table 4 of document reference SS-004, to be justified as being the most appropriate strategy when considered against all reasonable alternatives.
11. Our Client supports the Council's spatial strategy, based on the sub-area distribution of growth approach, as detailed in the Submission Plan for it directs the majority of housing development to the most sustainable settlements commensurate with their place in the settlement hierarchy.

Q2.4 Do policies ST1 and ST2 allow sufficient development in large rural settlements, small rural settlements and other villages to comply with para 79 of the Framework? How were the proportions of development proposed for each settlement arrived at?

12. Our Client has no further comment in relation to this particular question.

Q2.5 Are the proposed settlement development boundaries appropriately drawn? What factors were taken into account in designating these? Is the approach taken in relation to settlement boundaries in Small Rural Settlements justified and consistent with national policy?

13. Our Client has no further comment in relation to this particular question.

Q2.6 Have the sites allocated for development in the plan been appraised and selected in comparison with possible alternatives using a robust and objective process?

14. The Site Selection Background Paper Bassetlaw Local Plan (2018-2037) (2020) (document reference: SS-017) provides a review of how the Council has selected potential development sites for inclusion in the Local Plan. It outlines the reasons why sites were taken forward for allocation

and why sites were not taken forward. The Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment findings also informed the site selection process.

15. Our Client is broadly supportive of the methodology and evidence base that sits behind the Local Plan allocations, including Ordsall South (Policy 27: Site HS13 Ordsall South).

Q2.7 Are the plans assumptions in relation to the amounts and timing of development to be delivered through neighbourhood plans and the Worksop Central Development Plan soundly based?

16. Our Client has no further comment in relation to this particular question.

Q2.8 Are policies ST1 and ST2 otherwise justified and consistent with national policy? Are there any omissions in the policies and are they sufficiently flexible?

17. National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 60 sets out that to support the Government's objective of 'significantly boosting the supply of homes' it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward for housing where it is needed. In addition, draft Local Plan Policy ST1 bullet 1b states that the Council's housing requirement is a minimum requirement.
18. In keeping with the spirit of paragraph 60 and draft Local Policy ST1, we are of the view that an allowance should be made for the residual capacity of allocations to be delivered within the plan period where there is demand. We are confident that all 1,250 residential units can be delivered at allocation Policy 27: HS13 Ordsall South within the plan period which would further enhance the housing supply available to the Council and would be consistent with the Council's spatial strategy.
19. By allowing for allocations to be delivered in their entirety within the plan period where there is demand the Council will ensure that housing development over and above its minimum identified need comes forward in line with its spatial strategy. In short, there is no need for Policy 27: HS13 Ordsall South to be restricted to 890 dwellings in the plan period.

Q2.9 Do the vision and objectives of the plan adequately address matters of climate change and air quality?

20. Our Client has no further comment in relation to this particular question.

Q2.10 Are the Council's proposed modifications to the policies necessary for soundness?

21. Proposed changes to the Local Plan are set out at examination documents SUB-008 and SUB-009a. The changes proposed are considered minor in nature.
22. The Council's proposed changes to the wording of Policy 27: Site HS13 will be addressed in our Matter 6 Hearing Statement.

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