

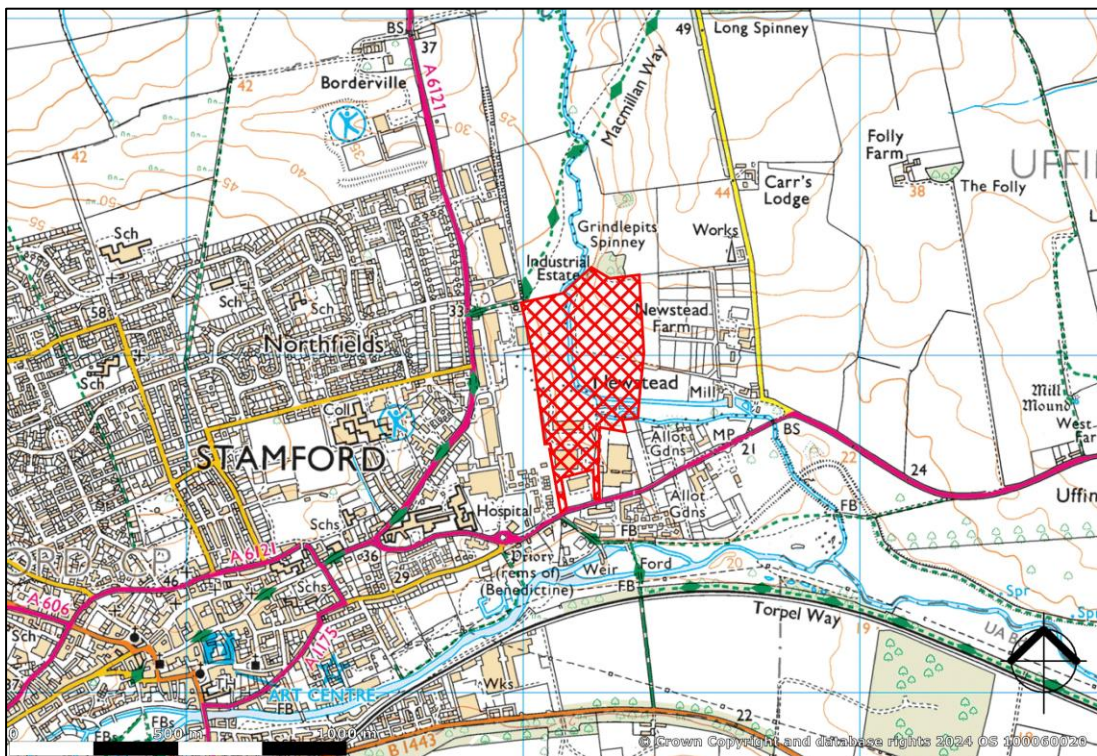


Representations to the South Kesteven Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) on behalf of F.H. Gilman & Co in Administration

1. Introduction

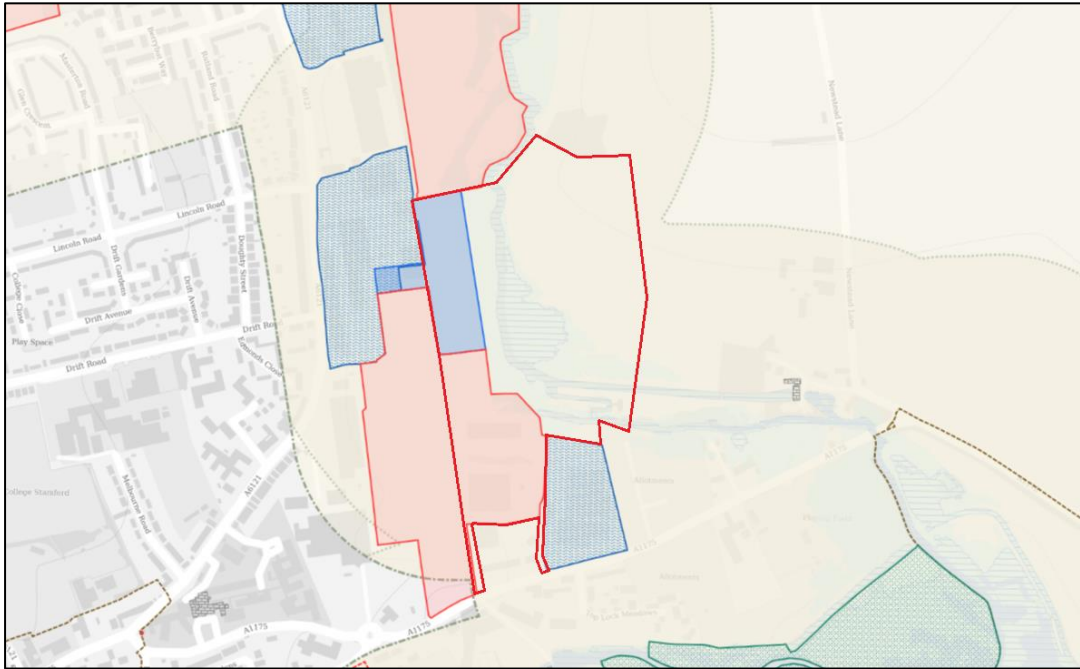
1.1 This statement sets out our response to the above consultation document ('the Draft Local Plan') and supporting evidence base documents on behalf of our client, F.H. Gilman & Co in Administration.

