

# **Examination of the Gedling Borough Local Planning Document Publication Draft (Part 2 Local Plan).**

## **Position Statement of the Willow Farm Action Group - Reference LPD\_pub\_B/382**

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### **1. Introduction**

1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of the Willow Farm Action Group, for consideration at the Gedling Borough Local Plan 2016 Examination.

1.2 It relates to 'Matter 6 - Housing Allocations', issue 6a and the questions of:

Q2 - 'Are there any significant factors that indicate that any sites should not have been allocated?'

Q4 - 'Are the allocated sites viable and deliverable, having regard to the necessary infrastructure, affordable housing and other facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints?'

Q7 - 'Has full consideration been given to the Human Rights Act when allocating sites in the Plan?'

1.3 This statement focuses on three areas of concern regarding the H3 Willow Farm allocation, which were raised by local residents within their original responses to the Local Plan and are recorded within the Report of Responses October 2016.

### **2. W.F.A.G Position Statement - Question 2**

2.1 The 'significant factor' we wish to raise is the access arrangements for the H3 Willow Farm site. Currently, the proposal is that the cul-de-sacs of Greens Farm Lane and / or Grange View Road should be used to access the development.

2.3 Respondents objected to the access proposals on a number of grounds, with some suggesting that if the development was to go ahead, despite their objections, then utilising the Gedling Access Road (GAR) to access the development would provide a viable alternative which would at least reduce the overall impact of the

development on the surrounding residential roads and Gedling Village more generally.

- 2.4 In responding to and dismissing this suggestion the Local Planning Authority (LPA) stated on page 71 of the Report of Responses that **'in addition to opening up the Gedling Colliery site, the Gedling Access Road will also provide a bypass for Gedling Village. A key objective of the Gedling Access Road is to remove significant levels of through traffic, including Heavy Goods Vehicles currently using Arnold Lane / Shearing Hill'**.
- 2.5 In late September 2016, the local MP Vernon Coaker met with members of the LPA to discuss concerns raised by local residents regarding the H3 Willow Farm development. That discussion included the access arrangements for the site. The MP reported that **' On the matter of direct access to the GAR from this site, the County argue that in addition to opening up the Gedling Colliery site, the GAR is a bypass for Gedling Village. The traffic modelling undertaken as part of the GAR planning applications indicate significant improvements in capacity to junctions along Arnold Lane and Shearing Hill. More direct access to the GAR would undermine this, they say. Also, the County officers feel that if access to the GAR were to be provided in addition to the proposed access from the two cul-de-sacs, then there would be a risk of creating a 'rat run' through to the GAR'**.
- 2.6 The developers of the site, Langridge Homes, have proposed that the H3 Willow Farm site be extended to the line of the GAR, thereby increasing the number of homes from 110 to 290. Access to the larger development would be from the GAR, which they say the Highway Authority supports.
- 2.7 In responding to this proposal, in the Report of Responses, the LPA states that it does not agree with the landowner that the site should be extended as there are **'no existing defensible boundaries for the Green Belt'**. They point out however, that the GAR, once built, will **'form a defensible boundary'**.
- 2.8 The Site Selection Document 2016 - Appendix A Urban Area and Adjacent to Hucknall, at paragraph 3.4 also addresses this proposal and states that **'the site recommended for allocation is based on existing defensible boundaries. Once built, the Gedling Access Road will likely become the new defensible boundary following a review of the Local Plan'**.
- 2.9 The LPA advise us that it is normal practice to review the Local Plan **'about every 5 years, to avoid running short of development land'**.
- 2.10 Whilst such a review and any changes to the Green Belt boundary would require examination by a Planning Inspector, the LPA are clearly sign-posting their future support for an expanded H3 Willow Farm site. Given the number of homes involved

and the access proposals submitted by the developer, then access to this larger housing development would be from the GAR.

- 2.11 We believe therefore that the current H3 Willow Farm access proposal is fundamentally unsound, because the first phase of building will establish a link to Gedling Village and the second phase, once approved, will then establish a link from the development to the GAR, which will undermine the purpose and effectiveness of the road by creating a 'rat run' from the GAR through to Arnold Lane / Shearing Hill which, according to the LPA's own stated position, is the very thing they wish to avoid.

