Doncaster Local Plan Examination
Hallam Land Management (ID 05212)
Matter 7 Statement – Specific Types of Housing

Issued September 2020

1.1 This Hearing Statement is prepared on behalf of our client Hallam Land Management (ID 05212). Our client seeks to respond to Question 7.1 only.

M7. Specific Types of Housing

Q7.1 Is the approach to housing development in the Countryside set out in policies 2, 3 and 26 justified and consistent with national policy? In particular:

- Are the size limits for an individual scheme/site and cumulative growth limits over the Plan period for residential development adjacent to the 14 Defined Villages set out in Policy 3 justified?

- Are the Council’s suggested changes to the title of the first column of the table in policy 3 and footnote 5 relating to the site/scheme and cumulative growth limits for the 14 Defined Villages necessary and would they make the policy effective.

- Is the requirement to demonstrate exceptional circumstance and clear community support for development in the Countryside adjacent to the Development Limit of a Defined Village justified and consistent with national policy?

- Is the Council’s suggested change to the end of part 3 of policy 26 (to clarify that other proposals for new dwellings in the Countryside will be supported in line with national policy) necessary to make the plan sound?

1.2 The requirement set out in Policy 2 and the supporting text of Policy 3, that residential development may be supported in the Countryside on land adjacent to the development limits of a Defined Village when exceptional circumstances and clear local community support is demonstrated, is not consistent with the NPPF and therefore is not sound.

1.3 The requirement to demonstrate exceptional circumstances for development in the Countryside is wholly at odds with the NPPF and it is clear that this is a policy strategy of constraining development rather than directing sustainable development to meet need. The Countryside designation is misleading and implies a strong degree of protection, akin to that of the Green Belt which is not required.

1.4 Whilst the NPPF identifies the need to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as part of the pursuit of sustainable development, it does not direct that all
countryside should be protected for its own sake. This is reinforced by the concerns raised by the Inspector of the Doncaster LDP Sites and Policies DPD who had previously criticised the Council’s misleading naming of the countryside as a ‘Countryside Protection Area’. It was noted that “…The area so designated has not been assessed for its special qualities and there is no policy either in the Core Strategy or the DPD which gives it any special status. The land is simply countryside. Referring to it as anything else implies a status which it does not possess.” (Paragraph 38, Final Letter Stage 1v2. [No document ref number, under Previous Examination in the EIP Library])

1.5 The recent strong delivery in Doncaster (as identified under our Matter 2 Statement) shows market demand and demonstrates an imperative need for flexibility, which Policies 2, 3 and 26 currently do not afford.

1.6 With regard to demonstrating clear local community support, this policy wording is not precise and is ambiguous as to how this will be assessed in the determination of a planning application. If a proposed development is acceptable in all other respects it is not reasonable to also require community support. This is not required by the NPPF and there is no justification in the Plan for why this is a requirement for development in smaller settlements but not larger ones.

1.7 Regardless of the Council’s suggested change to the end of part 3 of Policy 26, part 3 of policy 26 should be amended to make clear the policy text relates to Exception Sites and Isolated homes in the Countryside and not all new homes in the Countryside. As currently drafted the policy is not sound as it has not been positively prepared nor is it consistent with the NPPF and without the aforementioned clarification there remains tension between this and Policy 2.

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