HEARING STATEMENT

MATTER 3: STRATEGIC APPROACH

ON BEHALF OF METACRE LIMITED (REF: 05173 / 05174)

Word count (excluding Inspector’s questions) – 807

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

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1.0 **Introduction**

1.1 This hearing statement is provided on behalf of our client Metacre Limited. It is made in respect of ‘Matter 3: Strategic Approach’. Responses are provided solely to questions which are directly relevant to our client’s site and previous submissions made on their behalf.

1.2 Metacre Limited are promoting two sites through this Local Plan. These being:

- Land at Crabgate Lane, Skellow (site reference: 186) – this is part of the proposed site allocation Land north of A1, Skellow in combination with site reference 165, and
- Land at Mill Lane, Skellow (site reference: 185)

1.3 Our Client is an important stakeholder in the plan making process and wishes to ensure that the Doncaster Local Plan is prepared in a robust manner that passes the tests of soundness contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para. 35), namely that the plan is:

- Positively Prepared;
- Justified;
- Effective; and
- Consistent with national policy.

1.4 Our client supports many of the policies within the Local Plan and believes with modifications the plan should be found sound. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions and provide the following responses to selected questions in so far as they relate to our previous representations.
2.0 Inspectors Questions

2.1 The omission of a response to a specific question should not be construed as our client having nothing further to add. Our client reserves the right to respond not only to the questions identified in this hearing statement but others as relevant and deemed necessary during the hearing session(s).

2.2 The questions are taken in order of publication within the Matters, Issues and Questions document (ref: INSP4).

**Q3.1. Is the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in policy 1 consistent with national policy and would it be effective in helping decision makers know how to react to development proposals?**

2.3 Our client considers policy 1 is largely consistent with national policy, though considers policy 1(B) needs rewording to be consistent with paragraph 11(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires planning applications which accord with an up-to-date development plan to be approved without delay.

**Q3.2. Is the broad spatial distribution of development proposed in policies 2 and 3 justified? In particular, the aims to accommodate:**

a) **At least 50% of new homes in and around the Main Urban Area; approximately 40% at seven Main Towns; and about 10% at ten Service Towns and Villages.**

b) **The ranges for the number of new homes in and around each of the individual Main Towns and Service Towns and Villages.**

c) **Major new employment sites in locations accessible from the Main Urban Area and Main Towns in locations attractive to the market with good access to the strategic transport network as well as Doncaster Sheffield Airport.**

d) **Retail, leisure, office, cultural and tourist developments in the network of town centres defined in Table 2.**

2.4 Our client is supportive of the allocation of Land at Crabgate Lane, Skellow (site reference: 186) in conjunction with site reference 165 and is broadly supportive of the spatial distribution of development, though raises concerns over the limited and disproportionate level of growth which has been identified
for certain settlements located within the settlement hierarchy.

2.5 An example of this is the level of growth identified for Skellow, which is identified as a Service Town and Village though has only been identified for up to 250 homes. Skellow is a highly sustainable settlement suitable for additional housing growth as it benefits from a large number of primary services located between two local centres which contain local services and amenities, primary schools and health care provision. It is also the largest Service Town and Village in terms of population, and has a close relationship with Adwick and Woodlands; a Main Town. The identified level of housing growth is considered to be limited and would not maintain and enhance Skellow’s’ role as a Service Town and Village; as such, additional housing should be allocated in Skellow.

2.6 Our client’s site at Land at Mill Lane, Skellow (site reference: 185) would increase the level of housing growth in Skellow to assist in providing a flexible land supply for Carcroft and Skellow, in addition to Site 186. This site is available now and is deliverable and is capable of accommodating all residential development in flood zone 1.

Q3.3. Is the broad spatial distribution of development proposed by the employment and housing allocations in policies 4 and 6 justified having regard to the aims set out in policies 2 and 3? Are any main modifications required to ensure that the Plan is unambiguous and internally consistent in this respect?

2.7 Our client is broadly supportive of the spatial distribution of housing development; however, I refer to the answer given in respect of Q3.2.

Q3.4. Is the suggested change to policy 2 set out in the Council’s response to PQ14 necessary to make the Plan sound?

2.8 Our client considers the suggested change to policy 2 is an improvement in that it provides further clarity for the decision-maker on how the policy should be applied. Notwithstanding this, the policy is considered to take an overly restrictive approach to residential development outside defined settlement boundaries and fails to allow for the consideration of the sustainability of countryside sites. This restrictive policy is contrary to national policy as it does not promote sustainable development in rural areas; a requirement of
paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Q3.5. *Is the approach to deciding development proposals based on the figures for new homes set out in policy 3 for Doncaster Main Urban Area, the Main Towns and the Service Towns and Larger Villages justified, and is it sufficiently clear to be effective?*

2.9 Our client is broadly supportive of the proposed distribution of development, however, considers that a more flexible approach needs to be taken to meet housing needs across the settlement hierarchy. Policy 3 identifies the number of housing which is to be provided within settlements across the plan period; in the case of Service Towns and Larger Villages, it is anticipated that 10% of the boroughs total housing would be planned here. This has been distributed across the 10 settlements in this category with Carcroft & Skellow identified for 250 homes. Our client considers it important that this figure is not used as a maximum, but instead a minima to ensure housing needs can be met in a flexible way which is responsive to the local needs of each settlement.