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Statement

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# Gedling Local Planning Document Examination

Position Statement on behalf of  
Northern Trust Limited

Ref. 9151009

Matter 7: Housing Allocations  
in/adjacent to the Urban Area

February 2017



## Matter 7: Housing Allocations in/adjacent to the Urban Area

### Issue 7c: Linden Grove (H4) [Policy LPD 64]

**Question 17. Is the proposed allocation justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of development?**

- 1.1 The proposed allocation of the Linden Grove site (Ref. H4) is justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of development. Please see GVA's response to **Matter 5: Issue 5b: Question 16** for further detail.

**Question 18. Is the proposed allocation deliverable? In particular, is it:**

**a. confirmed by the landowner involved as being available for the use proposed?**

- 1.2 The site is available for residential development (see GVA's response to **Matter 5: Issue 5b: Question 16**).

**b. supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?**

- 1.3 Northern Trust is advised by Curtins on transport matters. Curtins have considered whether a safe and appropriate access can be formed for vehicles and pedestrians and have concluded that a suitable access can be constructed on Burton Road. This would take the form of a single priority T junction. This has been discussed with NCC (the Local Highway Authority) and it is understood that the County Council has confirmed that the proposed access is acceptable in principle. The Borough Council's evidence base<sup>1</sup> also confirms that NCC agree that access to the site is feasible from Burton Road.

- 1.4 The illustrative masterplan for the site demonstrates that the development could be appropriately connected to the existing pedestrian/cycle facilities in the surrounding area, including the cycleway on Burton Road.

**c. deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?**

- 1.5 There are no environmental or other constraints to development and both Northern Trust and the Council are satisfied that the scale of development possible on this site could be accommodated without unacceptable adverse impacts being generated (see GVA

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<sup>1</sup> Including the Site Selection Paper (2016).

response to **Matter 5: Issue 5b: Question 16**), at the application stage, adverse impacts are forecast/identified, we are satisfied that it will be possible to mitigate those through design, or the use of planning conditions/obligations.

***Question 19. Has full consideration been given to the likely contamination on this site, given its use for sewage sludge disposal in the past?***

- 1.6 A Preliminary Environmental Risk Assessment was produced by Waterman in June 2014. This highlighted the potential for the near surface soils to contain metals and organic pollutants.
- 1.7 Further advice has since been received from Wardell Armstrong, who have been involved in the nearby Teal Close site, which has a similar history of sludge deposits. Wardell Armstrong has advised that, although, if present, these contaminants would need to be considered during the detailed design stage, they are highly unlikely to prevent residential development and the risks are typically managed through ground investigation, risk assessment and common mitigation measures such as cover systems (in gardens) and gas protection systems (in buildings).
- 1.8 A similar conclusion was reached by the Inspector appointed to examine the adopted Local Plan (2005). He stated that no 'special' work would be required to make the site suitable for residential development (IR Page 2-62).

***Question 20. Has full consideration been given to the loss of agricultural land?***

- 1.9 The Agricultural Land Classification Maps indicate that the site is 'Grade 3'. A detailed assessment has not been undertaken to determine whether the site is Grade 3a or 3b.
- 1.10 However, in respect of the nearby Teal Close site, it was concluded that the sludge disposal had limited the agricultural classification of the land to Sub Grade 3b. Therefore, it is anticipated that the Linden Grove site would also be limited to 'Grade 3b'.
- 1.11 In addition, at just 3.8ha, the site is significantly below the 20 Ha threshold above which Natural England is consulted on planning applications involving the loss of agricultural land, indicating that this scale of loss is not significant in policy terms.
- 1.12 We also note that:
- the site is remote from other agricultural land holdings;
  - much of the greenfield land in the surrounding area is Grade 3 or higher; and
  - agricultural land has not been a constraint to the development of other much larger sites in the local area.

