

Independent Examination of the Gedling Local Plan Planning Document (Part 2 Local Plan)

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

Issue 7b Willow Farm (H3) Policy LPD64)

This Position Statement on the MIQs for Issue 7b should be read in conjunction with the written representations on the Willow Farm Lane site submitted by GPA Ltd on behalf of Langridge Homes Ltd with respect to the Pre Submission Draft Local Plan.

Regard should also be had to plans and technical reports submitted as part of previous consultations and a Pre Application submission in 2013:

- Planning Statement (2013)
- Transport Statement (2013)
- MLA and Landscape Character Assessment (2013)

Q9 Is the proposed allocation justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of development?

Yes:

- 1 The site is located on the edge of the main built up urban area, and as such the site is in a sustainable location, and satisfies the requirements of Policy 2 Spatial Strategy of the ACS;
- 2 No negative impacts have been identified – there are no nature conservation and heritage constraints; the site is of low value agricultural land (grade 3B/4); and it is in flood zone 1;
- 3 The SA assessment of sites shows that the site scores well against the assessment criteria with several major or minor positive effects identified, and no major negative effects;
- 4 Access can be gained from local road network – NCC Highways has indicated that up to 110 homes can be served from the existing road network, having regard to the amount of development already served by the existing access roads;
- 5 Subject to policy changing ie site is removed from the Green Belt) no stakeholder objections were received to the development of this site following a pre application submission in 2013.

Q10 Is the proposed allocation deliverable? In particular, is it:

- a) **Confirmed by the landowner involved as being available for the use proposed?**
The site is in the sole ownership of Langridge Homes Ltd who can confirm that the site is deliverable in the short term, subject to policy changing and the GAR being constructed;
 - b) **Supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles can be provided?**
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NCC Highways Authority has confirmed that access can be obtained from the local road network for a development of around 110 new homes.

c) Deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

As noted above there are no environmental constraints to development. The site can be connected to local services in adjoining residential development area. With regards to surface water run-off, a local concern, it is normal practice for developers to ensure that run off rates do not exceed agricultural run-off rates. Appropriate SUDS features will be incorporated into the scheme including underground attenuation storage tanks. The site is also close to local services including local schools.

Q11 What are the exceptional circumstances which justify the removal of the site from the Green Belt?

The Inspector to the ACS public examination confirmed that the test of exceptional circumstances to require Green Belt changes had been met in order to meet the housing requirements of Gedling and also the other ACS authorities and to ensure a sustainable pattern of development.

The Inspector also stated that Gedling should aim to rebalance its housing land supply in favour of sustainable sites located within and adjoining the main built up area of Nottingham – The Willow Farm site meets these criteria.

The more detailed work on identifying housing land allocations sites in this Part 2 Local Plan has reaffirmed that there is insufficient land within the built up areas outside the Green Belt to meet the future housing needs.

Q12 When is the Gedling Access Road due to be completed?

GBC and NCC to advise, but it has a history of being delayed, although we understand that planning permission and funding are now in place, and a start can be expected during 2018.

Once construction starts on the GAR, then this will provide the necessary confidence for Langridge Homes Ltd to prepare and negotiate a planning consent, and also to commence development on the basis that that no new homes would be occupied until the GAR is complete. In other words there will be an opportunity for parallel work-streams.

Q13 The development of this site for housing is dependent on the completion of the GAR? 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 110 dwellings allocated on H3 if this road is not completed?

If the GAR is not built, then it would have far reaching repercussions not only on the deliverability of this site, but on the whole of the Local Plan housing strategy for Gedling as it would mean that the Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm could not be built out. This would result in a considerable short fall in housing land supply over the plan period.

As such a robust strategy is required with either reserve sites or deliverable safeguarded land on the edge of the built up urban area being identified which is not dependent on the GAR being constructed.

Whilst acknowledging that the GAR is needed to relieve congestion through Gedling Village in particular, it is unlikely that a small development of 110 new homes would have such a significant impact on the local road network to justify a refusal on highway grounds if the GAR were to be delayed/not built. Further negotiations with NCC Highways would be necessary to see if there is a way forward.

