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Planning Policy
Charnwood Borough Council
Council Offices
Southfield Road
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LE11 2TN

23/06/2023

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re. Cossington Neighbourhood Plan – Pre-examination (Regulation 16) consultation

With regard to the above consultation, I am writing on behalf of Mulberry Land, who wish to make representations to the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.

Mulberry is a privately owned, multi-disciplinary developer within both the commercial and residential sectors. Through our in-house experience, we work closely with planning authorities to deliver proposals that directly address relevant economic, social and environmental objectives, embracing local and national policies. Together, working in partnership with landowners, planners, public authorities and local communities, we create places of lasting appeal that maximise the true value of sites and have a positive impact on the surrounding area.

Mulberry Land are specifically promoting land to the north of Syston Road, Cossington. The site is approx. 17 hectares and is in a highly sustainable location for employment development. We have submitted representations in support of employment development at this location as part of the Charnwood Local Plan Examination, during 2022 and earlier in 2023.

The site is located immediately to the northwest of the existing employment site at Charnwood Edge Business Park. The site also is located directly to the north of land currently the subject of live planning application P/22/1192/2, known as Land to the West of Charnwood Edge Business Park, Syston Road, Cossington. This application was submitted for the erection of 4 industrial buildings (B8) and associated works. Comprehensively, the sites will expand on the existing employment part, creating jobs, connections and economic activity alongside the A46.

Mulberry Land welcomes the opportunity to comment on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan and looks forward to future engagement with the Parish Council in discussing land to the south

east of the Cossington NP designated neighbourhood area for future employment opportunities.

Page 3 of the NP reiterates the principles of sustainable development as contained within the NPPF. This details three dimensions to development:

- An economic dimension – they should contribute to economic development
- A social dimension – they should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the right supply of housing and creating a high-quality built environment with accessible local services
- An environmental dimension – they should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

We agree that for the NP to be adopted, it needs to be supportive of development that contributes towards the above sustainability criteria.

Mulberry Land welcomes the section in the NP which covers support for new businesses and employment. We appreciate that communities such as Cossington might be concerned regarding any impacts on the settlement, however suitable sites are required for economic development to help meet with Charnwood's identified employment needs and known occupier demands. Charnwood is required to accommodate additional employment land as a result of Leicester City Council being unable to meet the full evidenced demand within their administrative area. As a consequence, an unmet need for approx. 23 hectares of employment land has been identified in the period up to 2036.

Positively planning for suitable sites is essential given the known shortfall in planned provision across the region. We are therefore supportive of flexible policies to enable further appropriate sites to come forward to satisfy this need. Restrictive policies should not prejudice windfall sites coming forward given the need for employment land. Doing so could significantly stifle the economic potential within the sub-region.

We would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Parish Council to ensure that the sensitive character of the Parish is continually respected, and to demonstrate that any potentially harmful impacts, such as increased traffic, will be mitigated and directed towards the strategic highway network, thus avoiding impacts on the settlement.

There are opportunities, alongside the delivery of economic benefits, to enhance the public transport connections currently on offer, which as set out in the NP, look to be limited. There is also the opportunity to provide some meeting / office space as a benefit to the local community to encourage working from home and supporting local infrastructure, along with financial contributions towards a new replacement village hall at Cossington.

Policy BE2 remains restrictive in its approach, with new business and employment development required to "*Fall within the planned settlement boundary for the Cossington Parish or within existing employment areas, unless it relates to small scale leisure or tourism activities, or other forms of commercial / employment related development appropriate to a countryside location*".

Land to the north of Syston Road, Cossington is located on the opposite side of the railway line, to the southeast of Cossington settlement, and it is therefore detached from the settlement. This factor, however, is a significant benefit when considering the site's proximity to the A46 and strategic highway network beyond, along with being adjacent to the existing employment area. Larger scale, strategic employment land requires good highways connections, which also means that any additional traffic movements are kept away from residential areas at Cossington, limiting impact on the settlement, and directing vehicles immediately onto dualled routes.

The required need for larger scale employment opportunities can rarely be accommodated within settlement boundaries, due to the size of sites and their requirement to be located alongside the strategic highway network. Access to transport routes is essential for their successful operational demands.

Policy BE2 of the NP does not adequately provide the choice nor availability for different elements of the industrial and logistics sector. There is a strong need to allow for additional employment land to come forward in order to boost the supply of floorspace and to allow development to come forward along key transport corridors such as the A46. In this context, the land north of Syston Road would make a valuable contribution towards the Borough's employment land supply, and will support the local workforce of Cossington, Sileby, Syston and beyond.

Mulberry Land commend Cossington Parish Council / Neighbourhood Plan Group on the production of the draft plan. However, it is felt that revisions should be made to enable the economic benefits of employment land growth in the area to realise its full potential. Employment growth for future generations is crucial, to ensure that communities remain vibrant and sustainable. We would encourage the NP to take advantage of this opportunity, and of course, Mulberry Land would welcome any future discussions in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Bishop

**Emily Bishop
Strategic Land and Planning Manager
Mulberry Land**

Enc: Site location plan – land to the north of Syston Road, Cossington



Site location plan – land to the north of Syston Road, Cossington