

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

**Examination into the Bassetlaw Local Plan**

**Matter 6: Housing Allocations**

**Issue 6 - Are the proposed housing allocations justified, effective, developable, deliverable, in line with national policy and otherwise soundly based?**

***Q6.1 Do the sites allocated for residential development provide an appropriate range of sites in terms of their type and size?***

1. Our Client only wishes to respond to this question as it relates to their interests at Ordsall South.
2. The Ordsall South site allocation, allocated for mixed-use development under Policy 27, provides sufficient scope to deliver a wide range of house types to meet a variety of needs. It is anticipated that the Site will come forward in phases, with each phase having the flexibility to deliver a diverse mix of dwellings to respond to the specific circumstances of that parcel and identified local housing need.
3. The provisions of allocation Policy 27 require a mix of residential dwellings in terms of type and size to be delivered as part of the Ordsall South scheme, including affordable dwellings and extra care facilities for elderly persons.
4. Our Client is therefore of the view that the Ordsall South site allocation provides the opportunity to deliver an appropriate range of residential dwellings in terms of type and size.

***Q6.2 Is the site allocated as an urban extension at Peaks Hill Farm sound, and in particular:***

- a) Are the various requirements set out in in the policy clear, justified and effective?***
- b) Have the site constraints, indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations been adequately addressed?***
- c) Is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the site can be implemented and that all necessary infrastructure and mitigation measures required to support it are achievable and can be delivered?***
- d) Is there evidence that the development of the allocation is viable and developable during the plan period?***
- e) Are there any omissions in the policy, and is it sufficiently flexible?***
- f) Are the main modifications suggested to the Policy necessary to make the plan sound?***

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

***Q6.3 Are the other 4 housing allocations in Worksop sound, and in particular:***

- a) Are the criteria set out in in the policies clear, justified and effective?***
- b) Have the site constraints, indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations been adequately addressed?***
- c) Is there evidence that the development of the allocations is viable and developable during the plan period?***
- d) Are there any omissions in the policies, and are they sufficiently flexible?***
- e) Are the main modifications suggested to the Policies necessary to make the plan sound?***

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

**Q6.4 Is the site allocated as an urban extension at Ordsall South sound and in particular:**

- a) Are the criteria set out in the policy clear, justified and effective?**
- b) Have the site constraints, indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations been adequately addressed?**
- c) Is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the site can be implemented and that all necessary infrastructure and mitigation measures required to support it are achievable and can be delivered?**
- d) Is there evidence that the development of the allocation is viable and developable during the plan period?**
- e) Are there any omissions in the policy, and is it sufficiently flexible?**
- f) Are the main modifications suggested to the Policy necessary to make the plan sound?**

7. Our Client is committed to working with the Council and local stakeholders to realise development at the Ordsall South Site. Our Client has undertaken comprehensive pre-application engagement, including meetings with the Council and statutory consultees, and two in person public exhibitions in August 2022. An Outline Planning Application is currently being prepared and it is anticipated it will be submitted to the Council in November 2022. In this respect, our Client is supportive of the Site's allocation under Policy 27: Site HS13 Ordsall South for mixed-use development and broadly supportive of the provisions of the allocation policy.
8. The Ordsall South Site extends to approximately 106.5ha and can accommodate a minimum of 1,250 residential dwellings. The Ordsall South Site would therefore contribute significantly to the delivery of housing in the District and support the sustainable growth of Retford in line with the Council's spatial strategy which seeks to direct development to the District's most sustainable settlements.
9. The scale of development which can be accommodated at the Site means that a variety of house types can be delivered to meet a range of housing needs alongside necessary and complimentary social and physical infrastructure to the benefit of new and existing residents including a new local centre, sports pitches, a school, community hub, extra care facility, and community park and woodland.
10. However, our Client is of the view that some changes to the wording of Policy 27 is required to avoid confusion, to ensure that the policy is clear, and to ensure that policy provisions do not relate to measures that are not relevant to the allocation site.
11. Our Client's response to this question and its sub-questions is set out on a point-by-point basis as follows (points c and d are answered together):
  - a) In keeping with the spirit of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 60 which seeks to boost the supply of homes, we are of the view that an allowance should be made for the residual capacity of Ordsall South 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. 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.

