

Report to Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration

Subject: Ashfield District Draft Local Plan Consultation (Regulation 18)

Date: November 2021

Author: Planning Policy Manager

Wards Affected

Bestwood St Albans, Newstead Abbey

Purpose

To seek approval for the representations set out in **Appendix 1** of this report to be sent to Ashfield District Council by their deadline of 16th November 2021.

Key Decision

No

Recommendation(s)

THAT: The Portfolio Holder approves:

the representations set out in the appendix as Gedling Borough Council's response to the consultation on the Ashfield District Council Local Plan Consultation.

1 Background

- 1.1 Ashfield District Council has published the Ashfield Local Plan Consultation document. The draft Local Plan is published under Regulation 18 and sets out Ashfield District Council's preferred options as opposed to a more open consultation. The Local Plan sets out the requirements for new development including housing, employment, community facilities and infrastructure within Ashfield District over the next 17 years. The plan provides the framework for guiding decisions on

individual planning applications. Ashfield District Council's administrative area adjoins that of Gedling Borough near Hucknall giving rise to significant cross boundary planning issues. The Plan period runs from 2020 – 2038, which is consistent with that proposed for the emerging Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan.

- 1.2 The Ashfield Local Plan Consultation includes supporting documents including the sustainability appraisal, evidence base documents and a Statement of Common Ground. The latter provides a record of the progress made regarding strategic cross boundary matters in relation to Ashfield's geographic area. It is important to note that Ashfield District are continuing to prepare evidence, which is evolving in order to support the next stage of the Local Plan, and this consultation exercise and the views of consultees will help inform the next stage.
- 1.3 The Local Plan refers to the duty to cooperate, describes the existing close joint working arrangements across Greater Nottingham, and refers to a draft Statement of Common Ground (SOCG). However, the contents of the draft Local Plan have not been discussed with the Greater Nottingham Authorities prior to its publication and there is no SOCG, which has been agreed and signed by the relevant authorities. This will be required under the policy guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework prior to the publication stage of the Ashfield Local Plan.
- 1.4 Similarly, in connection with the proposed new settlement to be allocated at Whyburn Farm, the SOCG rather vaguely refers to meetings between Ashfield District Council officers and their Gedling counterparts to consider cross boundary implications arising from the proposed development. Gedling Borough note that there were two meetings concerning potential development opportunities in the Whyburn Farm area but these were strategic in nature with no certainty that the site would be included in the future development plan. Other than that, the Council is not aware of any specific meetings taking place on the subject of cross boundary issues. Given this situation, the comments set out in **Appendix 1** seek to establish more effective working arrangements between the two Councils, which would feed into the relevant SOCGs and any agreements therein.
- 1.5 It is worth noting that the draft SOCG sets out clearly the intention of the three local planning authorities within the Nottingham Outer Housing Market area (namely Ashfield District, Mansfield District and Newark and Sherwood District Councils) to meet their objectively assessed housing need. The SOCG goes on to state that it is not anticipated that Ashfield District Council would need to allocate housing land to meet any unmet housing requirements from surrounding local authorities. Consequentially the Local Plan Consultation makes provision to meet Ashfield District's

objectively assessed housing need of 457 homes per annum.

- 1.6 The remainder of this report summarises the key proposals in the Ashfield Local Plan Consultation document. **Appendix 1** sets out the recommended comments to be sent to Ashfield District.

Overall Strategy

- 1.7 The largest scale of growth is to be accommodated at the main urban areas of Hucknall, Sutton-in-Ashfield and Kirkby-in-Ashfield where 59.3% of housing growth is identified.
- 1.8 Two new settlements are proposed at Whyburn Farm, close to Hucknall for 3,000 dwellings (1,600 within the plan period); and at Cauldwell Road (adjoining the sub-regional centre of Mansfield) for 1,000 dwellings. These would accommodate 26.3% and 8.3% of the housing provision respectively. It is not sufficiently apparent from the published evidence base how the overall strategy has been justified and it is not clear from the Sustainability Appraisal and Housing Background Paper why the two new settlements proposed are the preferred option.

Housing Allocations around Hucknall

- 1.9 In addition to the Whyburn Farm proposal, there are a number of other housing allocations and housing commitments in and around Hucknall. In all approximately 50% of Ashfield District's housing target is to be met in and around Hucknall. The housing allocations include the following which are considered to be close to the Gedling Borough's boundary:
- Land at Whyburn Farm (S6) for 3,000 dwellings
 - Land north of the A611, south of Broomhill Farm (H1hc) 633 dwellings (in addition, phase 2 of Broomhill Farm has planning permission for 217 dwellings).
 - Linby Boarding Kennels (H1hb) for 43 dwellings (part of the site has planning permission for 12 dwellings).
- 1.10 Other sites allocated at Hucknall lie principally to the west of the settlement including at the Rolls Royce Strategic site where a number of the allocations already have planning permission. A key issue for the Ashfield Local Plan is the need to ensure there is sufficient supporting infrastructure to enable development to proceed and in relation to the interests of Gedling Borough especially in the Hucknall area. This is elaborated on further in the section on infrastructure below. More detailed comments on the individual housing allocations are set out in **Appendix 1**.

