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Policy and Strategy Team
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19th January 2015

Dear Sirs

**DRAFT SITE AND POLICIES LOCAL PLAN
INITIAL CONSULTATION**

We write on behalf of our Client, Ainscough Strategic Land ("ASL"), in response to the aforementioned Site and Policies Local Plan Consultation Document.

ASL welcomes the opportunity to comment on this Consultation Document, and trust that these comments will be afforded full and proper consideration by Selby Council as part of the ongoing plan-making process.

ASL currently controls land interests in Carlton, a Designated Service Village ("DSV") in the adopted Selby Core Strategy and a sustainable location for housing growth. Like many settlements within Selby District, Carlton is constrained by large areas of land lying in Flood Zone 3a as identified on the Environment Agency ("EA") flood maps. Accordingly, it is essential that the Council's Sites and Policies Local Plan facilitates housing growth in Carlton in view of its role as the only DSV in the South-East Sub-Area of Selby, and thus is the only sustainable location for open market and affordable housing delivery. Policies contained within the Sites and Policies Local Plan and other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents should not place an unnecessary burden on development coming forward.

Sites and Policies Local Plan

We note that the Consultation Document contains a number of Questions for which responses are sought. We set out our Clients response to each of the Questions below, where we choose to do so.

Question 5

We generally support the objectives set out in the Consultation Document. However, Objective 1 should make reference to the allocation of housing and other sites in sustainable locations listed under Policy SP2 of the Core Strategy. These are accepted to be the most sustainable locations for growth, and new development should be directed towards these settlements.

Question 7a

In respect of the housing calculation for the Plan Period, we agree with the proposed base date of April 2011 which represents the start of the Plan Period. The total number of completions and commitments since the commencement of the Plan Period in April 2011 should be calculated to



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Identify the residual housing requirement across Selby up to 2027 within each area.

Question 7b

We have no objection to the calculation method which the Council has applied to date. However, we would encourage the Council to introduce a further column into Table 2 in March 2015 when data for the reporting year April 2014 - March 2015 is available. This will provide a more up-to-date picture of the residual requirement, and in particular extant permissions (i.e. any that may have lapsed in the interim which should no longer be included as contributing towards the housing requirement).

Question 8a

The Sites and Policies Plan should identify and allocate sufficient deliverable housing land to meet the minimum requirement of the District up to 2027. The Council should have sufficient evidence available to them to be confident that the sites, if allocated, will be delivered during the Plan Period. Equally, policies set out in the Sites and Policies Local Plan should allow for windfall sites to come forward adjacent to the three main towns and DSV's in the absence of a five-year supply of housing land. This Policy mechanism is essential in order to ensure that the Plan has sufficient flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, and in particular the delay in delivery of allocated sites. This is a historic problem in Selby, and one which the Council needs to urgently address.

Question 8b

The Council's strategic site at Olympia Park is expected to deliver a significant number of dwellings during the Plan Period, at a rate of around 50 dwellings per annum (assuming two housebuilders). Nevertheless, alongside this strategic site there is the need to ensure that other housing sites are released at an appropriate time and rate to come forward for development.

One option is to provide for the phased release of sites, along the lines of the approach previously applied in the 2005 Selby Local Plan. Clearly however, it will be important to ensure that those sites phased for early release are deliverable. Accordingly, a policy mechanism to facilitate the earlier release of sites from later phases (in the event that Phase 1 sites don't come forward as anticipated) should be included to help to negate the risk of a housing shortfall.

Question 8c

There is not considered to be a need for contingency sites to be identified in the Site and Policies Local Plan. Instead, the policy mechanisms described in response to Questions 8a and 8b above should be included in the Plan.

Question 9a

There are various potential scenarios by which to split the residual housing requirement in the Designated Service Villages.

Based on the figures set out in Table 2 of the Consultation Document, the residual requirement for new housing across the DSV's (taking account of completions since 2011 and commitments as of March 2014) stands at 1,330 dwellings.

The growth scenario per DSV presented in Table 4 of the Consultation Document is based upon proportionate growth (taking account of 2011 census data plus completions). By applying this scenario, the housing growth levels in each of the seven Sub-Areas illustrated on Figure 10 of the Core Strategy would be as follows (based on 9% growth):

Sub-Area	Dwelling Growth
Northern	64
Western	316

Eastern	266
Central	386
South-East	75
Southern	151
North-East	246

Evidently this proportionate growth approach has the potential to lead to a significant housing imbalance across the District. It would result in the majority of housing growth being focused towards the Central, Western, Eastern, and North-East Sub-Areas of the District, areas which already benefit from their proximity to the three main towns of Selby, Tadcaster and Sherburn (and which between them have a residual requirement for a further 3,030 dwellings).