Policy 27 as written seeks to protect and enhance the Retford South-Eaton Green Gap in accordance with Policy ST38. This provision is illogical and causes unnecessary confusion. As submitted, the Ordsall South Site is subject to two conflicting allocations, one which seeks to deliver comprehensive mixed-use development, and another which seeks to protect the landscape. The confusion caused by the new Green Gap designation at Ordsall South is heightened because the Green Gap does not currently exist.

Policy 27 is therefore contrary to paragraph 16 f) of the NPPF which states that plans should

'serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area'.

Our Client is fully supportive of the need to deliver development that is sensitive to landscape context and which can be integrated into the landscape through the use of green and blue infrastructure. However, this can be achieved through allocation policy provisions and comprehensive masterplanning in conjunction with stakeholders. For example, policy provision F(iii) requires 'an in depth landscape buffer around the periphery of the site'. This policy provision captures the essence of Green Gap policy, ensuring a sensitive transition from the open countryside to urban area, and renders the Green Gap designation redundant.

If the Council maintains the need for a Green Gap, and that the Inspector considers it to be justified, then Site HS13 should be excluded from the Green Gap, with the proposals maps updated accordingly.

In the allocation policy justification text, paragraph 7.14.4 refers to land in use by Retford Golf Club as a training range forming part of the wider allocation site. The tests for the loss of such a facility are set out in NPPF paragraph 99 and the tests for developer contributions at NPPF paragraphs 56 and 57. It is unclear why a financial contribution is required to offset the loss of the training range for presumably the golf club's management committee would decide how to invest any receipts from the sale of the land for development. Our client is therefore of the view that this policy provision 2 J should be removed.

The junctions set out at policy provision M(iii)(e) are not relevant to the Site and should be removed from the allocation policy. These junctions are located in and around Worksop – the locations of these junctions is denoted at Table 29 of the Bassetlaw Transport Study 2022 (document reference: TI-017); it is unclear why they are included in the policy. The requirement to improve highways infrastructure in Workshop is not justified and is in conflict with NPPF paragraph 57 which requires planning obligations to be directly related to the development.

The Retford Transport Assessment (document reference: TI-004) sets out at paragraph 11.13.1 that possible highway mitigation measures to accommodate the Ordsall South scheme are based on 'a lot of assumptions' and that a detailed transport appraisal will be required at the planning application stage to confirm what highways improvements are necessary.

As part of technical highways work undertaken to support development at Ordsall South, junctions included at provision M(iii) have been assessed to understand their capacity and to identify appropriate mitigation measures. However, only junctions M(iii)(b) Ordsall Road/A620 Babworth Road and M(iii)d London Road / Whitehouses Road were assessed as requiring mitigation measures, with other junctions either operating with spare capacity or not relevant to the proposed development by virtue of being in the vicinity of Worksop. It is therefore considered that improvements to all these junctions are not justified.

It would be more appropriate for the policy allocation to make reference to the need to undertake highways assessments to identify the off-site highways improvements which would be required to satisfactorily accommodate development at the Site. This approach is recommended in the Retford Transport Assessment, with the report concluding that 'the mitigation requirements for each Local Plan allocation site will need to be determined at the planning application stage through the submission of a Transport Assessment'.

- b) Our Client has worked alongside the Council for many years to realise the development potential of the Ordsall South Site. This included a Baseline and Vision Document demonstrating how a mixed-use development could be delivered at the Site, a condensed version of which entitled 'Ordsall South Preliminary Concept Plan' was subject to a public consultation as part of the Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan Focussed Consultation which took

place in June 2021.

Subsequently, a full suite of technical reports have been produced to support development at the Site. The conclusions of these technical assessments demonstrate that, subject to appropriate mitigation measures where necessary, there are no technical constraints which preclude development at the Site.

Subject to securing the requisite planning permissions, it is anticipated that construction could realistically commence on site in early 2025 and be fully completed by 2040. Table 1 below denotes the indicative construction and phasing programme for the Development.

