



Charnwood Local Plan Examination

Matter 6 - Housing Site Allocations in Service
Centres and Other Settlements – Site HA65

for Hollins Strategic Land LLP (PSLP/366)



Project : 18-555
Site address : Matter 6 Issue 4
Client : Hollins Strategic Land LLP

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1. Introduction

1.1 Emery Planning is instructed to attend the Examination into the Charnwood Local Plan (2021 – 2037) on behalf of Hollins Strategic Land (hereafter referred to as 'HSL'). HSL's specific interest is the land north of Melton Road, Queniborough which is proposed for allocation (Site Ref HA65) under Policy DS3.

2. Question 6.16

a. Is the proposed scale of housing development justified, having regard to any constraints and the provision of necessary infrastructure?

2.1 HA65 identifies a notional capacity of 55 dwellings. We can confirm that this scale of development is achievable as a minimum capacity. Figure 1 is a capacity plan which indicates a 2.88ha developable area and at a density of 20-30dph this could achieve 58-86 dwellings. This has been drawn in the context of SLR's advice but also reflects the developable area shown on the indicative layout for the application to the west (P/20/1605/2) by Hallam Land Management. That application was for 200 dwellings and the built form was greater than that shown in paragraph 2.120 of the draft Local Plan. Officers concluded¹:

"It is officer's opinion that the impact of the development on the appearance of the countryside and the purposes of the area of separation can be mitigated through substantial landscaping such that the harm would not be significant and demonstrable in its own right."

2.2 Members did not follow officer advice and the application was refused. The key point is that the views of officers was that a greater level of development to that in the draft Local Plan was appropriate. Therefore, for our capacity plan (Figure 1) we have followed that indicative layout but the actual developable area can be determined at the application stage.

b. Is the allocation consistent with the development strategy in Policy DS1 and where relevant, does it take account of a made Neighbourhood Plan?

2.3 Yes. Policy DS1 sets out the distribution of the overall requirement into the following categories:

- Leicester Urban Area (Birstall, Syston, Thurmaston) – 38%;
- Loughborough Urban Centre – 31%;

¹ Page A21 of the Committee Report dated March 2021

- Shepshed Urban Area – 12%;
- Service Centres (Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby) – 14%;
- Other Settlements – 5%; and,
- Small Villages and Hamlets - 0.1%

2.4 The Charnwood Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (**EB/DS/3**) ranks Queniborough as a fourth tier settlement in Figure 11 due to the village benefiting from a range of services and facilities that enhance the sustainability of the village and development of this site will be in a location which is accessible.

2.5 With regard to the Neighbourhood Plan (EB/NP/3), it takes no account of the housing needs in the emerging Local Plan. Paragraph 54 of the Examiners Report states:

“I do not consider that there is a need for the neighbourhood plan to be allocating additional sites for development based on the existing local plan requirements for the village, despite the representations of other landowners. It is for the new local plan to address those matters.”

2.6 Policy Q6 of the made Queniborough Neighbourhood Plan does accept that the Area of Separation as defined in the Neighbourhood Plan can be superseded by an allocation in a development plan document. It states:

“In respect of complying with the requirement for new development to maintain the separate identities of our town and villages, the Area of Local Separation between Queniborough and Syston and East Goscote shall be as shown on this Neighbourhood Plan’s Countryside Map unless the land is allocated for development in a development plan document.”

2.7 Therefore, the neighbourhood plan was based on the Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan is a new planning chapter for housing need and allocations in Queniborough. Given the requirements in Policy DS1, that Policy Q6 is permissive of an allocation in a development plan document, then the allocation in Queniborough is appropriate.

c. What is the likely impact of the proposed development on the following factors:

settlement separation and identity and landscape character

2.8 In response to c(i) we answer the following question in the Inspectors MIQs which states:

“Will the development successfully maintain the separation between Queniborough and East Goscote?”

2.9 As part of the evidence base for the Plan the following reports have been prepared which are:

- Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones & ALS - March 2016 (EB/ENV/6);
- Annex A - Assessment Pro-Formas - March 2016 (EB/ENV/7); and,
- Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones and Areas of Local Separation Methodology and Assessment Findings Report Addendum May 2019 (EB/ENV/5).

2.10 The site has also been considered in two other parts of the evidence base, these being:

- SHLAA (Site PSH446) in Queniborough Settlement Proforma (EB/DS/1f); and,
- Site PSH446 in Sustainability Appraisal: Spatial Strategy (EB/DS/7) – October 2019.

