



Historic England

MELTON LOCAL PLAN

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2018

Historic England Statement

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 Historic England (HE) made representations to the Melton Local Plan at both Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages (correspondence of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 together with four separate letters in relation to SS4 dated June, October and December 2016 and March 2017).
- 1.2 The July 2017 consultation included a revised boundary for SS4, Southern Sustainable Extension.

2 HE Current position in relation to the Matters, Issues and Questions Paper

- 2.1 With regard to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions Paper, Issue 4 (4.5 iv), HE maintain our objection to the revised boundary. This is also reflected in our response to FC31 IN1 for the 'corridor of investigation' for a highway route. Historic England consider that a relief road line north of G – F – C – B – A on the attached plan (Appendix 1, submitted with all previous objections) could avoid substantial harm.
- 2.2 HE would be very happy to agree this by Statement of Common Ground if the necessary changes can be made to the proposed boundary of SS4.
- 2.3 HE understand that a bid for a Housing Infrastructure Grant (HIF) was submitted in September in relation to funding the road which forms part of SS4. The outcome of this bid was expected imminently, but is not yet known and could potentially unlock development, reducing viability concerns.

3 HE Current position in relation to the Submission and Focused Changes Melton Local Plan

3.1 HE object to proposed SUE SS4, in so far as it lies east of Dalby Road due to the setting impact upon the significance of the Scheduled Monument of St Mary and St Lazarus Hospital. The Sustainability Appraisal site appraisal, which is not sufficiently detailed in any case, also raises concerns. The hospital was the principle establishment of the Knights of St Lazarus in England and is of exceptional archaeological and historic importance (even amongst monuments designated on the basis of national archaeological importance). Whilst noting the case for the utility of a southern bypass, HE do not accept that the planned capacity for residential development to the east of Dalby Lane and south of Kirby Lane is sustainable with regard to the conservation of the Scheduled Monument in its agrarian landscape setting, consciously at a distance removed from the town, with strip fields between. Medieval Leper Hospitals accommodated those who were excluded from society due to fear of medical and moral contagion (the two being intimately linked) and inmates were set outside the company of the living. The site accessible from the highway but placed apart from the community of the living, is characteristic of this monument type. The function of the Hospital as the administrative centre of the order England and its land and property was key both to its function as an institution and its role in support of the Crusades. Whilst medieval leprosy should not be viewed solely in the present day medical diagnosis and encompassed a range of conditions, the reduction in the prevalence of actual leprosy through the medieval period would have altered the function of the site. The identity of the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem and their association with the treatment of the sick was still central to their corporate identity and this remained articulated by setting of their establishment. The extensive water features that form parts of the earthwork monument may hint at an articulation of the relationship between curative bathing and the treatment of skin complaints. If the planned option for development including housing and a relief road south of Kirby Lane was to be pursued, the bypass (Outer Western Relief Route) and associated landscaping should be sited as far north of the scheduled monument as possible, and without intrusion into areas of surviving ridge and furrow earthworks or breaking through key historic boundaries and breaks in topography. This view is reflected in HE responses to 15/00127/OUT and previous local plan consultation responses, (as noted in our letter of 30 March 2017, HE did not object to the dashed line to the south shown on the proposals map of the earlier Local Plan consultation, providing that it

was the furthest extent of development rather than an approximate boundary). HE have provided detailed and constructive advice, meeting with the Local Planning Authority and the proposed developer on several occasions and have clearly set out in letter and plan form a relatively small amendment, which whilst still allowing for development to the east of Dalby Road, including the bypass, would prevent the most significant harm to the scheduled ancient monument. As indicated in our previous correspondence the introduction of housing as well as a relief road in the area east of Dalby Road would be harmful to the significance of the scheduled monument, but there is a substantive increase in impact where the proposed road line breaks field boundaries.

3.1 To provide a sound allocation, being positively prepared, justified and consistent with national policy, protecting the setting of the Scheduled Monument of St Mary and St Lazarus Hospital, the site allocation should be realigned partially to the north, in accordance with our previous advice. South of the line E-D-C-B-A (on attached plan, Appendix 1) lie earthworks of medieval / post medieval cultivation (ridge and furrow) which directly support the historic landscape context and hence the significance of the scheduled monument. The historic field boundary on line E-D-C-B-A forms a clear tipping point in itself in terms of level of harm to the monuments significance through setting impacts. Keeping the relief road to the northern side of line E-D-C-B-A would greatly reduce the prominence of the road when viewed from the scheduled area and it would avoid breaking the 115m contour. The next key tipping point (heading west) is where a revised relief road would break the existing east-west oriented field boundary west of point E, in order to approach the proposed Sandy Lane junction north of the mature tree at G. If the point where the field boundary is crossed is constrained to a point west of point F this will work with the natural topography which falls away from that point, greatly reducing the visibility of the new road from the monument, hence the new road should not in our view break through the existing boundary between points F and E. Having examined the proposed junction on Sandy Lane, whilst our preferred location was north of that indicated, Historic England believe that as long as the junction is kept north of the mature tree at location G (hence on the north facing slope) harm will again be kept overall to a less than substantial degree. HE consider that a relief road line north of G – F – C – B – A could avoid substantial harm.

3.2 HE are aware that limiting housing development in the setting of the scheduled monument to the topographic break provided by the line of Dalby Lane may increase

requirements to the west, however this underlines the need for nuanced decisions in which the relative importance and sensitivity of heritage assets is properly understood. It is evident that a funding model in which adjacent housing phases deliver the immediately adjacent stretch of road may be too inflexible and should not in our view justify this level of avoidable harm.

