

Bassetlaw Local Plan Examination

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

North Road, Retford (HS7 and EM006)

Prepared by Fisher German LLP on behalf of The Hospital of
The Holy and Undivided Trinity

Project Title

North Road, Retford

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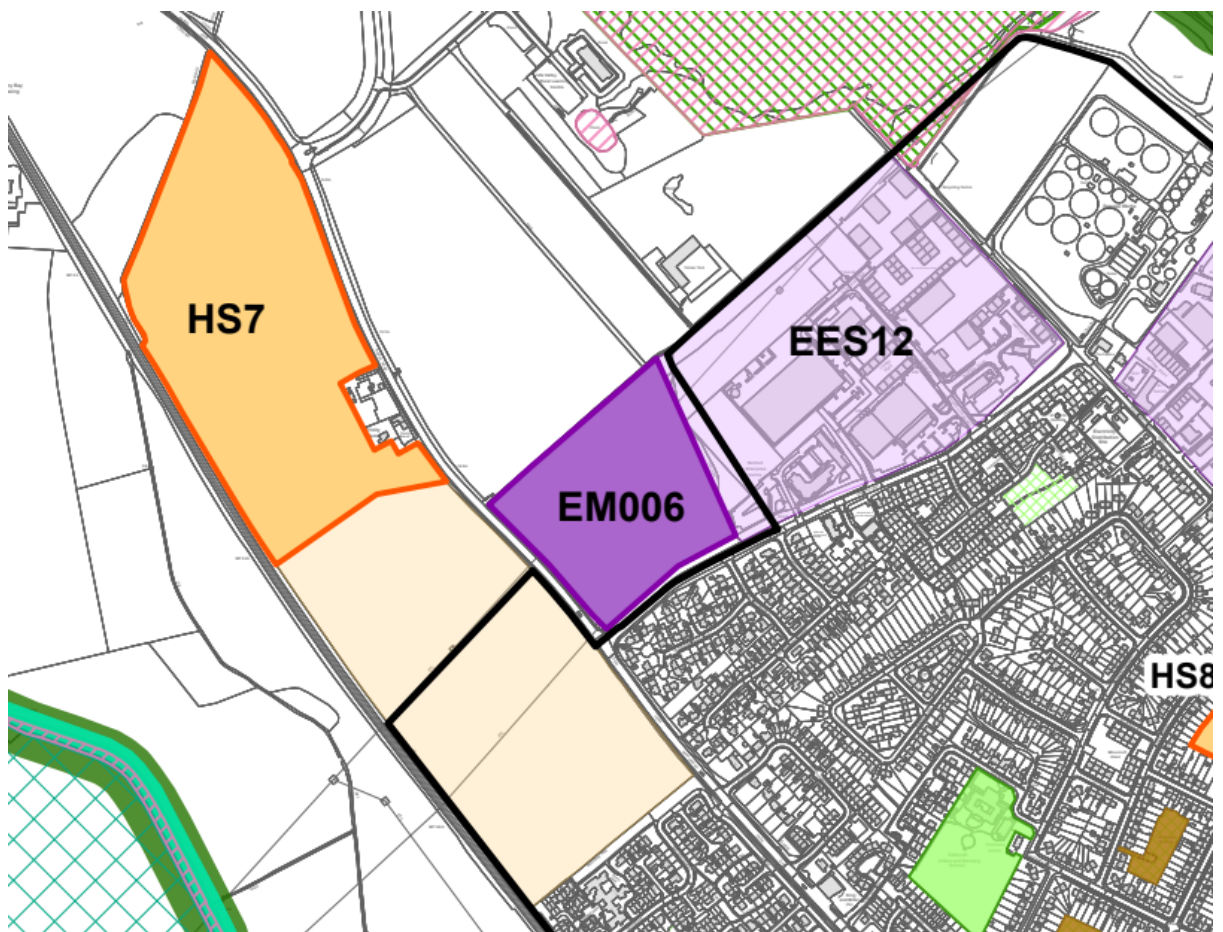
Norman Court

Ashby de la Zouch

LE65 2UZ

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of The Hospital of The Holy and Undivided Trinity in respect of their land interests at North Road, Retford, proposed allocation HS7 and EM006, as illustrated on Figure 1.
- 1.2 Land immediately south of proposed allocation HS7 (buff shading on Figure 1 below) was promoted by The Hospital of The Holy and Undivided Trinity through the previously withdrawn Site Allocations Development Plan Document. An outline planning application was subsequently prepared by The Hospital of The Holy and Undivided Trinity for 196 dwellings (15/00493/OUT) and 11 hectares of employment land.



Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020-2038: Publication Version Policies Maps Composite, July 2022 (The Hospital of The Holy and Undivided Trinity Land Interests HS7 and EM006)

- 1.3 The residential scheme is now being built out Avant Homes (20/01477/RES), and the employment land to the east of North Road (EM006) will shortly be brought forward. There is active market

interest in proposed allocation HS7 and terms for disposal are currently being negotiated with a house builder.

- 1.4 The Hospital of The Holy and Undivided Trinity support the proposed allocations and remain committed to delivery, as evidenced by the successful delivery of the initial phase of land which is currently bringing forward high quality housing in a sustainable location to the north of Retford, one of the most sustainable settlements in Bassetlaw.
- 1.5 This Statement should be read alongside the Statement of Common Ground signed by The Hospital of the Holy and Undivided Trinity and Bassetlaw District Council.

2. Matter 8: Meeting Housing Needs of Different Groups in the Community (Policies ST29-ST34)

Issue 8: Does the Plan set out positively prepared policies to meet affordable housing needs and the housing needs of other groups, which are justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

Q8.1: a) In Policy ST29 is the 20%/25% (brownfield/greenfield) affordable housing requirements justified, and will it be effective in helping to maximise affordable housing and not undermining deliverability?

- 2.1 We support the approach adopted by the Council in that it recognises that viability varies not just on the basis of spatial location, but also site typology. In this context the Council have recognised that delivery of brownfield land can be more difficulty and expensive than greenfield land, and thus applied a lower rate of an affordable housing provision.
- 2.2 Whilst we have no objection with the approach or requirement identified, it is important to note that on occasion where there are significant viability issues a compromise may need to be reached on levels of affordable housing provided, and subject to satisfactory supporting evidence this should not be terminal to a planning application.

Q8.2: b) Is the requirement in ST30 to provide 2% of plots on housing allocations over 100 for self-build plots justified? Will the policy approach be effective in ensuring the delivery of an adequate supply of custom and self-build plots over the plan period?

- 2.3 The requirement to provide 2% of plots on housing allocations of over 100 units is not supported. Whilst the policy if enacted may meet the Council's statutory duties in respect of the provision of self-build plots, we are yet to be convinced that this approach is reflective of the aims of the act, nor reflects the ambitions of budding self-builders.
- 2.4 The focus on Self and custom build has been introduced to secure greater diversity in the housing market, increase overall supply and help to deliver the homes people want (Independent review into scaling up self-build and custom housebuilding: government response, June 2022). The approach adopted by the Council diversifies the housing market to a small extent, but in doing so adds complexity to strategic housing sites, which may slow or hinder delivery. The policy as submitted does not however increase housing supply, it replaces market housing for self-build. Given the added complexity in the delivery of such sites, this will more likely slow and hinder

development, reducing deliverable supply and housing delivery. Finally, we do not consider that it is an inherent desire of budding self-builders to be located in a parcel adjacent to a modern development. Most are looking for more bespoke opportunities.

- 2.5 While some housebuilders provide a custom build option as part of their product, this cannot be expected across all sites and the entire sector as it simply may not be within the business model of many housebuilders. Such requirements could therefore dissuade housebuilders from operating within the district and delay development while policy requirements are negotiated. It is a further incorrect to assume that because there is demand for self-build plots on a self-build register, that they would all build their own property, even if suitable land was available. The reality is the difficulty and lack of needed skills will mean only a small percentage of those on the register will ever develop a self-build property.
- 2.6 Whilst we understand the requirements of the Self-build act mean the Council needs to permit a certain number of self-build plots, the approach adopted here, and elsewhere, is not supported by evidence and is a blunt tool for a more nuanced issue. Our overriding preference has always been a permissive planning policy position which enables the sensible development of self-build plots or units, in locations where they are likely to be delivered by self-builders.

8.3: a) Are the requirements of ST31 relating to the provision of homes that comply with M4(2) of the building regulations justified by evidence relating to need and viability?

- 2.7 The PPG (Housing: Optional Technical Standards) sets out the circumstances wherein Local Authorities can adopt higher optional standards for accessible, adaptable and wheelchair compatible dwellings. The PPG confirms authorities can do so, but only where the need for this policy intervention is justified in appropriate evidence. This evidence can be derived from a number of different locations, and the PPG provides examples. We are however not satisfied that the Council has sufficiently justified this requirement. Whilst the Council has stated that it is viable for dwellings to be built to this level, it has not provided sufficient evidence that there is a localised issue which necessitates policy action. Simply being viable is not a prerequisite for requirements beyond that contained within the building regulations and without compelling justification the requirement for this is not considered to be justified or consistent with national policy or guidance.