1.2 Our client owns approximately 16ha of land at the eastern edge of Stamford. The plan below shows the full extent of land (hatched in red) within our client's ownership:



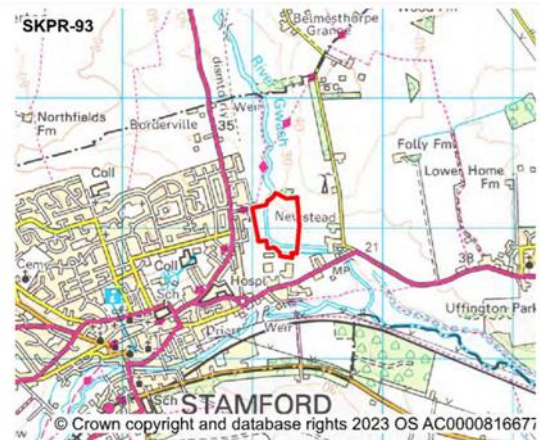
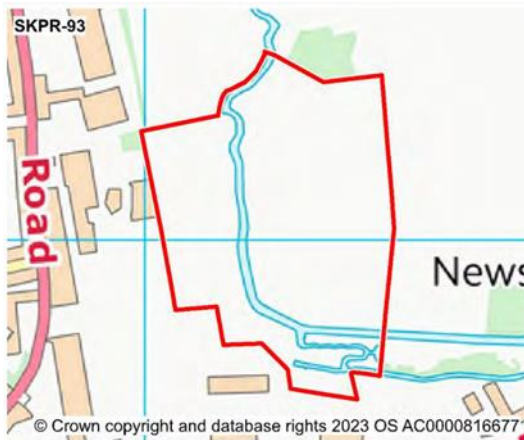
Site Location Plan Land at Uffington Road

1.3 The plan below shows the location of the site (outlined in red) in the context of the Draft Local Plan Policies Map.



Draft Local Plan Policies Map (Stamford)

- 1.4 In the context of the Draft Local Plan and Policies Map, our client’s site comprises three distinct areas:
- 1) **Residential Allocation** - an area of existing industrial buildings and hard standing which forms part of a wider allocation for housing development under Policy STM1.H2 (Stamford East);
 - 2) **Employment Allocation** - an area of overgrown and rough ground to the north of the existing industrial units which is allocated for new employment development under Policy E2 (Employment Sites);
 - 3) **Unallocated Land** - an area of open agricultural fields at the north-east of the site which is currently unallocated in the Draft Local Plan.
- 1.5 We previously responded (on behalf of our client) to the Council’s ‘Call for Sites’ consultation in November 2020 to put forward the areas of land not currently allocated for residential development (i.e. the employment allocation and unallocated land) as a potential site for residential development. This area is identified in the Council’s Site Assessment Report (2024) under reference **SKPR-93**. The red-line plans below show the extent and location of the site:



Site SKPR-93 (Site Assessment Report, 2024)

1.6 Our submissions to the Call for Sites (2020) consultation proposed that the above area of land (hereafter referred to as 'Site SKPR-93') is suitable for residential development for the following reasons:

- it is available, deliverable and developable for residential development;
- it is in a sustainable location given its proximity to a range of shops and services, employment opportunities, hospitals, public transport, public open space, leisure and education facilities;
- it comprises a mix of brownfield and Grade 3 agricultural land where development should be prioritised ahead of Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land;
- it is adjacent to existing residential allocations, including land within our client's ownership, which presents an opportunity to bring forward a cohesive and logical urban extension to the east of Stamford;
- it has potential to deliver a 'Green Link' pedestrian/ cycle route from Uffington Road to new public open space (proposed as part of Stamford North) and the wider open countryside to the north. The provision of a Green Link is an aspiration of the adopted Stamford Neighbourhood Plan (2022);
- it has potential to deliver ecological enhancements (as part of an identified biodiversity enhancement area) alongside the River Gwash and areas of the site within Flood Zones 2 and 3;
- part of the site has been allocated for employment use since 1995 but has remained undeveloped over the last two decades due to lack of market demand.