Q14 Would the development of this site reduce the green corridor between Gedling and Lambley and Burton Joyce?

No.

The Willow Farm site is concealed visually from Lambley and Burton Joyce by the topography. The highest contour of the proposed allocation site is 75m AOD, yet the land rises up to 200m AOD on the western side of Burton Joyce and to 250m on the western edge of Lambley, before falling away again. The site will be further concealed from these settlements by the GAR when it is built.

Assuming the GAR is built then this will provide a long term defensible boundary for the Green Belt. The new road will have street lighting which will have more of an urbanising influence on the wider landscape than any new housing at Willow Farm which will be at a lower altitude to the road. Any perceived narrowing of the green corridor between Gedling and Lambley and Burton Joyce will therefore be caused by the GAR and not new housing on the urban side of the road.

In any event new housing development at Willow Farm will only marginally reduce the distance between Gedling and Lambley and Burton Joyce. At present the distance between the settlements is in the order of 2 km. The proposed development of H3 will only narrow this gap by 100m, and by upto 200m if the land allocated were to be extended up to the proposed GAR.

It should also be noted that the Indicative layout for the proposed housing scheme makes provision to retain a green corridor through the development to enable access to the countryside beyond.

Q15 Should the land allocated be extended up to the proposed Gedling Access Road?

Yes.

The site selection document (Appendix A) (LPD/GRO/06) states that the site is well connected to the urban area and does not make a significant contribution to the Green Belt. It recognises that the GAR will likely become the new defensible Green Belt boundary. Given that the alignment of the GAR has been agreed and has planning permission, then it seems logical that the whole site up to the GAR should be allocated, or part allocated with the remainder being designated as Safeguarded Land. There are no constraints to the development of this additional land, which will be visually enclosed by the GAR and the topography and face inwards towards the city.

In previous discussions (some years ago) with NCC and Gedling BC, Langridge Homes put forward proposals as part of a pre application inquiry (2013) which showed development at Willow Farm being split into two separate parts; one accessed off Green's Farm Lane (and possibly Grange View Road) and the second with a new access off the Gedling Access Road. No vehicular connections were planned between the two sites in order to prevent any rat-running between the residential areas and the Gedling Access Road, except possibly for buses, waste collection vehicles and emergency vehicles. In addition there would be footpath and cycling links to connect both parts of the

development. The basis of these proposals were agreed with NCC, which stated in writing that *“This site may benefit from access from Gedling Access Road . . .”*.

We understand however that NCC are now of the view that an access junction into the Willow Farm development may not be suitable. However, the purpose and therefore design of the road has been down-graded from a By-pass, to a relief road and now to an access road. The Gedling Access Road is proposed to be exactly that, i.e. an access road, with a number of access junctions at various locations along its length. In technical terms, we do not see any reason why an access junction cannot be provided into the proposed Willow Farm development as originally anticipated by NCC, and appropriate junction spacing, visibility splays and junction geometry could be provided.

Development of additional land at Willow Farm would provide 10.15 ha of additional area of developable land (5.97 ha net after allowing for landscape buffers and green corridors), with a capacity for an additional 180 homes (assuming 30 dwellings per ha) on the edge of the main built up urban area). The total allocation site would then be in the order of 290 dwellings.

It would be accessible to new bus routes along the GAR from the Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm site and provide opportunities for bus penetration into the development.

Q16 Would the cumulative impact of the development of this site, along with the Gedling Colliery/Chase Farm site (H9) and the Gedling Access Road be acceptable?

Yes.

The GAR will add significant capacity to the local road network on the east side of Nottingham. Adding traffic generated by a further 180 new homes to projected traffic flows from existing and planned developments will have a fairly insignificant impact on the GAR. By making this allocation in the Local Plan will mean that an appropriate junction could be designed and provided during the construction phase of the GAR.