South Kesteven District Council Local Development Framework
Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan Document

Statement of Common Ground
English Heritage, National Trust and South Kesteven District Council

16th October 2012

Matter 10: Belton House and Heritage Assets

1 Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared to set out the areas of agreement, including in respect of the detailed Policy wording and supporting explanatory test, between English Heritage, National Trust and South Kesteven District Council on matters relating to Policy SAP11 and Section 4.8 of the District Council’s Site Allocation and Policies Submission Development Plan Document (DPD) having regard to the representations submitted by English Heritage and National Trust concerning that Policy (specifically in response to the Council’s Main Modification SAPMM043).

2 Common Ground Between Parties

2.1 All parties agree that in preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF) documents South Kesteven District Council has sought to ensure that the Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan provides a robust policy and spatial framework to deliver sustainable development, in sustainable locations, having regard to the requirements set out in the relevant government guidance.

2.2 All parties agree that Policy SP11 is consistent with, and adds value to, the adopted South Kesteven Core Strategy (2010), the National Planning Policy Framework and current adopted regional planning policy. In particular the importance of Belton House and its Parkland, and their setting, are recognised as key heritage assets that all parties have a duty to protect and, where possible, to enhance. A suitable detailed evidence base to assess the wider visual setting of the heritage assets at Belton and its sensitivity to different forms of development in different locations has
been prepared by Atkins Limited – the Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy, January 2010.

2.3 All parties agree that the Setting Study should be identified in the Council’s Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan as it provides appropriate and relevant guidance for developers, the Council and other interested parties in the preparation and assessment of development proposals that have the potential to impact, positively or negatively, upon the significances of the heritage assets at Belton.

2.4 All parties agree that some minor changes to the detailed wording of Proposed Main Modification SAPMM043 are appropriate to address the specific comments raised by English Heritage and National Trust in their responses to the consultation upon the proposed Modifications to the Submission DPD.

2.5 It is jointly proposed and agreed by the three parties that the text of Section 4.8 and Policy SP11 of the Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan should be amended as set out in Appendix 1 to this Statement of Common Ground.

2.6 The principal agreed change is to remove the specific reference to Fig 15 in the Setting Study as the definition of the visual setting is not confined to this Figure; rather it needs to have regard to the sensitivities of different parts of the setting to different forms of development.

2.7 In very general terms the larger, in particular taller, a development is the greater likelihood that it will impact upon the visual setting of Belton – for example, especially tall developments that would be seen above the wooded ridge lines around Belton will potentially impact upon its setting even though sited a significant distance away, whereas a house extension is only ever likely to require assessment of its impacts upon Belton’s setting when located very close to the heritage assets. Section 3 of the Setting Study (“The Sensitivity of the Setting to Change”) addresses the considerations relevant to different forms of development – small, medium, major and tall – and their likely sensitivity depending upon their location relative to key views and approaches associated with Belton.

2.8 Whilst these sensitivities of different parts of the setting are summarised on Figure 15 in the Study it is the more detailed guidance in Section 3 of the document that needs to be utilised to inform the assessment of individual proposals.

2.9 Consequently the changes now proposed, and jointly agreed, are quite modest but seek to ensure that when development proposals are prepared, assessed and determined they pay appropriate attention to the more detailed guidance available in Section 3 of the Belton House and Park Setting Study.
3 Conclusion

3.1 South Kesteven District Council, English Heritage and National Trust consider that the suggested changes as set out in Appendix 1 to this Statement of Common Ground would satisfactorily address the issue that has been identified.

Signed:

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On behalf of South Kesteven District Council

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge
On behalf of English Heritage

Alan Hubbard
On behalf of National Trust
4.8 Belton House and Park

4.8.1 The Grade I listed Belton House and its historic park and garden are heritage assets of international importance. In recognition of its importance the District Council, jointly with the National Trust, commissioned the Belton House and Park Setting Study to define the extent of the setting of these heritage assets and inform policy formulation and decision-making for development proposals within the defined area. The Belton House and Park Setting Study will be a material consideration when assessing the impact of proposals for developments which fall within the defined extent of the setting of Belton House and Park.

4.8.2 The Belton House and Park Setting Study defines the extent of the visual setting of Belton House and Park and identifies the types of development which can impact upon it (Section 3 of the Study).

4.8.3 All development proposals are assessed against the criteria in Core Strategy policy EN1 for their impacts. However, in view of the importance of Belton House and Park, it is considered appropriate that proposals for development within the parameters set out in section 3 of the Setting Study should include an assessment of their impact on the House and Park.

Policy SAP 11: Protecting and Enhancing the Setting of Belton House and Park

Belton House and its Historic Park and Garden are nationally and internationally significant heritage assets located in close proximity to the northern edge of the existing built up area of Grantham. Protecting and enhancing their setting, using the Belton House and Park Setting Study to inform the assessment of the impacts, is important to maintaining their significance as heritage assets.

Proposals will need to demonstrate what, if any, impact there will be on the setting of Belton House and Park through the preparation of a Heritage Impact Statement, and how through their location, scale, design, landscaping and materials take account of the setting of Belton and that any adverse impacts have been removed and/or mitigated.