2.11 The Green Wedge assessment concludes that ALS-J provides an important gap between Queniborough, East Goscote and Syston. However, that report does not take the other factors such as housing need and the spatial strategy into account. That is taken in the SASS where the Green Wedge is one of a range of factors considered, one of which is "Landscape". For the land to the west, paragraph 7.2.33 states:

"Site HS74 (Land at Threeways Farm) in Queniborough falls within an Area of Local Separation and is classified as moderate sensitivity. Development here therefore presents the possibility of negative effects. However, an area of open 'countryside' will remain between Queniborough and East Goscote, including open space between the proposed allocation and the A607. The land is currently agricultural and has no defining features, and therefore, the effects of a well-designed development would be minor. However, it will be important to ensure that 'rounding off' doesn't occur in the future, as this would reduce the gap between the two settlements. Overall, a neutral effect is predicted."

2.12 We support that conclusion and combination with the flood plain/open countryside to the north of the A607/south of East Goscote and the landscaped area to be retained on the land controlled by HSL, there will be both a functional and visual separation role between the villages of Queniborough to the south, and East Goscote to the north. This also accords with the evidence that HSL received from SLR Consulting in their advice dated 6th June 2018 which still applies.

2.13 The technical work that HSL has undertaken to date confirms that an increased capacity above 55 dwellings can be accommodated whilst ensuring the principles established by emerging Policy DS3 (HA65) are complied with. Their technical work has also highlighted that tangible green infrastructure benefits can be delivered on-site. The site is 6.3 hectares and is therefore of sufficient

scale to accommodate an increased capacity at a density that is reflective of the prevailing character of the area whilst allowing for on-site open space and robust landscape buffers to be established.

- 2.14 To conclude, we are entirely confident that the development of this site will not have an adverse impact on settlement separation and identity and landscape character and the site can meet the housing needs in Queniborough without any loss of the identity of the village or of East Goscote.

biodiversity, green infrastructure including public rights of way and agricultural land quality, heritage assets, the strategic and local highway network and other infrastructure including health facilities, education and open space, air and water quality, noise pollution, land stability and flood risk.

- 2.15 There are a range of site-specific points in this question. The combination of the Sustainability Appraisal: Spatial Strategy (EB/DS/7) and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) assesses the site and all these matters were covered with the conclusion of the SHLAA being:

"There are no irresolvable physical/environmental constraints preventing development, the site is in a suitable location for development and a suitable access can be achieved".

- 2.16 After the assessment in Table 6.9: Housing site options assessment, the SA states:

"There are six site options in Queniborough. Three are proposed for allocation (PSH42, PSH446, PSH287). Apart from site PSH287 (which performs slightly better than the other three site options overall) accessibility is comparable. With regards to environmental factors, the sites all perform similarly, with only PSH183 performing worse with regards to biodiversity. However, the three selected sites are all closer to the Syston AQMA."

Highways and Access

- 2.17 Eddisons, who are the highways consultant, advise as follows.
- 2.18 The site has an extensive adopted highway frontage to Melton Road. As such, there is some flexibility to the location of the site access. The Charnwood Local Plan documents have suggested that the access is located towards the western frontage of the site away from the roundabout junction of the A607/Melton Road, indicated by the red dot on the image on the previous page.

2.19 The site is currently proposed to be allocated for 55 residential dwellings. This would require a simple 'bell mouth' junction arrangement. This is shown in principle on Drawing Number 2483-F01. The geometry will be as follows and can easily be accommodated on land within the site or on currently adopted highway

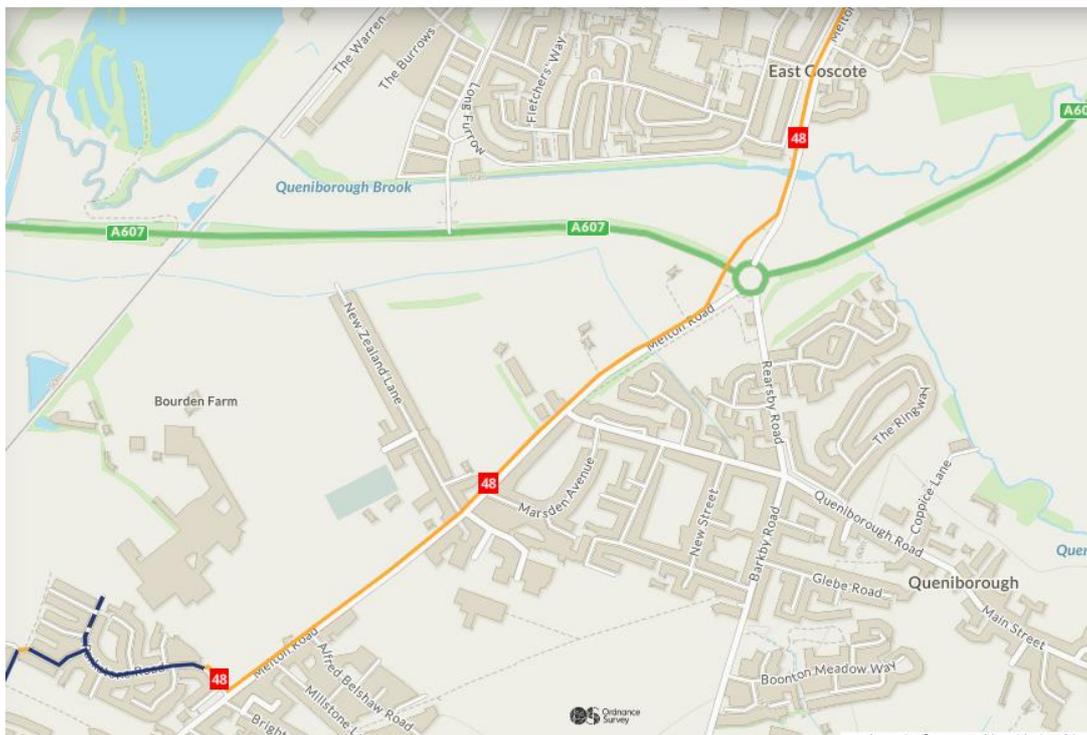
- Road width of 5.5m.
- Footways on both sides of 2m wide.
- Junction radii of 6m.
- Visibility splays of 2.4m by 120m.

2.20 The visibility splays are based on the robust Design Manual for Roads and Bridge (DMRB) rather than Manual for Streets. As part of the junction arrangements, it is proposed to extend the 40mph speed limit from its present start which is close to the western boundary of the site eastwards to cover the site frontage up towards the roundabout with the A607.

- 2.21 The geometric criteria has been referenced from guidance set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The DMRB forms part of the Manual of Contract Documents for Highway works.
- 2.22 The junction alignment parameters are taken from the DMRB document CD123 Geometric Design of at Grade Priority and Signal Controlled Junctions and CD116 Geometric Design of Roundabouts forming part of the road layout section of the Design Manual For Roads and Bridges.
- 2.23 As such, there should be no objection to the principle of accessing the site from Melton Road. This was clearly the conclusion reached by LCC in their original acceptance of the site being allocation in the emerging Charnwood Local Plan.

Sustainability

- 2.24 Melton Road has a wide shared footway/cycleway on the northern side to allow a direct connection to and from the site for pedestrians and cyclists. To the east there are formal pedestrian crossing facilities at the A607/Melton Road roundabout to provide direct and safe links to local facilities within Queniborough to the south-east and East Goscote to the north-east. To the west, Melton Road travels towards Syston.
- 2.25 The centre of Queniborough, Syston and East Goscote are all within a 20 minute walk of the site and many amenities are much closer to the site including the nearest bus stops which are within a 5 minute walk and the closest school and shop which are within a 10 minute walk of the site.
- 2.26 The site is adjacent to the national cycle route 48 which runs along Melton Road and connects to Leicester city centre to the south-west of the site. This will ensure that the site is accessible by cycle.



Cycle Route Network

2.27 The nearest bus stops are located on Melton Road towards Syston around a 5 minute walk from the site. They serve three different services, the 5, 5A and the X5. Their routes and frequencies are summarised in **Table 1** below.

| Serv No | Route | Monday – Friday (per hour) | | | | Sat | Sun |
|---------|--|----------------------------|--------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| | | AM Peak | Midday | PM Peak | Eve | | |
| 5 | Melton Mowbray- Queniborough-Syston- Leicester | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 5A | Melton Mowbray- Syston-Leicester | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X5 | Melton Mowbray- Syston-Leicester | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Table 1 - Existing Bus Services In Vicinity of Site

- 2.28 As can be seen, there are up to 5 buses per hour during the peak periods operating past the site. They run between Melton Mowbray and Leicester city centre from around 6am to past 11pm during weekdays and also at weekends. Journey times to Leicester city centre and Melton Mowbray are around 30 and 35 minutes respectively.
- 2.29 Syston railway station is located around a 30 minute walk from the site or a short bus journey away. Trains to Leicester take 11 minutes and Nottingham around 35 minutes with an hourly direct service from the station.
- 2.30 As such, the site can be considered very accessible by non-car travel modes.

Traffic Impact

- 2.31 To provide comfort in terms of traffic impact at the potential allocation site we have interrogated the TRICS database. The parameters used to ascertain the vehicular trip rates for the proposed development are as follows:
- Residential, Houses – privately owned.
 - Range between 20 and 150 dwellings.

- Greater London and Republic of Ireland sites excluded.
- No surveys undertaken during COVID pandemic.
- Weekday surveys only.

2.32 A summary of these trip rates and the likely level of trips that would occur as a result of the proposed development is included in Table 2, below.

| Peak Hour | Trip Rates | | No of Trips | | |
|-----------|------------|-------|-------------|-----|-------|
| | Arr | Dep | Arr | Dep | 2-Way |
| AM | 0.143 | 0.345 | 8 | 19 | 27 |
| PM | 0.314 | 0.160 | 17 | 9 | 26 |

Table 2 - Proposed Development Trip Rates and Traffic Flows (55 Units)

2.33 As can be seen from the above table, the proposed development is predicted to result in a maximum of 27 two-way vehicular trips during the weekday AM peak and PM peak periods respectively.

2.34 To provide further context, the number of additional vehicles likely to be generated would be no more than an additional vehicular trip every 2 minutes during even the busiest hours of the day.

2.35 This would represent a minimal impact at this junction and would not result in anywhere near a severe impact at this junction. As such, there should be no objection on the issue of traffic impact to the proposed allocation.

2.36 Therefore, following an assessment of all the relevant site specific matters, both the SHLAA and SA have concluded the site is suitable.

d. Are the development requirements clear and deliverable and are any further safeguards or mitigation measures necessary to achieve an acceptable form of development? Are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

2.37 Our representations at Pre-Submission stage sought a modification to the policy to allow for flexibility in the developable area once a detailed design has been prepared. Our proposed changes to Policy DS3(HA65) are for the following reasons:

- inclusion of a minimum number of dwellings. In this case 55 dwellings. The SHLAA considers the site could accommodate 117 dwellings but we accept that the need for separation to East Goscote may reduce that figure and our indicative capacity plan has potential for up to 85 dwellings;
- deletion of the first bullet point (as drafted in the policy) as we consider that the second bullet point deals with that issue. It will be at that design and layout stage where the actual development area will be determined through landscape and visual appraisal. The second criterion gives that flexibility.

2.38 Our revised policy would state:

"Policy DS3(HA65) Land off Melton Road, Queniborough

We will support development proposals at site HA65 that:

- ***A minimum of 55 dwellings;***
- *restrict development to the southern part of the site; and*
- *through their design and layout, clearly maintains the physical and perceptual separation between Queniborough and East Goscote and preserves the separate identity of those settlements."*

2.39 This proposed change to the policy also necessitates the removal of the shading relating to 'housing' and paragraph 2.122. The policies map should just set the allocation boundary. We consider that the policy and paragraph 2.121 provide sufficient control for the LPA at application stage on this matter and detailed technical work that would be necessary for an application may well demonstrate a greater developable area than that shown indicatively on the diagram, which has not been the subject of that level of work.

2.40 Paragraphs 2.121 and 2.122 should be amended as follows:

"Site HA65 Land off Melton Road,

2.121 Queniborough is located in the area between Queniborough and East Goscote that is important in maintaining the separate identities of these two

places. The capacity of the site has been reduced to reflect the sensitive location and enable the impact of development on the settlement identities of the two villages to be mitigated. **The scale of development will be considered at the detailed design and layout stage but the site should deliver at least 55 dwellings.**

~~2.122. The diagram above provides an **indicative** visual guide to assist with interpretation of the policy below."~~

- 2.41 To have this flexibility is necessary for two additional reasons.
- 2.42 The first is that the planning application by Hallam Land Management to the west (P/20/1605/2) had an indicative layout for 200 dwellings. The proposed allocation is for 100 dwellings on that site but the proposed developable area was greater than that shown in paragraph 2.120 of the draft Local Plan. As we have set out earlier, officers concluded that this level of development was acceptable but whilst members did not follow officer advice it demonstrates that the "Housing within Allocation" should be removed for HA65 as the actual developable area to be determined at the application stage.
- 2.43 The second is that this additional flexibility enables greater capacity on proposed allocations to meet an uplift in the housing requirement due to affordable housing needs and/or meeting Leicester's unmet needs. We consider that the capacity of our client's site could be up to 85 dwellings at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 2.44 To conclude, the site is suitable and these site-specific matters will be duly considered in greater detail when a planning application is prepared and determined.

e. Has any planning permission been granted for residential development and if so, what are the details?

- 2.45 The site has not been subject to a planning application as HSL have sought to follow the development plan process. However, they intend to submit an application on the basis that the Plan is found sound.
- 2.46 This concludes our Statement to Matter 6 Issue 4.

3. Figure 1

