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1 Introduction

1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by David Bainbridge MRTPI, Partner in the Planning Division of Bidwells on behalf of Larkfleet Limited.

1.2 This Statement has been submitted to the Examination into the South Kesteven Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD). In particular this Statement responds directly to the Issues raised by the Planning Inspector in advance of the opening of the Hearing Sessions on 6 November 2012.

1.3 It is acknowledged that there is no need for participants in the Examination to prepare hearing statements where relevant points are already covered in the original representations.

1.4 Bidwells on behalf of Larkfleet Limited have participated fully in the preparation of the DPD as listed below however the issues raised by the Planning Inspector give rise to the requirement for comment as contained in this Statement.

1.5 Bidwells on behalf of Larkfleet Limited have participated in the following stages of preparation of the DPD.

- Responses submitted in respect of Proposed Main Modifications Consultation, July 2012.
- Responses submitted in respect of Submission Publication Stage, November 2011.
- Responses submitted in respect of Additional Sites Consultation, October 2010.

1.6 This Statement responds to the relevant Issues laid down by the Planning Inspector in respect of Session 8: Omission Sites. Where there is no response to an Issue this is because it is not considered relevant for example where the Planning Inspector has posed questions primarily intended for the Council to respond to.

1.7 This Statement does not exceed the 3,000 word limit.
2 Baston

2.1 Question: Are there sound reasons for including a site at Baston in the allocations? 118

2.2 Response: Baston performs well in sustainability terms within the context of LSCs.

2.3 The identification of the villages and the site locations within Policy LSC1 is not justified because it is not the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

2.4 Paragraph 3.4.3.4 states the following:

“Overall the assessment concluded that Barkston, Baston, Castle Bytham, Langtoft, Morton and South Witham are less suitable for additional development.”

2.5 The statement above is not justified because it does not accurately reflect the assessment which shows Baston is a sustainable location within the context of LSCs and this position proposed by LSC1 is not the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

2.6 The most appropriate strategy is to have concluded that Baston is one of the LSC capable of accommodating some modest growth. Whist it is acknowledged that the only available, suitable and achievable housing land at Baston is Site BAST 02, this site compares favourably to currently identified sites under Policy LSC1. The presence of only one developable housing site at Baston will ensure growth is modest.

2.7 The most appropriate strategy is to identify part of Site BAST 02 accessed off Chesham Drive for residential development.

2.8 BAST 02 is considered to perform better within the assessment work than some of the other sites identified for residential development in the DPD.

2.9 Three of the sites currently identified for residential development under Policy LSC1 appear to have been selected in part or mostly on the basis of additional benefits to the local community beyond the provision of up to 35 affordable housing on-site and open space/play provision.

2.10 Policy LSC1 does not require or guarantee delivery of the additional benefits to the local community. If the Council considers these additional benefits outweigh some or all of the constraints/concerns about residential development on these sites then policy should make it clear exactly how and when the additional benefits will be delivered relative to delivery of the residential development.
3 Question: Are there sound reasons for including BAST02 site in the allocations? MM55, MM59

3.1 Response: There are sound reasons for including BAST02 site in the allocations.

3.2 The site is suitable and deliverable for residential and associated development.

3.3 A recent position published by the Council in respect of BAST02 is found in the response to the Planning Inspector's note to the Council dated 9 February 2012 regarding the selection process for sites and villages.

3.4 The site assessment contained in the response to the Planning Inspector identified highways objections and AW cordon sanitaire as major constraints in respect of BAST02. Whilst no other constraints, impacts or issues are identified in the assessment the overall conclusions of the assessment in respect of BAST02 is as follows:

"only suggested site not in flood zone – however, highway concerns and encroachment on countryside make site less suitable & there are drainage concerns re: impact on Baston Fen SAC and septicity issues because of distance from STW"

3.5 The highways objections and AW cordon sanitaire were considered to be 'show stoppers' to development and hence BAST02 was not taken forward beyond the first site sifting stage.

3.6 In view of these conclusions I obtained from the Council a copy of extracts of the responses of Anglian Water Services Ltd (AWS) and Lincolnshire County Council as Highway Authority (LCC) in respect of BAST02. Whilst these responses are not dated I understand these were received by the Council late 2010 or early 2011 i.e. before the Parish and Town Council workshops held in July 2011.

3.7 The 'show stoppers' identified by the Council and based on the comments of AWS and LCC back in late 2010 or early 2011 are not supported by the more recent responses of AWS and LCC.

3.8 Consultant Development Engineers BSP have engaged with LCC in respect of the preparation of a transport assessment (TA) for a proposed development of 49 no. dwellings (a mix of private and affordable dwellings) on part of BAST02.

3.9 The Council and I have an email and attachment from Sarah Heslam, Senior Highways Officer, Development Control Team, Highways West to Jo Posnett, Senior Transportation Engineer at BSP in respect of the TA dated 21 May 2012 and Technical Response 1, dated 16 May 2012, it is clear
that LCC as Highway Authority do not have any objection to the TA and they conclude the proposed development is acceptable in principle.

3.10 I accept the DPD process considered a higher potential number of dwellings at BAST02, at one point a potential development of 190 dwellings on a gross site area of 4.8 hectares was assessed by the Council. However, Appendix 2c of the evidence document, submission document dated October 2011 states:

"A small part of the site, adjacent to Chesham Drive, was considered for development, but was rejected because of highway concerns."

3.11 Therefore, a smaller number of dwellings than 190 were also not found to be acceptable on highway grounds by your authority but there is no evidence to support this position. I have demonstrated through the more recent position of LCC that this is not credible because there are no objections to 49 no. dwellings.

3.12 In respect of drainage and septicity the Council and I have a letter from Denise Harding at AWS to Tim Wilson at BSP dated 1 June 2012. Denise confirms that whilst there are capacity constraints at the Deepings Sewage Treatment Works (to which the above site will discharge to) AWS can enable limited growth to take place. Regarding septicity Denise highlights how this potential concern can be managed through detailed design and maintenance. It is clear that AWS no longer consider drainage or septicity to be a major constraint to development of 49 dwellings at the above site and therefore these are not showstoppers.

3.13 I have raised these points with the Council in writing i.e. letter dated 15 June 2012 in which I respectfully requested confirmation of the position in light of this new evidence and to accept drainage and septicity objection can not be sustained but the Council has been unwilling to withdraw these objections in advance of the opening of the examination into the DPD.
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