New Settlement: Land at Whyburn Farm, Hucknall

- 1.11 Land is allocated at Whyburn Farm, Hucknall, as shown on the Policies Map for a mixed use New Settlement to deliver 3,000 new dwellings, along with approximately 13 hectares of employment land. Policy S6 identifies the necessary infrastructure to make the site acceptable in planning terms. This includes the following infrastructure amongst others: an on-site primary school, contributions towards secondary school places, highway improvements, provision of public transport, cycling and walking facilities and green infrastructure.
- 1.12 The Local Plan also includes the potential extension of the existing NET tram link from Hucknall Town Centre (Hucknall North) through Top Wighay Development site in Gedling to the Whyburn Farm site as a possible requirement. In this context, it is advised that a safeguarding corridor has been secured to provide for the NET extension into the Top Wighay Farm site. In determining the Top Wighay Farm planning application, it was not possible to safeguard a route for an extension from the site onto Whyburn Farm as this could not be required for a site that was not yet allocated. The possible extension of the NET to Whyburn Farm would need to be progressed via an agreement between the landowners. However, to date no transport modelling has been undertaken and it is presently unclear whether a NET extension will be required as mitigation for the Whyburn Farm site and if so, whether this would be a viable proposal.
- 1.13 A large employment land allocation is proposed at Whyburn Farm of approximately 13 hectares gross (11 hectares net). When viewed in combination with the employment land committed at Top Wighay Farm on the other side of the A611 and significant amounts of other employment space available, there is a concern that the local employment land market could become saturated in this locality.
- 1.14 The intention to require a detailed infrastructure delivery plan for this site is strongly supported and Gedling Borough Council would seek to be engaged in this process given the close proximity of the Top Wighay Farm Strategic site and linkages between the two sites which are located either side of the A611 in this vicinity.

Strategic Employment Allocation Junction 27

- 1.15 The allocation of about 38.5 ha of land in the vicinity of Junction 27 of the M1 for strategic distribution and logistics is noted and it is accepted that this is likely to fulfil a wider than district wide role in meeting needs for this type of development along the M1 corridor. Whilst there are concerns relating to the scale of employment land provision at Whyburn Farm

outlined above, the other employment allocations for more local district wide needs for office and industrial space are based on the findings of the 2021 Employment Land Study and justified.

Infrastructure

- 1.16 The supporting documents include an Infrastructure Statement, which sets out that a more detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan is to follow in due course. There is a need for the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to take into account the existing planned commitments and their mitigation measures (including those adjoining Hucknall in Gedling Borough) along with the new proposed allocations within Ashfield District. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan should also consider the possibility of the potential for extending the Top Wighay Farm strategic site onto the adjoining safeguarded land should this be an option to be included in the emerging GNSP.
- 1.17 In relation to secondary education, the Infrastructure Statement states that the level of proposed growth around Hucknall requires additional secondary provision. This could be from an expansion of The Holgate School, but this would result in a substantial school and may not be able to facilitate the total growth. Alternatively, it may require a new school in relation to the proposals at Top Wighay Farm and Whyburn Farm. In this context, Gedling Borough Council's Community Infrastructure Levy already includes provision for contributions toward secondary education in this locality.
- 1.18 The preparation of the GNSP is at an early stage and possible options for growth are being considered. In this context, Gedling Borough Council is requesting that Ashfield District Council adopt closer working with Gedling Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council on any cross boundary infrastructure issues relating to the Hucknall area.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 The Portfolio Holder is asked to agree the comments set out in the **Appendix**, which includes more details on the issues summarised above. Ashfield District Council has requested comments be submitted by 16th November 2021.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 The only alternative is for Gedling Borough Council not to make any representations on the Ashfield Local Plan Consultation in which case its views would not be made known to Ashfield District Council. This alternative option is not recommended as it is considered that the Local Plan has significant implications for Gedling Borough Council, which

needs to be put to Ashfield District.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 None

5 Legal Implications

5.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations provide for early consultation on pre-publication draft local plans prior to the formal Regulation 19 Stage. Ashfield District Council are required to consider comments made.

6 Equalities Implications

6.1 None direct. This is an opportunity to comment on a consultation document prepared by Ashfield District Council who will then proceed to the next stage of their Local Plan preparation. Ashfield District Council will undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the preparation of the next stage of their Local Plan.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

7.1 None direct. This is an opportunity to comment on a consultation document prepared by Ashfield District Council who will then proceed to the next stage of their Local Plan preparation. Policies within the Local Plan address carbon reduction and environmental sustainability within Ashfield Borough Council.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Comments by Gedling Borough Council on the Ashfield draft Local Plan (regulation 18)

9 Background Papers

9.1 None

10 Reasons for Recommendations

10.1 In order to submit the representations by Gedling Borough Council on the Ashfield Local Plan Consultation Regulation 18 by the deadline of 16th November 2021.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:
Date:
On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:
Date:
On behalf of the Monitoring Officer