This would leave the southern part of the District (Southern and South-East Sub-Areas) delivering just 226 dwellings over 16 years. Together this is less than what the Central, Western, Eastern and North-East will be delivering individually. Given the proximity of the Southern and South-East Sub-Areas for the M62 Corridor, existing industry (Eggborough Power Station), and proposed industry (Drax Power Station), there is clearly the need for a more balanced approach to the spatial distribution of housing growth across Selby.

In total, there are 18 DSV's identified under Policy SP2 (some of which are combined settlements). Accordingly, an equal share of the current residual of 1,330 dwellings would result in 74 dwellings per DSV. However, this would still result in an imbalance in housing delivery, as some DSV's are more closely grouped together across the District than others. For example, Carlton is the only DSV in the South-East Sub-Area of Selby. In contrast, the North-East Sub-Area and Central Sub-Area each contain 3 DSV's, despite their close proximity to Selby Town and Sherburn.

To ensure a balanced housing delivery across the District, and in view of the economic growth potential in the likes of the South-East Sub-Area owing to the Drax White Rose CCS Project (with the potential to generate 1,060 construction and operational jobs), a more considered approach would involve an equal share of dwellings per Sub-Area.

Doing so would result in a requirement of **at least 190 dwellings** within each of the seven Sub-Areas based on the residual requirement of 1,330 dwellings. This would result in the following split of housing:

Sub-Area and DSV's	Minimum Dwellings per DSV (rounded up)
Northern (Appleton Roebuck, Ulleskelf)	85
Western (Byram/Brotherton, Church Fenton, Monk Fryston/Hillam, South Milford)	48
Eastern (Barlby/Osgodby, Hemingbrough)	85
Central (Brayton, Hambleton, Thorpe Willoughby)	64
South-East (Carlton)	190
Southern (Eggborough/Whitley, Kellington)	85
North-East (Cawood, Escrick, North Duffield, Riccall)	48

The above scenario is considered to be the most robust, and one which will inevitably lead to a much more balanced distribution of housing across the District. Given the presence of the main towns of Selby, Tadcaster and Sherburn within the central, western and north-western parts of the District, it is crucial that enough new housing is also delivered in the south-east of the District to support economic growth and proposals within this Sub-Area, and jobs growth (and where this a high level of housing need). Providing new homes for key workers in view of the proposals for the Drax White Rose CCS Project will be fundamental, and help ensure that Selby District (and its residents) enjoy the economic benefits it will ultimately generate (not least increased expenditure in the local economy).

Accordingly, we advocate the Sub-Area approach to inform the split of housing between the DSV's, and which should be treated as minimum thresholds.

Question 9b

Once the minimum thresholds for the DSV's have been established, consideration should then be given to identifying sufficient land to meet these targets. Concerns relating to accessibility, flood-risk, and land availability should not be used as reason to limit housing growth in a particular DSV as this could simply lead back to the same situation associated with the proportionate growth scenario (whereby there is a housing imbalance across the District).

Question 10

Figure 5 sets out the Council's proposed approach to allocations in the Sites and Policies Local Plan.

We deal first with the sequential approach. One of the Core Principles of the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"), as set out in paragraph 17, is to "*encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.*" Evidently therefore, the previous "*brownfield first*" approach set out in former national policy guidance has been superseded.

Accordingly, it is considered that the sequential approach to land allocations should be simplified as follows:

1. *Brownfield land and buildings, and greenfield land, within the settlement; and*
2. *Extensions to settlements on adjacent brownfield land and buildings, and adjacent greenfield land.*

Turning to wider policy considerations, it is unclear whether these are listed in order of priority or not. Clearly however, the location of land within the Green Belt would be a primary factor against its allocation for housing (as no Green Belt review has been undertaken or is proposed), more so than any constraints relating to accessibility and flood-risk. The Council also need to take into account the viability of a site; brownfield sites will invariably have associated abnormal cost implications which developers will need to take into account.

Question 10

The selection criteria to be applied to the site allocation process require careful consideration in the context of releasing enough 'deliverable' land across the District to meet the housing requirements up to 2027, and a balanced approach to housing delivery.

Large parts of Selby District are subject to significant flood constraints. This is clearly illustrated on Figure 6 of the Core Strategy, with the North-East and South-East parts of the District the most constrained. However, these areas still need to deliver new housing to help "*boost significantly the supply of housing*" across the District in line with the wider sustainability objectives of the NPPF. If flood risk is too stringently applied as a selection criterion, then there is the very real possibility that a limited amount of new housing will come forward in the South-East of Selby over the Plan Period, leading to a housing imbalance, a failure to meet localised housing needs, and a failure to deliver much-needed new housing for key workers associated with the Drax CCS Project (and the associated economic benefits). A pragmatic approach to flood risk is therefore called for, as per that encouraged in the National Planning Practice Guidance ("NPPG").

Question 22

The existing development limits illustrated on the 2005 Selby Local Plan Proposals Map are now out-of-date, and no longer provide for the housing needs of the District. There is a demonstrable need for these boundaries to be re-drawn to identify land parcels outwith the existing development limits to meet future needs.