1.7 As shown on the Draft Local Plan Policies Map, Site SKPR-93 remains part allocated for employment / unallocated land. Having reviewed the Council's Site Assessment Report (2024), we consider that the findings of the Report are inaccurate insofar as they relate to Site SKPR-93 and other sites that have been allocated for residential development. In connection with this, we consider that the proposed distribution of housing development (set out within the spatial strategy) does not represent the most sustainable pattern of development for South Kesteven District and, therefore, does not accord with the presumption in favour of



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sustainable development as set out at paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).

1.8 Our comments in respect of specific policies, text and evidence documents supporting the Draft Local Plan are set out below.

2. Comments on the Proposed Distribution of Housing Development

2.1 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states (under the presumption of sustainable development) that all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seek (amongst other things) to meet the development needs of their area.

2.2 Policy SP1 sets out the overarching spatial strategy for the new plan period up to 2041. This is then followed by Policy SP2 (Settlement Hierarchy). Taken together, they indicate how the total number of new homes will be distributed across South Kesteven District. In this regard, Policy SP1 states:

‘All allocations proposed in the Local Plan are the most suitable and sustainable development options and provide for a variety of site types and sizes to ensure choice is offered to the market and delivery is achievable’.

2.3 Having reviewed the Draft Local Plan and the supporting evidence base documents, we do not agree that the proposed distribution of development represents the most suitable and sustainable pattern of development for the district.

2.4 The proposed spatial strategy focuses growth on Grantham and then to the other towns and larger villages. In terms of housing growth, 49% is distributed to Grantham; 13% to Stamford; 8% to The Deepings; 10% to Bourne; and 20% collectively to larger villages and other smaller settlements. Whilst the continued focus of housing growth on the major town of Grantham is reasonable in broad terms, the table below illustrates how the proposed distribution of housing development will shift development away from the most sustainable larger towns and towards less sustainable rural locations.

Distribution of Housing Development			
	Adopted Local Plan 2020	Draft Local Plan 2024	% Change
Grantham	53%	49%	-4%
Stamford	18%	13%	-5%
The Deepings	8%	8%	0%
Bourne	7%	10%	+3%
Larger Villages	10%	15%	+5%
Other Settlements	4%	5%	+1%



- 2.5 This shift in the distribution of housing development towards smaller settlements clearly represents a less sustainable pattern of development than that of the adopted Local Plan. In particular, the proposed distribution of development does not reflect the significant role of Stamford as a main service centre within South Kesteven District.
- 2.6 After Grantham, Stamford is the most sustainable location for development in the district and acts as the main service centre for nearby towns and villages. Policy SP2 (Settlement Hierarchy) identifies Stamford as a 'Market Town' alongside Bourne and the Deepings. However, Stamford is the largest of the market towns and is the only town (aside from Grantham) directly accessible via the A1, a key north-south route that forms part of the strategic highway network. It is also the only market town accessible via the national rail network (from Stamford Train Station) which provides services to Cambridge, Birmingham, Peterborough and beyond.
- 2.7 Despite being the second largest settlement in the district, the Draft Local Plan proposes that a mere 13% of new housing will be distributed to Stamford over the plan period, whereas 20% will be distributed across less sustainable rural villages. This approach will not deliver the most sustainable pattern of development as it does not maximise sustainable travel options; nor does it conserve and enhance the natural and historic qualities of a predominantly rural district. The proposed spatial strategy, therefore, is not in accordance with the presumption of sustainable development (as set out in the NPPF); nor is it justified given that other more sustainable sites (such as Site SPKR-93 in Stamford) are available and have not been allocated.
- 2.8 Given Stamford's location, size and role within the district, it should take a much more positive role in delivering homes and take a greater share of growth over the plan period.
- 2.9 In considering the broad locations in and around Stamford that could accommodate development, we note that development to the west of Stamford is constrained by the A1, whilst land to the south is restricted by the heritage and landscape constraints of Burghley House (Grade I) and Burghley Park and Garden (Grade II*). Land to the north is subject to an existing allocation and planning application for an urban extension ('Stamford North') which is accounted for in the overall housing figures. As such, the most logical and sustainable location for future housing development at Stamford would be to allocate land to the east of Stamford, adjacent to the settlement boundary.

