



Newark and Sherwood Amended Core Strategy DPD

MATTER 26 – ShAP 4

**Statement on behalf of Newark and
Sherwood District Council**

January 2018

Question 26: Does Policy ShAP4 (Land at Thoresby Colliery) present a sound approach in terms of landscape impact, accessibility, and employment provision and in terms of its coal mining legacy? Is the allocation necessary bearing in mind 4 above?

- 26.01 It is considered that the proposed allocation of the former Thoresby Colliery has taken account of landscape and accessibility issues and adopts an appropriate approach in respect of facilitating additional employment development. Through Main Modification 0012 (see below, para 26.10) the site allocation policy will positively address the issue of coal mining legacy. The allocation is the culmination of a robust and sound plan-making process, supported by an appropriate evidence base, the undertaking of integrated impact assessments (fulfilling Sustainability Appraisal requirements), Habitats Regulations Assessment and rigorous public consultation.
- 26.02 Whilst a separate matter to the sites proposed allocation, it should be noted that the site now benefits from a resolution to grant outline planning permission, subject to the signing of the Section 106 agreement (16/02173/OUTM). This would allow for residential development of up to 800 dwellings, employment development (up to 4,855 sqm B1a, up to 13,760 sqm B1c and up to 13,760 sqm B2), a new country park and a Local Centre (including a mix of commercial, employment, community, retail (up to 500 sqm), health and residential uses, a primary school, open space and green infrastructure (OTH/01). In resolving to grant outline consent the Council is clearly content that there is the reasonable prospect a subsequent detailed scheme can positively address the issues identified in this matter.

Landscape impact

- 26.03 The CPRE [Representor 008] have submitted representations outlining that the allocation of the site conflicts with the Council's landscape assessment, and that the mitigation measures proposed are insufficient. Importantly landscape and visual impact advice was provided to the Council by VIA East Midlands Ltd (now overseeing the County Council's landscape function), through the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HOU/08 & HOU/14)).
- 26.04 This advice concluded that the proposed development would result in a substantial change in the landscape from the existing consented restoration scheme and existing agricultural fields. Nonetheless it was advised that, if consent was to be granted, careful consideration at reserved matters stage would be required over the impact of the layout and density of built development and that a robust and extensive landscape structure to reduce negative effects on landscape and visual amenity would need to be established. The implication being that there is the prospect that this could be achievable. Significantly the advice has guided the allocation process and the recommended mitigation measures have been

incorporated into the policy (criterion 11). The representation from the County Council [Representor 018], recognises that the VIA advice has been taken account of, and then concludes that provision of green infrastructure (GI) in line with an agreed GI framework addresses previous concerns to a significant degree at policy level. The mitigation measures reflect objective professional advice and are considered to be sound, providing appropriate guidance for the development of an effective landscape approach.

Accessibility

- 26.05 The CPRE [Representor 008] have argued that the site is not well located for access by non-car modes and the improvement of passenger transport links to nearby communities are likely to be too local to mean the development is well located for access by public transport. Whilst Town-Planning.co.uk [Representor 011] have criticised the masterplan put forward by the site owner (Harworth Estates), on account of it not providing sufficient integration and linkages to Edwinstowe.
- 26.06 Thoresby Colliery is considered a sustainable location which can be well integrated with the existing settlement, and from where good public transport links can be provided. Indeed the scale of development proposed is likely to be able to support the extension of existing and/or creation of new services. This is reflected in the policy wording of ShAP4 which emphasises the importance of maximising the opportunities for sustainable travel and achieving suitable access to local facilities. Bus improvements, where deemed necessary, will be delivered through a combination of planning obligations and developer contributions. Responsibility for delivering improvements would fall to the County Council and bus operators.
- 26.07 Judgements over the acceptability of any specific masterplan are beyond the scope of the Core Strategy review, the matter here is whether the site can, in principle, achieve a good standard of integration and whether the policy approach will effectively deliver this outcome. The site is considered to be a sustainable location with the strong potential to be well integrated with the existing settlement. Specific policy content has been provided over the need for a comprehensive masterplan showing how the redevelopment will be integrated with existing and consented development in Edwinstowe and the surrounding countryside (criterion 10.1 and supplemented by content in criteria 12 and 13). This is considered to provide an appropriate platform for delivery of an integrated detailed scheme.
- 26.08 Nottinghamshire County Council [representor 018] made a representation suggesting that point vi of criterion 12 be amended to state that the safeguarding of a route for alternative access to the new Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre, would be vehicular in nature. The Council accepts this and proposes to introduce the

amendment through a ‘clarifying minor amendment’ (**CMA/0015**). This would amend point vi below criterion 12 to read:

‘vi. Safeguarding of a route for alternative vehicular access to the new Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre;’

Employment provision

- 26.09 Town-Planning.co.uk [Representor 011] has raised concerns that employment provision at Thoresby Colliery may stifle the delivery of the remaining parts of Bilsthorpe Colliery site, also owned by Harworth Estates. Consideration to phasing the release of employment land behind that at Bilsthorpe is suggested. However in employment land terms land at the former Bilsthorpe Colliery is counted as ‘serviced employment land’ following the lapse of the original site-wide consent. Post the granting of consent for the gasification plant and the rationalisation of remaining land (taking out that which is realistically undevelopable) there is only a small residual amount of land remaining available. This aside without strong justification the introduction of potentially overly restrictive phasing requirements is considered to run counter to the pro-economic growth agenda set by national policy. The redevelopment of Thoresby Colliery will provide for a sustainable mixed use development. Given the residual amount of land remaining at Bilsthorpe the imposition of any undue restriction over when employment land can be brought forward is not viewed as appropriate.
- 26.10 Beyond this it is considered that the location is appropriate in employment development terms, and that the 10ha of employment land will contribute towards a sustainable form of development and the realisation of the ‘regeneration’ strategy for the settlement defined through Spatial Policy 2.

Coal mining legacy

- 26.11 The Coal Authority [Representor 021] submitted representations suggesting that the policy should be modified to provide clarity over how coal mining legacy issues should be addressed. This would include the requirement for a ‘Coal Mining Risk Assessment’, or equivalent report. In response, main modification **MM/0012** is proposed, incorporating the representors suggestion. This would result in a new final criterion being added to point 10 of ShAP4 to read:

‘viii. Coal Mining Risk Assessment or equivalent report addressing any potential coal mining legacy issues’

- 26.12 It is considered that the main modification will ensure that the coal mining legacy of the site is positively addressed.

Is the allocation necessary bearing in mind 4 above?

- 26.13 The need for the allocation of the site is questioned by the CPRE [Representor 008], given the balance of sites being carried and OAN requirements. It is argued that there are 'less damaging' options available –taking account of historic windfall rates, opportunities from the Brownfield Register and that the revisiting of allocations would be more appropriate as part of a future review. In response the identification of the site responds to the significant regeneration opportunity presented by the earlier than anticipated closure of Thoresby Colliery, and is considered to represent a sustainable location for growth. The site allocation policy provides a sound and appropriate basis for bringing development forward. Allocation of a strategic mixed use scheme of a significant scale in the west of the District will balance the growth planned for the Newark Urban Area, provide additional flexibility in terms of housing land supply, support the meeting of housing needs and enhance the prospect of a five year land supply being maintained.