***Question 21. Has full consideration been given to the cumulative impact of this and other recent developments?***

- 1.13 The only impact that requires consideration on a cumulative basis is that relating to traffic. Concerns have been raised by the County Council about the ability of the local highway network to accommodate the Teal Close, Gedling Colliery, Willow Farm and Linden Grove developments in advance of the construction of the Gedling Access Road (GAR). More specifically, the County Council is concerned about increasing congestion on Arnold Lane.
- 1.14 Curtins has prepared a Transport Assessment for the Linden Grove site which assesses the impact of LPD compliant levels of development at Teal Close, Gedling Colliery and Willow Farm in a 'no GAR' world. This demonstrates that all four developments can be accommodated without giving rise to severe adverse impacts.
- 1.15 Discussions are ongoing with the County Council in respect of both the impact testing that has been undertaken, and the wording of Policy LPD 64. However, in the light of Curtin's findings, we are satisfied that, at the very least, Policy LPD 64 should be amended as proposed.

***Question 22. If the site was previously not suitable for designation as Safeguarded Land, why is it now suitable for development?***

- 1.16 The Inspector who examined the Gedling Local Plan considered the merits of releasing the Linden Grove site from the Green Belt, and allocating it for housing, back in 2003.
- 1.17 At that time, the Council's view was that the gap between Nottingham and Burton Joyce was narrow but would be partly compromised by the planned Colwick Loop Road (CLR). Moreover, the Council considered that the elevated CLR would sever the site from the Green Belt land to the east and that the site would cease, therefore, to perform any relevant or valuable Green Belt function.
- 1.18 The Inspector noted that the extent to which the CLR would compromise the 'gap' would remain unknown until the detailed design for the CLR was finalised and until the actual impact of the CLR was fully understood, it could not be concluded that the release of the site was acceptable in Green Belt terms.
- 1.19 He regarded the gap as important but vulnerable and concluded that the Linden Grove site should not be released from the Green Belt because of the threat it posed to the gap.
- 1.20 Since then there has been a material change in circumstances as a result of the construction of the CLR between the site and Burton Joyce to the east.

- 1.21 The CLR passes immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. This section of the road runs on an approximately 5m high embankment. This embankment severs the site from the Green Belt to the east, in physical and visual terms. The site has, therefore, become a discrete pocket of land which is sandwiched between the CLR and the existing housing on Linden Grove, totally isolated from the main area of Green Belt to the east.
- 1.22 The NPPF (para 80) notes that Green Belts serve five purposes. We have considered the extent to which the Linden Grove site satisfies these purposes and have reached the following conclusions:
- it is the CLR that now checks the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up area. Development of the Linden Grove site would result in the urban area being extended eastwards but this outward expansion would be very modest indeed (extending less than 260 metres out from the existing urban edge) and would be firmly checked by the CLR. Moreover, a degree of expansion of the urban area is necessary in order to satisfy the Borough's housing needs and this site represents a highly sustainable location for much needed development;
  - it is not necessary to keep this site 'open' to prevent neighbouring towns from merging. The development of the site poses no threat to coalescence, either actual or perceived;
  - as a consequence of the construction of the CLR, the site is now better related, in both a physical and visual sense, to the urban area than it is to the wider countryside. It plays no obvious 'countryside' role;
  - the site serves no purpose in preserving the setting and special character of a historic town; and
  - the Borough Council has assessed its ability to accommodate the housing that it needs on previously developed land in the urban area and has concluded that 'urban regeneration' will not address its development requirements. The ACS and LPD make provision for development in the urban area it is necessary to release land from the Green Belt in order to satisfy the development needs of the Borough. The release of the Linden Grove site would therefore accord with the strategy established in the ACS.
- 1.23 The Council's Site Selection Paper (2016) confirms that the site does not make a significant contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. The Council's Green Belt Assessment (2016) scores the site only 9 out of 20 in terms of its performance against the purposes of the Green Belt, meaning that it is the joint third worst performing (in Green Belt terms) of the sites assessed adjacent to the urban area.