### **3. W.F.A.G Position Statement - Question 4**

- 3.1 Respondents to the H3 Willow Farm proposal within the Local Plan expressed their concern regarding the lack of infrastructure in place to support this development; in particular they made reference to a lack of school places and doctors surgeries.
- 3.2 In responding to these concerns within their Report of Responses, the LPA highlight the contents of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which they point out identifies the requirements for infrastructure across the Borough, outlines the liaison that has taken place with the relevant public bodies to identify the growth required to meet the additional demand and sets out their intention to seek appropriate financial contributions from the developers in order to build the necessary capacity to meet this demand.
- 3.3 The LPA strategy of urban concentration is based upon a premise that it should assist in making the best use of existing infrastructure however, the information presented by the LPA, in support of the Local Plan, clearly identifies that the existing health and educational services within the Carlton area are already at or exceeding capacity and will not therefore be able to meet the additional demand generated by the new housing developments.
- 3.4 Policy 18 of the Aligned Core Strategy sets out the principle that new development **MUST** be supported by the required infrastructure at the right stage of development.
- 3.5 The Chase Farm Planning Application 2015, considered the issue of health services and at paragraph 11.4 states that **'The majority of local practices are operating at full capacity and therefore additional patients caused by the development will require additional new space to accommodate their health needs'**.
- 3.7 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Addendum 2016 also recognises that there **'are potential capacity constraints in surgeries in Arnold, Carlton and Hucknall'**.

- 3.8 The LPA's schedule of deliverable sites within the Carlton area, which is outlined in Appendix B of the 5 Year Housing Supply Assessment, indicates that there are expected to be 772 new homes completed between 2016 - 2021 (**see Table 1 below**). We have also included the proposed H3 Willow Farm development within these figures, which does not appear within the LPA's Housing Supply Assessment.
- 3.9 Utilising the formula provided by the LPA for identifying the demand for primary care health provision, which is based upon 2.5 people per household, there will be an additional 1930 people seeking primary health provision within the Carlton area within 5 years.

| Sites                         | Projected completions<br>2016 - 2021 | Notes  |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Carlton                       | 222                                  | Based upon 46 sites identified within 5 Year Housing Supply Assessment |
| Teal Close                    | 270                                  |  |
| Gedling Colliery / Chase Farm | 240                                  |  |
| Willow Farm                   | 40                                   | Based upon the Langridge Homes assumption of 40 homes per year.        |

**Table one**

- 3.10 Whilst the LPA have acknowledged in their Report of Responses that **'appropriate financial contributions towards primary health care are required'** , there is no assurance or guarantee that the additional capacity will be in place at the **'right time'** in accordance with Policy 18 of the Aligned Core Strategy. We accept that the LPA may have answered the question of **'how'** funding will be raised to build capacity however, they have not addressed the question of **'when'** the essential services will be in place.
- 3.11 We acknowledge that the Chase Farm Planning Application 2015 includes plans for a new Health Centre, however, the Application at paragraph 18 deals with the phasing of the development and confirms that Phase 1 and 1b are not due to be completed until 2026. The Phase 2 development, which includes the new Health Centre, is subject of a 'condition' that an application for approval of all reserved matters **'shall be made to the planning authority no later than 7 years from the date of this permission'** and that once authorised, Phase 2 development should begin **'no later than 9 years from the permission or 2 years from the date of the approval of the**

**final reserved matter, whichever is the later'**. Therefore the construction of the new Health Centre is unlikely to start until 2024.

- 3.12 The question we raise on behalf of our residents is where and how will the additional 1930 residents receive their primary health care?
- 3.12 A further matter of concern for our residents is the lack of available school places to meet the additional demand generated by the new housing developments.
- 3.13 The National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 72 states:- **'The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education'** and that the LPA should **'give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.'**
- 3.14 The Chase Farm Planning Application 2015, at paragraph 11.10, states that the proposed development of 1,050 dwellings would yield an additional 221 primary and 168 secondary pupils and that **' The County Council note that based on current projections, primary and secondary schools are at capacity and cannot accommodate the additional 221 primary places and 168 secondary places arising from the proposed development'**. It also recognises that **'The catchment secondary school, Carlton Academy, has almost met or exceeded its primary to secondary transfer PAN for the last four years. Therefore there is no capacity to accommodate the expected average of 34 secondary pupils per age group, without additional accommodation being created.**
- 3.15 We recognise that these figures represent the level of demand that will be generated by Chase Farm over the 15 year lifetime of the project, however, the planning application does provide an insight into the current situation facing local schools at both primary and secondary level, in that they are already at or exceeding capacity.
- 3.16 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016, at paragraph 5.5, confirms that primary schools within one mile of the Gedling Colliery / Chase Farm site are oversubscribed. We note the Headmistress of the Willow Farm Primary School confirmed that this was the case at her school, when submitting her objection to the H3 Willow Farm development.
- 3.17 In responding to the concerns raised by the local residents, regarding the impact of this development on already oversubscribed schools, the LPA have emphasised their intention to seek appropriate financial contributions and pointed out that a new primary school is required for the Gedling Colliery Site.

