

**South Kesteven District Council
Council Offices
The Picture House
St Catherines Road
Grantham
NG31 6TT**

By Recorded Mail and E-mail

20th April 2024

Re: South Kesteven District Local Plan Review - Draft Local Plan - Regulation 18

Dear Sir/Madam,

As existing residents of Colsterworth Village we have recently become aware of the proposed development of land at the east of Stamford Road (SKPR-120 Land at the East of Stamford Road Colsterworth) and would like to make clear our objection to it.

The land highlighted for potential development is not suitable, would negatively impact the village, its residents, wildlife and risk lives. Importantly, it fails to meet or deliver the 'development principles' set out for its development in the Draft Local Plan (page 201).

Several of us have therefore come together to form an action group; The Colsterworth Collective Action Group to stand firmly against this proposed plan. Let us be clear, we recognise the need to build homes, however driven by our passion for this village we will challenge, offer input and commit time to ensure decisions taken are in the best interests of this village and the well-being of its current and future residents. We have set out below high-level concerns and objections for your reference.

Existing Development

Balfour Beatty site adjacent to A1 at Bourne Road of 70 homes is underway. Despite homes being available for sale for over two months, only two properties appear to have been sold and remain 'subject to contract'.

Better Places to Build (in and around Colsterworth)

Bridge End / Woodlands has a build site approved (since 2015) for 48 homes, that records show work has commenced on. This would provide 70% of the required allocation and be better serviced by transport and amenities. Furthermore, should the plan [SKPR-120] proceed this could clearly

expose the village to a build of at least 118 homes - exceeding the allocation requirement by almost 70%.

Bridge End, North of former A1 exit / China Moon is available for sale and development. This would provide the opportunity to continue the Bridge End / Woodlands development and be better serviced by transport and amenities.

Plans to build c10,000 homes at former RAF base 'Woolfox Depot' south of Colsterworth have been set out with Rutland County Council. Surely a joint approach to this 'garden city' concept with adjoining SKDC land would be a meaningful and achievable long-term commitment to meeting the UK's needs (and that of the local areas) for new housing.

Colsterworth Village Amenities

Colsterworth infrastructure relating to education, medical practice, general store, village hall, social club, playgrounds, allotment and small supermarket are not equipped to cope with 20%+ population growth which would be the result of current and planned future development – this plan offers no robust solution to what would be a massive imposition on this village as a whole.

Pedestrian Access

All village amenities (stated above) except for the allotments are situated to the north of the proposed residential allocation. Therefore, any access to these amenities would require the crossing of Bourne Road which is a classified road subject to a 30mph speed limit with no weight limit restriction as it provides access from the surrounding villages as well as the adjoining county of Leicestershire to the A1 which is a strategic part of the National Highway major highways infrastructure. By positioning this residential allocation to the south side of the village and to the south of Bourne Road the provision of suitable footway and cycleway connections into the village will again be very problematic. As stated in the development principals accompanying this allocation pedestrian links such as footway and cycleway connections into the village should be incorporated in the development proposals. As there is only one uncontrolled crossing point along the length of Bourne Road near to number 40A what mitigation measures would be imposed on the developer to provide a safe crossing facility and to provide suitable footway and cycleway routes as long sections of Bourne Road have footways less than 2.0m wide and in other sections there is only a footway on one side of the carriageway. The existing cycle route on Bourne Road terminates at number 58 as you enter the village from the A1 and there are no other cycleways along Bourne Road as cyclists are expected to use the main carriageway.

The only other pedestrian access into the village amenities from the proposed residential allocation is the public right of way (PROW) known as the Ropewalk which runs from Bourne Road to Back Lane crossing the public open space off Colster Way. From Bourne Road to Colster Way the PROW is bounded by boundary fences of adjacent properties and is not hard surfaced for part of its length. If this was promoted as a suitable access route the available width between the boundary fences may not provide a sufficient width for the construction of a joint use cycleway / footway.

