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Respondent numbers: 244
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Written submission to accompany attendance at the public enquiry by the Planning Inspectorate in reference to Matters, Issues and Questions and Hearing Sessions.

This written submission is made in support of objections previously submitted as written statements (Core Strategy Review Representation Form Submission) made via the Erewash Borough Council (EBC) web site on April 14th, 2022.

This written statement will cover the two principal areas nominated for attendance during the public enquiry: Matter 4 – The Green Belt and Matter 6 – Strategic Policy 1.6 North of Cotmanhay. As a component part of this submission, other areas of related topics will be included where they influence this submission.

We consider the core strategy review is unsound and fails to comply with the duty to cooperate for the following reasons:

Matter 4 – The Green Belt

1.1 Brownfield sites.

Erewash Borough Council publish a brown field land register. This document still fails to include two of the largest brownfield sites in the borough, namely the Oakwell brickworks site and the West Hallam Colliery and brickworks sites; two large genuine brown field sites. Erewash Borough Council (EBC) have previously stated that these sites are not viable due to contamination clean-up costs (i.e. lack of contractors willing to undertake this work due to the costs involved) etc.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Clauses 117, 118c, 119 and 137 make it clear that brownfield sites must take precedence over the use of green belt land.

Whilst it may be argued by EBC that these sites are unsuitable for a variety of reasons, neighbouring boroughs (Amber Valley and Broxtowe) have proposed brownfield sites for development that are heavily contaminated and require remedial work prior to use. EBC's reluctance to even list these sites let alone propose them for development, is a point of concern. This is particularly concerning as there are consultants and developers specialising in the development of brownfield sites in urban and suburban environments: see www.britishland.com

1.2 Erewash Borough Council owned white and green belt land.

Erewash Borough Council own the land consisting of the former Pewit municipal golf course. It was proposed and voted to turn this facility into a nature reserve. This prime piece of land represents significant capital value to EBC which would provide much needed capital revenue to a council in significant deficit and land that could be developed for housing adjacent to the existing town centre. This land is classified as white land and as such development of it would be in accord with NPPF clauses 137.a and 138, yet it does not appear in the Local Plan. This begs the question why. Furthermore, development of this land in combination with the brownfield site at Oakwell brickworks (see comments above) would provide a linear development to the immediate west of the town centre with primary access to major transit routes and schools.

1.3 The use of green belt and inequitable distribution of housing development.

The use of green belt land is predominantly based on subsuming green belt to the north and the south of Ilkeston. The allocation of green belt land is wholly inequitable and prejudiced. This is evidenced in examples within EBC's various documents, this is one of them:

EBC's *Green Belt Technical Paper*, 'table 3: Sites within the spatial strategy', referring to the land north of West Hallam which EBC consider as an unsuitable site as it encroaches on open countryside. What is curious about this statement is how EBC differentiate encroachment on open countryside is somehow different at this site as opposed to the green belt abutting open countryside in Cotmanhay and Kirk Hallam. It seems that the quick solution is to develop green belt to the north and south of the borough based on convenience and protection of the parishes where plenty of green belt options are available. Engagement with the consultation process and subsequent submission of evidence against development of green belt is less likely in the two areas mentioned above than it would be, in for example, West Hallam or Breaston.

It is also notable that during the work to develop the local plan under the previous Conservative administration how the proposed use of green belt sites within Conservative controlled wards were removed from the local plan. Sadly, it is hard not to see an overt and cynical political element to the Erewash local plan as it stands. When Labour won a majority in the 2023 local election it was based on a mandate to modify the local plan to make housing allocation across the borough more equitable. This was promptly and undemocratically overturned by intervention of Lee Rowley, Minister for Housing. It can only be assumed (as nobody has ever been clear as to why this intervention occurred) that it was done by local Conservative councillors

engaging with the local Conservative MP appealing directly to the Minister for Housing.

Matter 6 – Strategic Policy 1.6 North of Cotmanhay

2.1 Remaining green belt land

The site to the north of Cotmanhay represents the very last green belt land to the north of the borough, the last piece of green belt separating Erewash from Amber Valley, partly maintaining the mile of separation between the towns of Ilkeston and Heanor. This site has been previously rejected for this amongst other reasons. Part of the proposal includes section 106 contributions from any developer for the provision of '*quality paths*' through the existing ancient woodland and the adoption of said woodland as a public amenity. This woodland is already used as a public amenity by dog walkers as well as being a place for fly tipping and antisocial behaviour. The woodland in question has no known ownership, as it is proposed that any potential developer contributes £125k to improve the woodland does this suggest that EBC will take it into borough ownership and maintain and care for the woodland? Will they then accept a duty of care to deal with the fly tipping and antisocial behaviour? If this land is developed, new residents will expect EBC to uphold such a duty of care. A failure to do so would constitute a dereliction of duties.

2.2 Overwhelming of local services and infrastructure.

The primary traffic transit route from north to south and vice versa is already heavily congested to the point of complete standstill at peak traffic movements in the morning and late afternoon. The current proposal will inject a significant additional traffic burden into an already overwhelmed system. This doesn't consider the ten-year development 1/2 a mile away in neighbouring Amber Valley (Shipleigh Lakeside) from the proposed SGA7 site, which will generate very significant additional traffic volume before any further development in this area. Likewise, to the south of Ilkeston (Stanton Industrial Park), there is a very significant industrial development taking place which will inject heavy traffic flow to the critical junction point between the A6096 and Quarry Hill Road. We were informed at a council meeting on March 3rd, 2022, that detailed traffic flow analysis would be undertaken as part of detailed local planning permission. This seems to be closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. Living in this area may become deeply unpleasant for existing residents as a result. Local schools are already oversubscribed and doctors, dentists etc. are already very difficult to access easily due to overwhelming patient numbers / workload.