- 3.3 It is also noted that the planned housing requirement for the Borough is more than the objectively assessed housing need for the Borough, as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment. Evidence has been requested but has not been provided as to the number of dwellings proposed beyond where the proposed road line breaks field boundaries.
- 3.4 We have reviewed the Heritage Study by Cotswold Archaeology procured by Melton Borough Council, with a copy given to Historic England during the meeting 24th May 2017. The setting analysis is critically flawed in that it fails to address the key contribution to the significance of the monument made by the extant historic landscape features.
- 3.5 Although welcomed, reference to the protection and enhancement of historic and archaeological features, including the St. Mary and St. Lazarus hospital scheduled monument and its setting within policy SS4, this is not sufficient to address the issues set out above. As proposed, the allocation would be contrary to criteria en3 of policy SS4en3. HE would be very happy to work on strengthening of the wording of policy SS4 in conjunction with a change to the southern boundary of the SUE to reflect the Pre Submission Draft Local Plan. A 'notwithstanding' approach could be taken to ensure a draft policy is developed in the meantime ahead of redrawing the boundary, but without a change to the boundary, the policy alone would not be sufficient to address the objections of HE.
- 3.6 **Summary**
- 3.7 Based on the current content of the Submission Plan and its supporting information HE maintains its concerns about soundness of the Plan in terms of the approach to SS4 and IN1. As such, the Plan is not consistent with national policy in the NPPF, including the need to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance (NPPF Para.132).

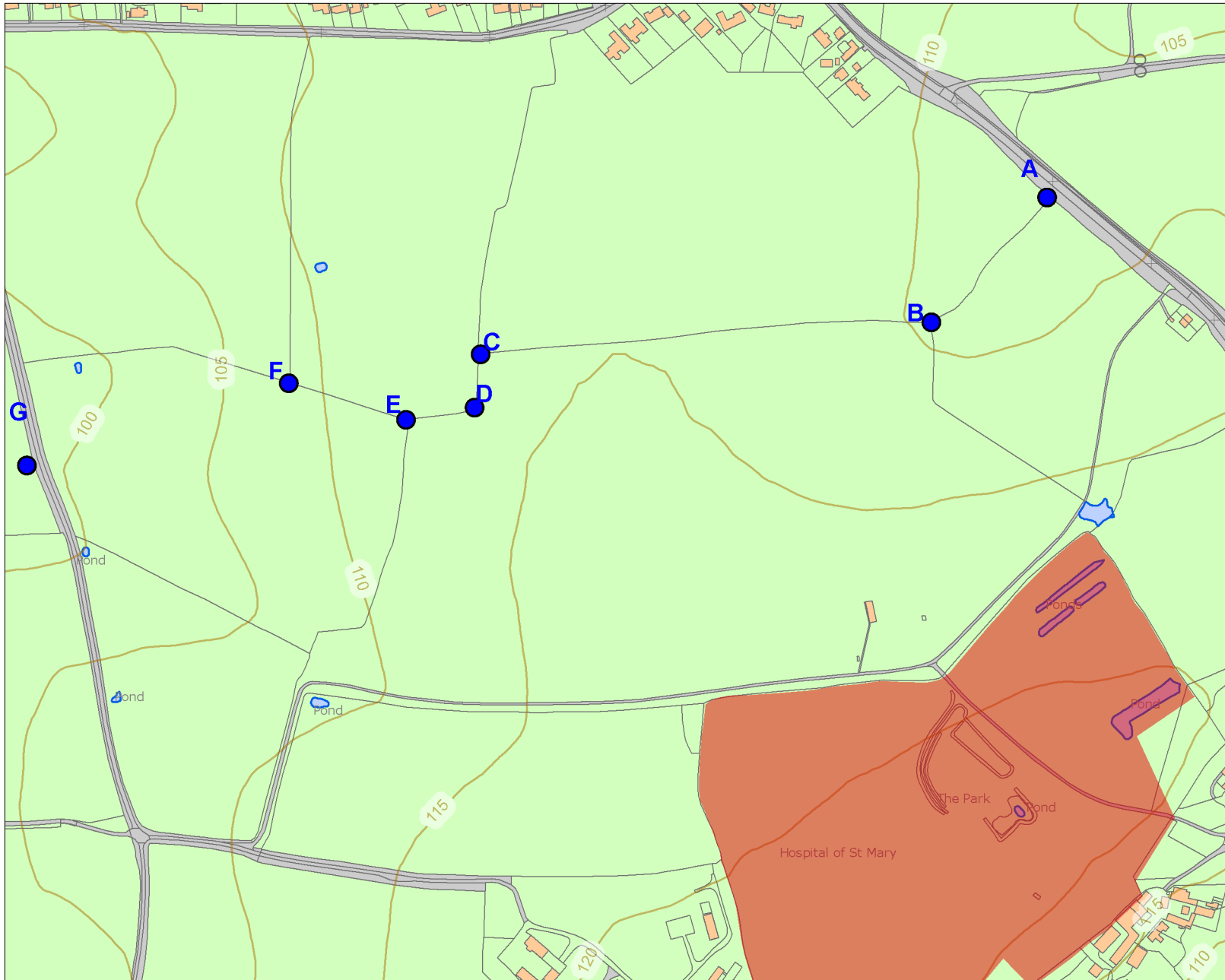


Word Count: 1531
(Appendix 1 attached)

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Burton Lazars HE 26-5-16



5m Contours
Scheduled Monument in Red
Blue dots refer to letter text

Date 26/05/2016
Map Scale 1:5,000
Map Centre 476058,317032



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