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Planning Policy  
Newark & Sherwood District Council  
Kelham Hall  
Newark  
Nottinghamshire,  
NG23 5QX

Dear Sirs

## **PUBLICATION ALLOCATIONS & DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DPD**

We make these representations on behalf of our client, Harworth Estates, with respect to their site at the former Rufford Colliery.

As you will be aware we have been engaged with Newark and Sherwood District Council for a number of years with respect to the site, and Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) are currently considering an extant planning application (LPA Ref. 10/00429/OUTM) for a Business Park on the pit head area of the site.

Most recently we submitted detailed representations to the Allocations & Development Management (ADM) Options report in November 2011 which set out the advantages of the Rufford Colliery site, a comparison with the sites preferred for employment by the Council, and advocated an alternative strategy for the Mansfield Fringe Area which we considered to be more appropriate (please see attached).

We are disappointed that, those representations appear not to have been taken up by the Council, and that our request for a constructive dialogue regarding our client's site has been declined.

For the reasons set in our previous representations, the Rufford Colliery Site is the most appropriate employment site within the Mansfield Fringe Area. In summary, these reasons are:

- Rainworth along with Clipstone are the identified service centers for the Mansfield Fringe Area (MFA), and as such should be the focus of employment and regeneration.
- The Core Strategy's Area Policy for the MFA (policy MFAP1) confirms this, and identifies that the redevelopment of key regeneration sites will be sought to aid the development of the MFA.
- The Rufford Colliery site is the largest and most accessible redevelopment site within the MFA, and is centrally located to provide sustainable employment opportunities to the MFAs population.

- Its access is superior and preferable to that of Clipstone Colliery because it is served by a purpose built regeneration route - the MARR. In this regard, it is simply more appropriate to route substantial employment traffic from Rufford Colliery onto the MARR, than to route it from Clipstone Colliery through Clipstone and the urban area of Mansfield, or via the B6030 through the countryside and past Rufford Colliery along the MARR. It should not be forgotten that coal was largely transported from Clipstone Colliery by rail via Rufford Colliery rather than along these roads.
- The Land West of Colliery Lane is unlikely to be served from the MARR because the difference in grounds levels means that the costs of achieving an access are prohibitive. This is the main reason why the site has not come forward over the last plan period despite its employment allocation and (now lapsed) planning permission. It is unlikely to bring forward the type of employment that is attractive to the market given the scale of the site, and its setting, and the costs of access over the next plan period. It is therefore undeliverable, and its allocation should not simply be rolled forward.
- In addition, whilst Clipstone Colliery itself was not allocated for employment in the last Local Plan no significant employment development has take place in Clipstone despite the availability of the Clipstone Colliery site and the similar sized employment allocation at Clipstone Drive. That allocated site's permission for employment was later surrendered for 420 dwellings plus 1Ha of B1 of employment, on the basis that the site was too remote for the market (08/1905/OUTM). Indeed, an application is now pending for residential instead of the B1 employment (12/00966/OUTM) owing to a lack of commercial interest for B1 employment at the site. The current employment allocation is therefore likely to deliver no employment but 600 houses. This is indicative that the market is unlikely to bring forward a large employment allocation within Clipstone. Again this is related to its poor access and setting.
- The Rufford Colliery site offers far more to the market than the other sites and therefore has a greater likelihood of delivering employment within the plan period. Its size and setting are such that it could deliver the full range of employment uses from small scale start up units to large format units served by rail and decentralised energy.
- Its potential for rail and decentralised energy together with its central location and superior access in such close proximity to the services of Rainworth make it the most sustainable site in the MFA.
- In addition, the Rufford Colliery site retains its own power and water supply from its previous use.
- Over the last 12 months the site has been cleared of buildings and coal storage
- The site would also deliver enhanced habitat restoration over and above that secured through the site's restoration scheme. The enhanced restoration would ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the 'would be' SPA were it ever to be designated. The 'would be SPA' does not and would not preclude development. Indeed, the sites preferred by the Council for employment in the MFA would also be within the 'would be' SPA and require Appropriate Assessment. In addition, to which we note that the large scale Lindhurst project in Mansfield District Council has also recently secured permission whilst also being located in the 'would be' SPA.
- The redevelopment of the pit head area at Rufford Colliery would also be likely to lead to a reduction of anti-social behaviour on the wider Colliery site.



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Rufford Colliery previously provided the Mansfield Fringe Area with substantial employment for generations, and its redevelopment was anticipated by NSDC through the current Local Plan and 'saved' policy E17 (which only applied to Rufford Colliery).

Its redevelopment would provide a more appropriate strategy for the MFA whereby the Land West of Colliery Lane would be allocated for housing. The site would be capable of being served from within Rainworth, where domestic traffic is more appropriate, rather than the MARR. The site at 5.5HA would be able to yield circa. 200 units taken into account the development constraints on the net developable area. The site is, however, within the settlement boundary and, it is, therefore, far more appropriate to allocate it for housing than proposed housing allocation Ra/Ho/2 which is not only outside the settlement boundary, but located within the Green Belt.

The redevelopment of Rufford Colliery for employment is, therefore, far more appropriate than redeveloping Clipstone Colliery for the reasons set out above and previously. However, it is recognised that a strategic size site within the MFA would not sit well with the Core Strategy's objectives at Newark or those for Mansfield another Sub-Regional Centre. It would, however, be more appropriate to reduce the level of employment at Clipstone and provide it at Rufford Colliery given its many advantages. This strategy would be more appropriate because it would continue to provide employment within Clipstone whilst its reduced scale would ensure that level of associated traffic movements would also be reduced.

It is proposed that the remainder of the employment allocation at Clipstone Colliery given over to Rufford Colliery should be developed for housing and public open space. We would envisage that up to a further 100 dwellings might be provided so as to enable the remaining site to be developed for public open space. The additional 100 dwellings would come forward later in the plan period and would not be significant enough to prejudice the core strategy.

On this basis, the allocation of the former Rufford Colliery site for employment should be the Preferred employment site in the MFA, as it would lead to a more balanced and sustainable strategy for the MFA that would be more appropriate than that currently envisaged by Council's ADM.

Once again, therefore, we would welcome a constructive dialogue before the next stage in the adoption process, in which we could discuss the alternative strategy proposed and address any concerns the Council may have.

In the meantime, should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

**ANDREW STEVENSON**  
Senior Planner



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