- 3.18 The plans for this new primary school are contained within the Chase Farm Planning Application 2015. Paragraph 11.11 states that '**a one-form primary school**' will be built which will be able to '**accommodate 210 children**'.
- 3.19 As outlined in paragraph 3.11 of this statement however, the construction of the new primary school is unlikely to start before 2024 and we note that the capacity created by this new school will still not be sufficient to meet the expected demand from the Chase Farm / Gedling Colliery development, let alone the other planned developments within the local area.
- 3.20 If the developments go ahead as planned, by 2024, H3 Willow Farm will have been completed with 110 new homes. Gedling Colliery / Chase Farm are expected to have completed 540 new homes (60 per year build out rate) and Wood Lane 40 new homes. Utilising the LPA Chase Farm figures for identifying the number of school places, these developments alone will have generated a requirement for 145 primary and 110 secondary places. We have only highlighted these developments because they are within Gedling.
- 3.21 We note that within their own response to the Willow Farm proposal, Langridge Homes state that '**the site has good access to community infrastructure**' and include within that statement local primary and secondary schools. They do not however, include the fact that these schools are already at or exceeding capacity.
- 3.21 In conclusion, the WFAG's position is that the current measures proposed by the LPA to address the shortfall in capacity will not be in place '**at the right stage of development**' and that there will, in fact, at best be a considerable gap between the completion of a large number of new homes and the availability of the essential services required to meet the growth in demand, and at worst no plans in place to meet this demand at all. Identifying the infrastructure necessary to meet that demand is not the issue of concern raised by our local residents, it is having sufficient school places and health services in place and ready to meet the additional demand generated by these homes. We believe that by pursuing its policy of urban concentration and in adopting a target driven approach to new house building the LPA has lost sight of the fundamental principle incorporated within Policy 18, which we believe must form the basis of a sound plan. In our opinion, to press ahead with a house building programme, without the necessary infrastructure in place, undermines the viability and soundness of the Plan. We do not accept that the LPA have answered the '**what, where, when, and how**' questions regarding the creation of the necessary growth in these services and that their plan is not therefore effective and does not comply with Policy 18 of the Aligned Core Strategy 2014.

#### 4. W.F.A.G Position Statement - Question 7

- 4.1 Respondents to the H3 Willow Farm proposal raised their concerns regarding the detrimental impact that the development would have on their residential amenities. They expressed concern that there was no indication within the Local Plan Part 2 that this issue had been addressed or that the interests of local residents had been balanced against the need for the Willow Farm development. Local residents also highlighted the responsibilities of the LPA under the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. Our original submission sets out the basis for our position.
- 4.2 The question raised by the Inspector is **'Has full consideration been given to the Human Rights Act when allocating sites in the Plan?'**
- 4.3 Our response is that we failed to find any indication within the Local Plan Part 2 that any consideration had been given to this matter; neither did we find any reference to the connected issue of residential amenity.
- 4.4 On the 23rd October 2016, WFAG contacted the LPA to seek assistance in locating within the Local Plan Part 2 or other supporting documentation an impact assessment of the Willow Farm development on local residential amenities, including the proposal to utilise Greens Farm Lane and Grange View Road to provide access to this site.
- 4.5 In their response, the LPA highlighted their statement within the Report of Responses which states **'It is not considered that the proposed development of Willow Farm will result in the enjoyment of existing dwellings being below a reasonable level, although it is accepted that there will be an increase in the level of noise experienced by existing residents'**. They also confirmed that this statement was **'based on our professional judgement'** and that **'the detailed assessments of any impact on amenity would be undertaken at the more detailed planning application stage once the precise details of the proposed development are known'**.
- 4.6 We do not accept this position and believe that there were a number of impacts that could and should have been properly assessed in preparing Part 2 of the Local Plan, without the need to await the planning application stage, for example the issues of overshadowing, overbearing, overlooking, noise and traffic.
- 4.7 The steep topography of the site is fixed and the fact that large parts of the development will be elevated above existing homes is relevant to the issues of overbearing, overlooking, and our residents' right to respect for their private and family life. The plan to utilise Greens Farm Lane and Grange View Road to provide access to the site is set out within the Plan and, based upon Langridge Homes' own estimate, the construction phase of the development will take in excess of two

years, which is relevant to the issue of noise and our residents right to the peaceful enjoyment of all their possessions.

- 4.8 In conclusion, we accept that there may be some issues that can only be considered at the time of application however, in our opinion, the information available at the time was sufficient to provide a sound basis for proper consideration of the issues raised by our residents under the Human Rights Act, at the time the Local Plan Part 2 was being prepared. In the absence of any documented assessment or detailed explanation our position remains that no proper consideration was given to the Human Rights Act and connected issues when allocating the H3 Willow Farm site.

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