*Table 1: Indicative Construction Phasing*

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36	2036-37	2037-38	<b>Total dwellings</b>
<b>Ordsall South</b>	50	50	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	150	150	<b>1,250</b>

Allocation Policy 27 includes the requirement for a mix of house types and supporting social and physical infrastructure including a new local centre, sports pitches, a school, community hub, extra care facility, and community park and woodland. Due to the scale of development which could be brought forward at Ordsall South, it is considered that the mix of uses and infrastructure required can be delivered and accommodated at the Site. As aforementioned, a Baseline and Vision Document demonstrating how a mixed-use development could be delivered at the Site has been produced and a masterplan shaping development at the Site continues to be refined.

The financial obligations Ordsall South is subject to are set out as site-specific requirements of Policy 27: Site HS13. As part of their evidence base, the Council have assessed the viability of the Ordsall South allocation in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment (document reference: PUB-028). It concluded that the delivery of Ordsall South is viable so long as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies are not imposed. As such, in the Bassetlaw CIL Draft Charging Schedule (document reference: PUB-008), the Council is proposing a zero charge (£0/sqm) for CIL as part of the housing site allocations of 50 units or more as each site has significant infrastructure costs which are expected to be delivered through developer contributions.

At the appropriate time, an agreement will be secured with the Council via a Section 106 Planning Obligation to deliver the necessary infrastructure to ensure Ordsall South is a sustainable development. Finalisation of the Heads of Terms will depend on agreement with the Council as to where any deficiencies in infrastructure exist and will need to take into account considerations of viability and proportionality.

- c) And d) The Council have undertaken a series of site-specific viability assessment on strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan, as set out at page 33 of the Whole Plan Viability Assessment (document reference: PUB-028). This has been informed in part by the Bassetlaw Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update (document reference: BG-041).

Our Client is committed to working with the Council to bring forward development at the Site and has taken advice from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party team of consultants to ensure that the proposed development is deliverable. At the appropriate time, an agreement will be secured with the Council via a Section 106 Planning Obligation to deliver the necessary infrastructure to ensure Ordsall South is a sustainable development. Finalisation of the Heads of Terms will depend on agreement with the Council as to where any deficiencies in infrastructure exist

and will need to take into account considerations of viability and proportionality.

As set out at Table 1 above, subject to securing the requisite planning permissions, it is anticipated that construction could realistically commence on site in early 2025 and be fully completed by 2040. Work on an outline planning application is well advanced and is due to be submitted to the Council for consideration in the short-term. It is anticipated that outline planning permission could be secured by Q3 2023 in keeping with the timescales set out at Table 1.

- e) No response provided.
- f) The Council's proposed changes to the Local Plan are set out at examination documents SUB-008 and SUB-009a.

Our Client supports the removal of the safeguarded land designation at Ordsall South. The safeguarded land designation was confusing and illogical. The requirement to provide a community park at the west of the allocation Site is a provision of the policy, and therefore the safeguarded land designation was not required.

However, the proposed amendment by the Woodland Trust, which seeks to apply protection to Oak Tree ATI number: 186338), is not supported. In principle, allocation policies should not seek to control development in such a detailed manner. Planning considerations in relation to such features as a tree should be dealt with through the planning application process. Our Client is keen to work with the Local Planning Authority and stakeholders to deliver an appropriate development at the Ordsall South site and is open to potentially relocating the tree if it cannot be retained. Detailed matters such as this will be discussed with the relevant consultees when appropriate.

***Q6.5 Are the other 6 housing allocations in Retford and the allocation in Tuxford sound, and in particular:***

- a) Are the criteria set out in the policies clear, justified and effective?***
- b) Have the site constraints, indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations been adequately addressed?***
- c) Is there evidence that the development of the allocations is viable and developable during the plan period?***
- d) Are there any omissions in the policies, and are they sufficiently flexible?***
- e) Are the main modifications suggested to the Policies necessary to make the plan sound?***

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

**Total Word Count (Excluding Questions): 2,229**