



BABTAG HEARING STATEMENT

May 2022

Babtag wishes to add to its July 2021 comments on the Charnwood Local Plan on Areas of Separation and Green Wedges relating to the proposed housing development areas HA7 and HA1. BABTAG sees an inconsistency between the council's stated position on the purpose and achievements of Areas of Separation and of Green Wedges and its willingness to encourage house building on this very land to the point that it makes this aspect of the local Plan "unsound". **The council's policy is against coalescence but its proposals make it inevitable.**

A reminder of the council's policy on Areas of Separation as set out in the Local Plan page 181 paragraph 8.17

"their main purpose is preserving settlement identity and they are based on landscape character, the visual appearance of an area and maintaining connectivity with the wider landscape setting of a settlement"

Paragraph 6.18

"council's policy of areas of local separation has maintained the character and identity of individual settlement and prevents their coalescence"

And on Green Wedges page 180

Paragraph 8.11

"to safeguard the identities of communities within and around urban areas"

The reality on the ground

BABTAG argues that these policy statements cannot be reconciled with the designation for housing development of the areas identified as HA1 and HA7 on the Local Plan policies map

HA7

The whole of this area was until recently designated green wedge. It is now zoned for development.

HA1

The whole area was till recently divided between green wedge and an area of local separation. Under the Local Plan proposals no green wedge will remain whilst the area of separation will be roughly halved.

Coalescence

The settlement identity of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe has already been threatened from the south and west by the massive 4500 houses development of Thorpebury. Now coalescence threatens from the north east as Syston's extension in HA1 will be in full view on what up till now has been mainly green wedge land. Under the proposals not a single acre of green wedge will remain between Barkby and Syston north of Barkby Lane and the reduced area of separation no more than the size of a single field.

Charnwood has been proud to claim that the conservation village of Barkby is “the jewel in its crown” but fails to recognize that the loss of its setting in green fields will tarnish that jewel immeasurably.

BABTAG calls on the Inspectors to find the gulf between the council’s stated policies and its proposals renders the Local Plan unsound.