Section 106 contributions are proposed for 68 school places for new residents of the proposed Cotmanhay site whose children will be expected to go to school in Kirk Hallam. This is ludicrous. The proposal makes a capital provision for places in schools at the southerly end of Ilkeston. How are children expected to get there? Will bus services be provided by EBC? Are parents expected to drive their children there? Whichever way this is viewed it can only result in yet more traffic and congestion on the primary north / south transit route.

2.3 Access and egress to the site North of Cotmanhay

Access to the 7.2-hectare site is proposed via Woodside Crescent with traffic lights planned at the junction with Heanor Road. Not only will this introduce further traffic to an already busy road, but it will introduce additional congestion plus air and noise pollution for existing residents adjacent to the junction and surrounding residential streets. In this respect, the site cannot be considered in isolation of the additional traffic flow generated by the major development at Shipley Lakeside in adjoining Amber Valley.

2.4 Proposed numbers allocated for site North of Cotmanhay

There are major discrepancies in the proposed numbers of houses allocated for the SGA7 site.

Consultants report *Erewash Borough Council Core Strategy Review Viability Assessment* 2023 by Andrew Golland Associates on behalf of Erewash Borough Council, dated September 2023, clearly states in the detailed technical analysis that this site is developable for 200 houses; see sections 4.1, 4.18, 4.20, table 4.8 and screen shot 4.23. Why then do Erewash Borough Council Planning Department housing allocation numbers continue to vary from their own consultant's report? Notably in document *Erewash Borough - Housing Trajectory in support of the Erewash Core Strategy Review (2022 to 2039)*, reference (K) Strategic Policy 1.6 – Land North of Cotmanhay, continuing to show 250 houses in contradiction to the Andrew Golland Associates technical review.

If Erewash Borough Council appoint a technical consultant to advise of developable allocation within a site, surely this advice should be followed? Otherwise, it arguably constitutes a waste of local taxpayers' money.

Conclusions

- It is understood and acknowledged by most that there is a need for further housing stock to be built. However, due care and attention should be given to prevention of continuous development of existing urban areas when the load could be spread over the wider borough. However, if it is considered necessary to develop adjacent to the existing urban area why are EBC not developing land they own adjacent to the town of Ilkeston. It should also be noted that the greatest employment opportunity in the borough is the development of the East Midlands Freeport at Castle Donington, yet there is little or no proposed housing provision to the south of the borough to address this in the current local plan.
- Allocation of green belt for development is wholly unsound when there are brownfield sites which could and should be developed. There is no clear or rational explanation as to why aforementioned brownfield sites are excluded when there are exemplars of contaminated brownfield site development activity in adjacent boroughs. Furthermore, it is in contravention of the guidance laid down in the NPPF. There are significant brownfield sites abutting Erewash with excellent access to primary transit routes, notably in Broxtowe, which could be developed in accordance with NPPF 11b and 137c in conjunction with neighbouring Broxtowe. This option is not mentioned anywhere, despite these sites being on the edge of the town of Ilkeston.
- If EBC insist on developing green belt adjacent to the existing urban area of Ilkeston, why isn't the former Pewit golf course included in this (although at this late juncture, I understand this may now be the case, or at least be under consideration)? Sale of this land would represent much needed capital value for EBC, providing a stream of revenue which is much needed.
- Little realistic consideration has been given to the burden on local infrastructure and services in Ilkeston resulting from then proposed developments of SGA7 (Land North of Cotmanhay) and SGA18 (Land Southwest of Kirk Hallam).
- **DUE PROCESS** – we have been reminded recently during the extraordinary council meeting on Thursday 30th. November 2023, that the due process of Public Consultation had been followed and the public have been given two opportunities (to date) to make their views known. These consultations (under the previous administration) did nothing more than pay lip service to the process as all views and submissions were roundly ignored. Furthermore, communication around the Local Plan and the consultation process within the borough has been poor. I can personally attest to this. During a conversation in early March of this year with two

Ilkeston town residents, I asked their view on the Local Plan. They both looked at each other, then at me and asked, 'What's the Local Plan'? I would like to say I found this incredulous, however, after four and a quarter years, I can now say that it comes as no surprise at all. The previous administration and council executive never had any intention of changing the Local Plan. They only made one change due to a landowner making it clear to the council that his land was not available for development. The people of Erewash voted for a change of local administration in May 2023 on the mandate of reviewing the Local Plan with a view to changing it for a more equitable and balanced approach. Clearly, the embittered previous administration has (indirectly) pulled a National Policy card to stymie the current administration. **THIS IS NEITHER DEMOCRATIC NOR SOUND, regardless of the rhetoric, we, the people of Erewash HAVE NOT BEEN LISTENED TO, OUR VIEWS COUNTED FOR NOTHING. WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE PLANNING INSPECTOR WILL TAKE THIS INTO CONSIDERATION.**