



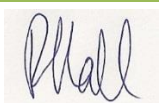


Melton Local Plan 2011-2036
Matters and Questions for the Examination

On behalf of JGP Properties Ltd

8th January 2018

Quality Control

Job No	P&DG/13.034		
Title	Matters and Questions for the Examination		
Location	Melton Local Plan 2011-36		
Document Ref	Matters and Questions		
File reference	P&DG/13.034 MAQ		
Date	8 January 2018		
Prepared by	CJ	Signature (for file)	
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Matters and Questions Statement sets out P&DG's representations submitted on behalf of JGP Properties Ltd.
- 1.2 Separate Hearing Statements Representations are submitted concerning the following Matters and Questions:
 - Legal Requirements and the Duty to Cooperate (Hearing Statement 1);
 - Matter 2, Question 2.1, parts i and ii (Hearing Statement 2);
 - Matter 2, Question 2.2 (Hearing Statement 3);
 - Matter 3, Question 3.1 (Hearing Statement 4); and
 - Matter 5, Question 5.1; parts i, ii and iii.
- 1.3 These representations should be read in conjunction with our previous representations made to the Melton Local Plan 2011-2036, including the Pre Submission Draft (November 2016) and Addendum of Focussed Changes (July 2017). This is with particular reference to the settlement of Burton Lazars, and the site at New Road, appended to our Focused Changes representations ref 13.034 23-08-2017.

3.0 Hearing Statement 2

Matter 2, Question 2.1, parts i and ii;

“Does the Plan provide a sound framework for the roles that will be played by various parts of the Borough in meeting development needs over the plan period? In particular:

- i) Are the development strategy, settlement hierarchy and broad apportionment of growth (Policies SS2 and SS3) consistent with the Plans’ vision and strategic objectives?*
- ii) Are they founded on robust evidence, consistent with national planning policy and deliverable?*
- iii) Is the role of Table 4 in informing the detailed housing allocations policies sufficiently clear? Is its evidential base sufficient for its purpose?*

- 3.1 To address the Council’s response to the Focussed Changes consultation, some clarity has been provided on the role of Policy SS3 in the removal of specific thresholds for rural settlements. A degree of added flexibility in this policy is welcome and we concur with the Council’s view taken that development amount should be commensurate with a wider range of contextual factors.
- 3.2 In other parts of the consultation, we do not consider that the Council has justified its position enough. We continue to have concerns that specific aspects of the development strategy are flawed and do not present full consistency, chiefly the settlement hierarchy. This is a matter we have raised in our previous representations at Pre-submission and Addendum of Focused Changes stages, and we do not propose to repeat those comments, but we are not satisfied this has been duly addressed in the Council’s most recent response to those representations, lastly the summary of responses to Focussed Changes.
- 3.3 In our view, a Plan is not positively prepared where its evidence base gives rise to the prospects of sites being developable, or for certain settlements being suitable for proportionate growth during an earlier stage of the Plan, only for those conclusions to change but not appropriately evidenced.
- 3.4 In the case of Burton Lazars, we consider that this has taken place by virtue of Melton Borough Council originally considering that its sustainability had to be treated distinctively because of its spatial relationship with Melton Mowbray, and then not reflecting this at all in the submission plan by applying the settlement scoring system and removing the ‘rural supporter’ category from the settlement hierarchy altogether. The distinct relationship continues to be referred but not carried through to policy or allocation.

- 3.5 We would wish for this issue to be addressed since Burton Lazars continues to have this distinctive spatial relationship to Melton, more so if the proposed Melton South Sustainable Neighbourhood is approved since this will be providing even more amenities in acceptable distance of Burton Lazars village.
- 3.6 As such for part iii), we do not consider Table 4 to be a suitable basis for determining housing allocations in isolation, since there are rural settlements of a comparative population to others listed for allocations including Burton Lazars (population c. 450) that are excluded from this table through the Council's conclusions of their sustainability.
- 3.7 If Burton Lazars had been considered in the way the Council originally stated it would, then subject to other material considerations there would be the prospect of moderate housing growth of this settlement in the Local Plan, potentially 2-3% of the total allocation for villages and service centres.
- 3.8 As Burton Lazars is included in the Gaddesby Ward for the purpose of calculating rural housing needs it is not possible to gauge an exact numerical figure of need for the village; however its spatial relationship with Melton would suggest it would be a desirable place to live and one which would require new homes. Our previous representations already cover the distance between Burton Lazars and Melton, all cases which the policy expects to be a Rural Hub as a location within 2.5km of the town.
- 3.9 If that approach can be taken forward with Asfordby Hill and Thorpe Arnold on basis of their relationship to Melton; and Easthorpe (which scored 0 in the Settlement Roles and Relationships Study 2016) because of its links to Bottesford, then what evidence is available to suggest Burton Lazars would be excluded from this position?
- 3.10 To quote Appendix 1 off the Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies (ref: MBC G4e) *"Thorpe Arnold has very few services and facilities and is identified as a 'Rural Settlement' in the emerging Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the village has a strong functional relationship with Melton Mowbray, and can easily access the wide range of facilities and services that exist there, including employment, retail, education and health services. Thorpe Arnold also has good access to transport choice including public transport, walking and cycling"*.
- 3.11 Similar sentiments were also echoed in paragraph 6.6 of the Settlement Roles and Relationships Study 2015 (ref: MBC SS2) where it was stated of settlements closely related to the main urban area of Melton Mowbray or other key settlement. *"Examples include Thorpe Arnold and Burton Lazars's relationship with Melton Mowbray and the relationship of Easthorpe with Bottesford. Looking forwards it is essential that these locations maintain their independent integrity but when planning for new development their strong relationship with the larger centres needs to be recognised in any policy approach"*.
- 3.12 How can Burton Lazars be any different given it was once a rural supporter settlement in the same vein as Thorpe Arnold?

4.0 Hearing Statement 3

Matter 2, Question 2.2;

'Does Policy SS3 provide effective guidance for development proposals on unallocated sites in/on the edge of existing rural settlements? How will the risk of inconsistency with the development strategy from repeated application of policy be assessed?'

- 4.1 While the proposed policy does allow for a small amount of growth in rural settlements, due to the concerns we have over the consistency of the Council's consideration of Burton Lazars in the settlement hierarchy, the policy is not fully accurate guidance. There is likely to be a housing need in Burton Lazars but the evidence base of the Local Plan includes the village in the Gaddesby ward, and there is no direct ability to account for the village's housing need as stated in our Hearing Statement 2.