Transport and Highways

The accompanying plan within the draft local plan has no indication to how the proposed housing allocation is to be access from the existing public highway. As the proposal is for an indicative allocation of 70 units then an adopted highway would be required to serve this proposed

development. If an access is to be formed onto Bourne Road (as suggested) this could be problematic at peak flow times as most of the traffic would turn right out of the development to access the major road network. This would require the developer to provide a transportation plan and provide a suitable and safe junction design. It should be noted that traffic flow of the B676 is projected to increase significantly already in the short to medium term with Easton Cold Food store trebling capacity and employing up to 300 people, a new Melton Mowbray ring road currently under construction and proposed plans to build a biomass plant at nearby Gunby. Whilst the current plan [SKPR-120] has not established that Bourne Road provides suitable access and sets out that this requires 'serious consideration', the points above clearly highlight that this would not only be a traffic issue, but it would also endanger people's lives.

At present the whole of the arable land including the area of proposed residential allocation is directly accessed off Bourne Road between numbers 44 and 46. Unless an alternative access route can be found then access to the remaining arable land would be through the development which would require any proposed layout for the development to take this into account which may compromise the local highway authority's standards for housing developments.

The village has significant constraints due to its rich and important history and that of the adjacent settlement Woolsthorpe by Colsterworth that contains the National Trust property Woolsthorpe Manor. Colsterworth High Street is narrow and winding and already a traffic bottle neck and cannot be developed. Back Lane, which provides access to a methodist church, school and doctors surgery is an area of intense use already and provides no opportunities for change.

Biodiversity

Development principals relating to biodiversity opportunities suggest that a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain should be delivered as stated within the new policy 4. With an assumed housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare and that the proposed allocation is all within a greenfield setting how would this be controlled within any planning application.

Contraventions to the Colsterworth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 – 2026

This proposed residential allocation would appear to conflict with the existing Colsterworth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 – 2026 prepared by Colsterworth Parish Council.

There is reference within Policy SP1 the Core Strategy of this plan states that any new development should be kept within the existing built-up part of the settlement and preference should be given to brown field sites.

This is further reinforced within Policy SAPH 1 which states that: *“Other than those sites which are allocated, new green field sites on the edges of the towns and villages will not be considered acceptable for housing development. Planning permission will only be granted for small infill (sites of 10 or fewer houses) and redevelopment sites provided that the development:*

- 1) *can be satisfactorily accommodated by:*
 - *the existing local highway network;*
 - *the waste water treatment and sewerage network and;*
 - *the local education and health provision.*
- 2) *will not have a detrimental impact upon the quality of life of adjacent residents and properties.*

3) *will not compromise the nature and character of the settlement.*

4) *is in accordance with the criteria of Policies EN1, EN2, and EN4 of the Core Strategy.”*

Based on local knowledge, the SKPR-120 allocation does not appear to be able to meet or deliver the ‘development principles’ set out for its development in the Draft Local Plan (page 201). The

Colsterworth & District Neighbourhood Plan (2016-2026) supports this view. This is set out in ‘Policy 1 – Residential Development’ and in relation to ‘Important views and Vistas’ Para 7.34 onwards.

We would add that the poorly defined boundaries of the proposed plan risk exposure to continued and further development which would be of even further detriment to the village and its infrastructure.

You will appreciate we have very serious concerns and are determined to ensure this process is managed fairly, correctly and transparently.

Members of the collective have spoken to residents and found that many have not been aware of the plan. We have undertaken our own leaflet campaign to raise awareness however some residents, especially those without internet access, are having problems accessing information and providing responses. The council has not arranged any local meetings to share the draft plan, so we are trying to arrange a village meeting to share information and gather more feedback.

This letter sets out our headline objections, so that these are registered before your deadline. Should any further information or comments arise from our meeting or from other information we are actively seeking we will submit them as soon as practicable in order that we can have a comprehensive and inclusive response to deliver the best possible outcome for the proposed allocation of houses in the village.

Yours faithfully,

Mr S Jordan-Bird
Chairperson

Mrs C Frisby
Secretary