1.24 With all of the above in mind, we are satisfied that the case for releasing this land from the Green Belt is now a compelling one.

***Question 23. What are the exceptional circumstances which justify the removal of this site from the Green Belt?***

1.25 Please see above and our response to **Matter 6: Issue 6a: Question 6.**

***Question 24. Would the development of the site reduce the openness and effectiveness of the gap between Nottingham and Burton Joyce? If so, would this accord with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt?***

1.26 The development of this site would have an impact on openness but it would not have an adverse impact on the effectiveness of the gap between Nottingham and Burton Joyce. The reasons for this are:

- the CLR has already had a significant visual and urbanising impact on this specific part of the gap. The Linden Grove site is now severed from the rest of the Green Belt (and the gap) and now clearly has a stronger physical and visual relationship with the urban area than it does with the gap. Developing the land would have no impact on the function of the gap;
- there is no physical or visual connection between the Linden Grove site and Burton Joyce and the development of the site would not result either in physical coalescence or any perception of coalescence;
- the proposed development would not extend any closer to main built up part of Burton Joyce than existing development to the south east and north west;
- even if the site is developed, a very substantial gap would remain between Nottingham and the main built up part of the village (a gap exceeding 800m); and
- the sensitive part of the gap is to the east of the Linden Grove site and the development would have no impact on this land (see satellite image attached).

***Question 25. The development of the site for housing is dependent on the completion of the Gedling Access Road. What would be the effect of the failure to complete this road on this allocation and has the Council identified any alternative site(s) on which to accommodate the 115 dwellings allocated on H4 if this road is not completed?***

1.27 It is Northern Trust's view that the development of the site should not be prohibited in advance of the completion of the GAR. Therefore, there should be no need to identify any alternative site(s) on which to accommodate the 115 dwellings allocated on the site (Ref. H4).

***Question 26. Does the housing trajectory accurately reflect the delivery of homes on this site, given that it is dependent on the completion of the Gedling Access Road?***

1.28 As confirmed in GVA's response to **Matter 5: Issue 7b: Question 26** the Council's Housing Trajectory for the site was considered a fair reflection of the likely rate of delivery assuming:

- 1) the wording of Policy LPD 64 remains unchanged (which means that the site would not be permitted to deliver housing prior to the completion of the GAR); and
- 2) the GAR is delivered in the timescales which were anticipated by the Council<sup>2</sup>.

1.29 However, NCC is now indicating that the GAR may be slightly delayed and not now completed until 2020. This is a year later than assumed by the Borough Council in its Housing Trajectory. If, in spite of our various submissions, the Inspector is not convinced that the Linden Grove site can be developed in advance of the GAR, the Trajectory will need to be adjusted to reflect this latest delay. However, if the Inspector is satisfied that the site can be developed ahead of the GAR, the forecast dwelling numbers can be brought forward in the Plan period as per our response to **Matter 5: Issue 5B: Question 26**.

***Question 27. Could the development of the site be undertaken prior to the completion of the Gedling Access Road without having severe highway safety implications?***

1.30 The development of the Linden Grove site would not, itself, give rise to any notable traffic impacts. The County Council's concern, and the reason why it is insisting that particular developments should be held back pending completion of the GAR, is cumulative impact i.e. the combined impact of the developments planned at Teal Close, Gedling Colliery, Willow Farm and Linden Grove.

1.31 As indicated above and elsewhere, Curtins has undertaken a 'no GAR' assessment of the local highway network which indicates that Teal Close, Linden Grove, Willow Farm and Gedling Colliery sites can be developed in advance of the GAR without having severe highway safety implications.

**GVA on behalf of Northern Trust**

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<sup>2</sup> According to the Council's evidence base the GAR is in the detailed design phase, with work scheduled to commence in 2017. It also suggests that the new road is scheduled to be completed and opened by spring 2019.



Image of the sensitive part of the gap to the east of the Linden Grove site:

