

Charnwood Local Plan Examination

Matter 6: URBAN AREA POLICIES, SITE SELECTION, SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSIONS AND HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS

Land off Gaddesby Lane, Rearsby

Prepared by Fisher German LLP on behalf of Clarendon Land

Project Title

Land at Gaddesby Lane, Rearsby

Agent

Fisher German LLP

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1. Introduction

1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of Clarendon Land in respect of their land interests at Gaddesby Lane, Rearsby, as illustrated on Figure 1 below. This site is a draft allocation in the emerging Local Plan, for 47 dwellings under Policy HA66.

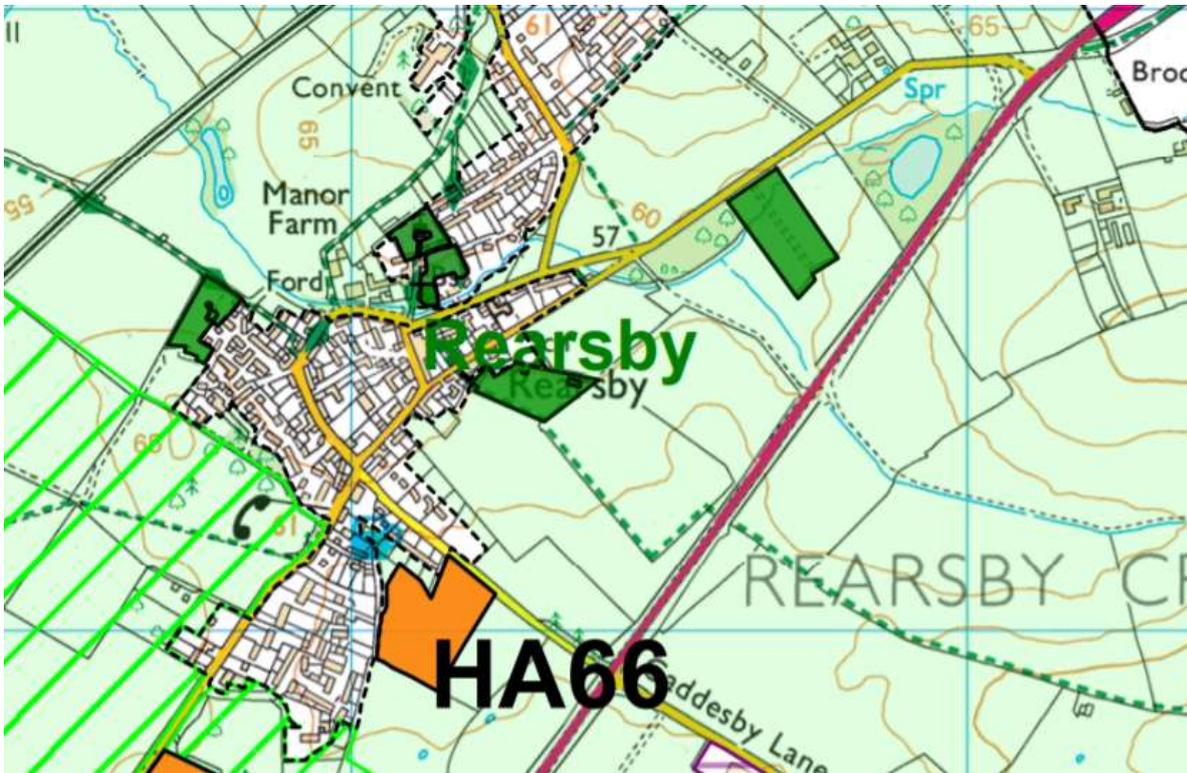


Figure 1: Local Plan Policies Map Extract

- 1.2 The site is located close to the village centre, in close proximity to the village’s services and facilities, including bus stops, public houses, village hall and school.
- 1.3 An outline planning application for the development of up to 65 dwellings (including affordable housing), with all matters reserved other than access, together with associated landscaping and other infrastructure is currently being prepared and is anticipated to be submitted imminently. The application is supported by a suite of detailed technical evidence confirming that the proposal can be delivered without undue impacts.
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan for Rearsby was made on the 9th December 2021, following a successful referendum on the 28th October 2021 in which 277 (94%) people voted in favour and 18 (8%) voted against. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not specifically allocate the land at Gaddesby Lane, it has acknowledged that the site is an emerging allocation in the Local Plan and makes a significant contribution to meeting Rearsby’s housing needs, negating the need for any specific allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan itself. When discussing future housing needs the Plan states at 4.23 that *“the housing allocation for 47 dwellings in the draft Local Plan alongside windfall development will ensure that sufficient land to meet residential need is available in the right locations”*.

2. Issues & Questions - Matter 6: URBAN AREA POLICES, SITE SELECTION, SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSIONS AND HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS

ISSUE 4: Housing Allocations

Answers to the below are in respect of draft allocation in the emerging Local Plan, for 47 dwellings under Policy HA66.

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 Clarendon Land support the proposed allocation HA66. As demonstrated through the site-specific technical reports which support the emerging outline planning application, the site can however deliver approximately 65 dwellings; 18 dwellings more than proposed by the emerging allocation.



Figure 2: Illustrative Masterplan

- 2.2 The technical reports that have informed the Illustrative Masterplan and are submitted with the outline planning application include:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including Great Crested Newt Survey
- Flood Risk Assessment including Drainage Strategy
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
- Built Heritage Statement

- Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Transport Statement including Travel Plan
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment

2.3 These reports have informed the sites constraints and opportunities and the identification of the 65-dwelling capacity of the site. Figure 3 below illustrates the site's constraints and opportunities.

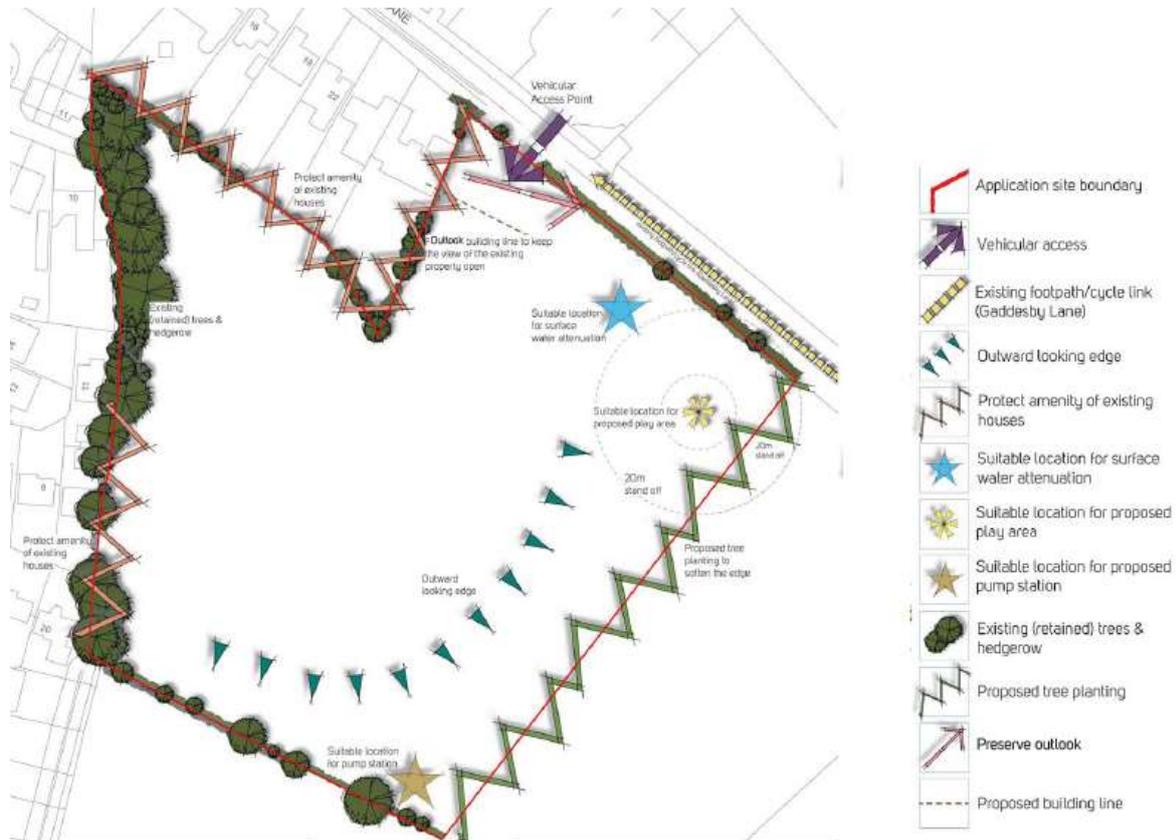


Figure 3: Sites Opportunities and Constraints

2.4 The site-specific evidence collected to date, and discussed in more detail throughout this statement, confirms that there are no issues relating to infrastructure capacity preventing proposed allocation HA66 from being delivered. Evidence reports have confirmed any harms arising will be successfully mitigated. A Section 106 Agreement will be entered into to ensure that site specific infrastructure needs will be delivered. The inclusion of the additional 18 dwellings proposed demonstrates accordance with Paragraph 124 of the NPPF which seeks to ensure the proposed scheme is designed to make efficient use of the land available.

Question 6.16 b.: *Is the allocation consistent with the development strategy in Policy DS1 and where relevant, does it take account of a made Neighbourhood Plan?*

2.5 Proposed allocation HA66 is fully consistent with the emerging development strategy outlined in Policy DS1. A residential scheme comprising 65 dwellings is a commensurate level of growth for the settlement and reflects Rearsby role as an 'Other Settlement'.

- 2.6 The Rearsby Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036 became part of the adopted Development Plan in December 2021. As detailed previously, whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not directly allocate the site, the Plan recognises that the site is an emerging allocation in the Local Plan and as a result will deliver any housing requirement directed to the settlement. When discussing future housing needs the Neighbourhood Plan states at paragraph 4.23 that *"the housing allocation for 47 dwellings in the draft Local Plan alongside windfall development will ensure that sufficient land to meet residential need is available in the right locations"*.
- 2.7 HA66 is therefore consistent with the development strategy in Policy DS1 and takes account of the made Rearsby Neighbourhood Plan.

Question 6.16 c.: *What is the likely impact of the proposed development on the following factors:*

- *settlement separation and identity and landscape character;*
 - *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.*
- 2.8 As set out in response to part a of Question 6.16, a series of site-specific technical evidence has been prepared to support an outline planning application for the proposed residential development of HA66 for 65 dwellings. These technical reports compliment the Council's Local Plan evidence base. The complete list of supporting reports is outlined in Paragraph 2.2 of this Statement. Commentary on each of the Inspectors bullet points in relation to 6.16 c is set out below:
- *settlement separation and identity and landscape character;*
- 2.9 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken which considers the development of HA66 for 65 homes. The Assessment concludes that the proposals will give rise to some landscape character change, although the change is not readily perceived from the adjacent landscape and the key characteristics of the localised and wider landscape setting would be unaltered.
- 2.10 The LVIA goes on to state that the development proposals respect and enhance the quality and character of the area, include high quality sustainable design, recessive finishes and new planting that corresponds with the Charnwood Character Assessment 2012 (EB/ENV/8).
- 2.11 The assessment considers that proposals comprising 65 homes on site HA66 will not give rise to any significant adverse effects in terms of landscape character, nor would it result in significant harm in terms of its impact on the landscape character of the area.
- *biodiversity, green infrastructure including public rights of way and agricultural land quality;*
- 2.12 In respect of biodiversity, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (including a Great Crested Newt Survey) and a Biodiversity Impact Assessment have been undertaken and informed the preparation of the Illustrative Masterplan comprising 65 homes and associated outline planning application.

- 2.13 The Ecological Appraisal sets out there are no statutory sites of international or national nature conservation importance and no non-statutory sites identified in the immediate area. It also confirms the arable field, hedgerows, scrub and tall ruderal on site are of low ecological value.
- 2.14 An Arboricultural Survey assessed 69 individual trees, 3 groups of trees and 8 hedgerows on/within close proximity to the site. The proposed development will require the removal of 2 moderate quality (Category B) trees to solely accommodate the proposed new site layout, T46 and T47. This will result in a loss of a low amount of tree cover from the site. Notwithstanding this, new replacement planting is proposed and to be secured through a planning condition.
- 2.15 An eDNA Great Crested Newt survey undertaken verified Great Crested Newts are likely to be absent from the site.
- 2.16 A Biodiversity Impact Assessment concludes based upon the calculations derived from the DEFRA Metric, and in response to the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed, there will be a net gain in biodiversity of 0.72 habitat units (11.11%) and a net gain of 2.30 linear units (211.18%). It goes on to confirm that the net gain is partly to be achieved through offsite enhancements (within the same field and landownership) through the conversion of 0.5 hectares of land to a traditional orchard. Overtime, this will also strengthen the village boundaries and provide a strong buffer between the site and the A607.
- 2.17 There are no Public Rights of Way on or immediately adjacent to HA66.
- 2.18 The Borough comprises of largely Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land. The Borough Council has accepted that greenfield land will be required in order to deliver its housing need. The proposed greenfield allocations across the Borough would result in the loss of either Grade 2 or Grade 3 land.

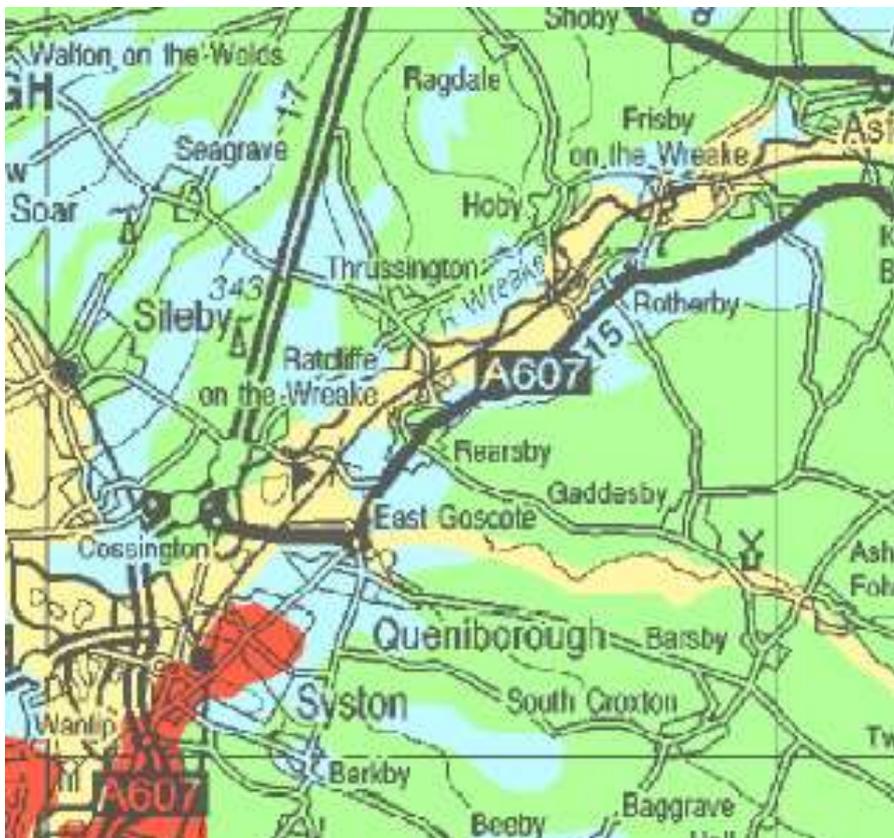


Figure 4: Agricultural Land Classification Map East Midlands

- *heritage assets;*

- 2.19 The outline application comprising 65 homes on HA66 has been informed by an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, Built Heritage Statement, a Geophysical Report, and a Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 2.20 The assessments confirm that development on proposed allocation HA66 would have a neutral impact upon the settings of the Rearsby Conservation Area and The Grange (non-designated built heritage asset). The assessment did recognise that the proposed development would result in a small visual change within their settings, but this change will be seen within the context of existing development and will not affect how their respective significance is appreciated or understood. The report concludes that development of proposed allocation HA66 would therefore result in no harm to the significance of the Rearsby Conservation Area or The Grange, and the tests of paragraphs 195, 196 and 197 would not be engaged.
- 2.21 The findings of the Geophysical Survey conclude no anomalies of significant archaeological activity were identified. DA Written Scheme of Investigation has been agreed with the County Archaeologist.

- *the strategic and local highway network and other infrastructure including health facilities, education and open space;*

- 2.22 The proposed development at HA66 has been informed by a Transport Statement and Travel Plan. Safe access has been demonstrated on to Gaddesby Lane and Melton Road. The assessment demonstrates that, the development will not have a severe impact on the operation of the local highway network or an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
- 2.23 The development will contribute positively towards education and health facilities, secured through a Section 106 Agreement. Notwithstanding this, we are aware, through our own research which has been shared previously with the Council, that there is existing capacity in respect of primary education in Rearsby.
- 2.24 A third of the proposed development scheme is occupied by public open space and landscaping which has been informed by the LVIA and ecological assessment to ensure a high-quality green infrastructure strategy. The development includes proposals for the creation amenity green space including circular walks, attenuation pond and play area for children. Proposals also include the retention of existing trees and hedgerows, as well as proposals for replacement planting.

- *air and water quality, noise pollution, land stability and flood risk.*

- 2.25 There are no known constraints related to air, water quality, noise pollution or land stability. Technical reports addressing these matters were not requested by the Council at the pre-application stage and are not considered necessary. If new concerns relating to these matters are raised, we believe these could be addressed through the submission of additional information during the determination of the application.
- 2.26 In respect of flood risk, the proposed development at HA66 is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment. This assessment confirms that the site is located in Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability of Flooding) and has a very low risk of surface water flooding. The outline planning application is also accompanied by a comprehensive Drainage Strategy which details a design that is suitable to protect the site and surrounding areas from surface water flooding for all events up to and including the 1 in 100-year storm event including an allowance for climate change.

Question 6.16 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?*

- 2.27 Clarendon Land consider the development requirements are clear and deliverable. No further safeguards or mitigation measures are required to deliver an acceptable form of development, nor are any main modifications necessary for soundness.

Question 6.16 e. : *Has any planning permission been granted for residential development and if so, what are the details?*

- 2.28 As detailed above an outline application is due to be submitted imminently, likely ahead of the hearing sessions.

Other Settlements – HA66 – Land off Gaddesby Lane, Rearsby

Is there evidence to indicate that the site can be developed without unacceptable harm to heritage assets?

- 2.29 As detailed in response to Question 6.16 c, the outline planning application for the development of HA66 is supported by a Built Heritage Statement and an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment. It is also supported by a Geo-physical Survey, a Written Scheme of Investigation and an Archaeological Evaluation Report.
- 2.30 The findings from the Geophysical Survey conclude no anomalies suggestive of significant archaeological activity.
- 2.31 The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment concludes that further predetermination archaeological work may be required by the Planning Archaeologist to confirm the veracity of the geophysics. However, it is suggested that this should consist of targeted trenching focused on the pit-like anomalies and if negative, no further works should be required.
- 2.32 The Archaeological Evaluation Report concluded the evaluation has not provided evidence that the site contained any focus of past activity, other than farming. The evaluation results indicate that the site is unlikely to contain any concentrations of finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance.
- 2.33 The Built Heritage Statement concludes that the site comprises a neutral element within the settings of the Rearsby Conservation Area and The Grange (non-designated built heritage asset), whereby it makes no contribution to the significance of these heritage assets. The report advises that the proposed development will result in a small visual change within their settings, but this change will be seen within the context of existing development and will not affect how their respective significance is appreciated or understood. The proposed development will therefore result in no harm to the significance of the Rearsby Conservation Area or The Grange, and the tests of paragraphs 195, 196 and 197 will not be engaged.
- 2.34 To conclude, the site-specific work undertaken, and described above, confirms that the proposed development at HA66 will not result in unacceptable harm to heritage assets.

Is there evidence to indicate that the site can be developed without unacceptable harm to the landscape?

2.35 Our response to Question 6.16 c advised that Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken to consider the development of HA66 for 65 dwellings. It concludes the proposals will give rise to some landscape character change, although the change is not readily perceived from the adjacent landscape and the key characteristics of the localised and wider landscape setting are unaltered. It goes on to state that the development proposals respect and enhance the quality and character of the area, include high quality sustainable design, recessive finishes and new planting that corresponds with the Charnwood Character Assessment 2012 (EB/ENV/8). Overall, the assessment considers proposals comprising 65 homes on site HA66 will not give rise to any significant adverse effects in terms of landscape character, nor would it result in significant harm in terms of its impact on the landscape character of the area.