One of the Core Principles of the NPPF, set out in paragraph 17, is to "*recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and support thriving rural communities within it.*" This represents a shift from previous national planning policy which sought to "*protect the countryside for its own sake.*" The loss of the countryside per se does not constitute serious harm, and this is a view shared by Inspectors in recent Appeal decisions (Ref. APP/P1615/A/14/222-590). Accordingly, the Council needs to embrace the need to release and allocated sustainable greenfield sites on the edge of sustainable settlements to meet housing needs. This includes sites identified as being at risk of flooding, but where they can be made safe and will not exacerbate flood-risk elsewhere.

Amendments to existing settlement boundaries needs to be positively addressed through the Sites and Policies Local Plan, and not rigorously applied and defended.

Question 31

There is no requirement for the Sites and Policies Local Plan to set specific requirements for house types and sizes, and tenures. Whilst a mix of house types should be encouraged, this should not be imposed. Instead, it should be informed by market demand which is ever-changing. There needs to be sufficient flexibility for the market to respond to these changing needs, and the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment ("SHMA") should form the basis of this, updated on a regular basis to identify housing needs across the District.

Question 37b

Policy H2B of the 2005 Selby Local Plan refers to the need to achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare. This Policy is now out-of-date, and is not consistent with national policy set out in the NPPF. The latter now places the emphasis on planning for a mix of housing which reflects local demand, and local character. Accordingly, Policy H2B should therefore be deleted.

Policy RT2 relates to the provision of recreational open space as part of new residential developments. This Policy remains in place, supplemented by the Council's Developer Contributions SPD adopted in 2007. However, the evidence which informed this Policy is now out-of-date. Paragraph 73 of the NPPF requires planning policies on open space provision to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreational facilities, and opportunities for new provision. Any deficiencies should be identified. Accordingly, Policy RT2 should be deleted and replaced with a new Policy in the Sites and Policies Local Plan informed by new evidence.

Question 45a

The settlement of Carlton is heavily constrained by to the south, west and south-east, with areas of land lying within Flood Zone 3 as shown on the EA flood maps. Accordingly, there is limited opportunity for the settlement to expand in these locations, which are also constrained by poor accessibility and the presence of Carlton Towers. Accordingly, the natural location for the growth of the settlement is to the north, beyond allocated site CAR/1 which now benefits from planning permission.

To inform its Core Strategy, the Council previously published a Landscape Appraisal in 2011 which assessed the landscape sensitivity of various settlements across the District to new development. This included Carlton.

Settlements were assessed based on a low, medium and high sensitivity ranking. As part of this exercise, Carlton was identified as having a low sensitivity to development. The northern part of the village is characterised by flat topography, arable land, and small woodland areas. In concluding on the sensitivity of the landscape to new development, the Appraisal concluded that any development to the north and west of the village is unlikely to be discordant with the character of the area or visually intrusive, being sited against the backdrop of existing development. The land to the north of

Carlton does not therefore represent a "valued landscape" for the purposes of paragraph 109 of the NPPF, and should instead be the primary area of growth in the settlement.

Turning to the role of Carlton, as set out previously it is the only DSV in the South-East Sub-Area. Based on the Council's SHMA, it has the joint second highest housing need across Selby District, with 217 households experiencing one or more housing needs.

Background Paper No. 6 'Village Growth Potential' published in February 2010 confirmed in Appendix 1 that:

"Because of flood-risk issues in other villages in the south-east of the District, Carlton is the most appropriate location to meet local need in that area."

Within an earlier version of the Village Growth Potential Study prepared by Selby Council, it is accepted that:

"Carlton emerges as the most appropriate location for catering for local needs in the south-eastern area of the District and has some opportunities for expansion."

Accordingly, there is no question that Carlton needs to be the focus for housing growth in the South-East Sub-Area, and to meet to full housing needs and quota for this part of the District. The Council therefore needs to approach land release in Carlton proactively and positively to ensure that housing needs in this part of the District are met, and met locally.

Summary

ASL welcomes the opportunity to submit these representations in response to the Council's Sites and Policies Consultation Document, and trust that these comments will be afforded full and proper consideration.

ASL has identified a robust and sound approach to the distribution of housing between the DSV's, and one which will result in a balanced delivery of housing across the District to meet economic growth objectives and proposals. The delivery of new housing and economic growth go hand in hand, and it is vital that new housing is delivered in the most sustainable locations at the right time to provide a diverse housing choice which meets local needs.

There is evidently a need to allocate considerable land in order to meet the minimum housing requirements of the District up to 2027, and to address the housing shortfall since the start of the Plan Period. Equally, there is the need for a policy mechanism which supports and facilitates the release of windfall greenfield sites in the ongoing (and potentially lengthy) absence of a five-year housing land supply.

We look forward to remaining notified of the Sites and Policies Local Plan as it progresses.

Yours faithfully

STEVEN GRIMSTER
Associate Planner

cc John Brooks, Ainscough Strategic Land