3. Comments on the findings of the Site Assessment Report (2024) in respect of Site SKPR-93

- 3.1 As noted above, land within our client's ownership was promoted for residential development through the Council's 'Call for Sites' in November 2020 and is identified in the Council's Site Assessments Report (2024) under reference SKPR-93. The Site Assessment Report concludes that Site SKPR-93 is not suitable for housing development for the following reasons:

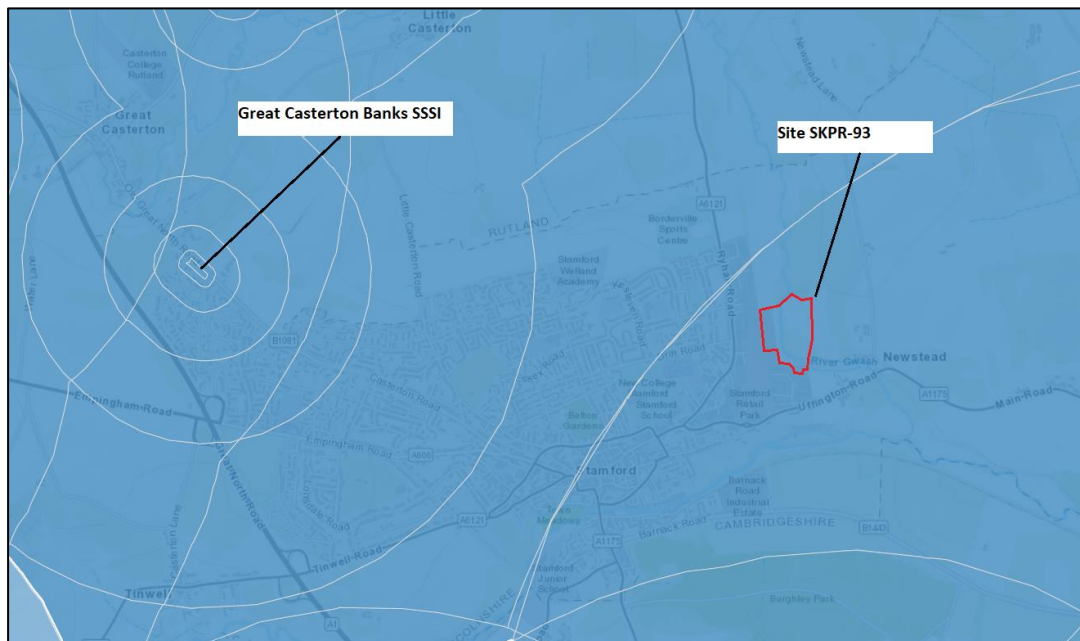


'Site is in close proximity to identified SAP/SCI/SSSI – Great Casterton Road Banks SSSI, and therefore could cause environmental implications on the designated site. Natural England have recommended the following sites fall within the recreational IRZ and may require an assessment of recreational Impact. Other more suitable sites are available to meet required need across the plan period'.

3.2 Having reviewed the Site Assessment Report, we do not agree with its findings in respect of Site SKPR-93, which are inaccurate and cannot be considered robust for the following reasons:

1) The site is not within the recreational Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of the Great Casterton Banks SSSI

3.3 As the plan below shows, the Great Casterton Road Banks SSSI is situated to the north-west of Stamford, more than 3.5km from Site SKPR-93 and beyond the Stamford North allocation (Policy STM1-H1).



SSSI Impact Risk Zones (England), Natural England

3.4 Contrary to the findings of the Site Assessment Report, Site SKPR-93 does not fall within the recreational Impact Risk Zone of the Great Casterton Banks SSSI. However, other proposed allocations within Stamford (including STM1:H1 Stamford North and SKPR-266 Stamford Gateway) do fall within the relevant Impact Risk Zone.

3.5 Whilst any new housing development at Site SKPR-93 would require an assessment of recreational pressure on relevant SSSIs (including potential mitigation), we note that several other allocated sites within South Kesteven fall within SSSI Impact Risk Zones. As such, this is not considered to be a robust justification for discounting the site for residential development.



2) The key sustainability criteria within the Site Assessment Report suggests that Site SKPR-93 is a more suitable and sustainable site than other allocated sites within the Draft Local Plan.

- 3.6 The Site Assessment Report concludes that there are ‘*other more suitable sites available*’ than Site SKPR-93 within the district to meet housing needs across the plan period. However, this is not supported by the Council’s own evidence within the Site Assessment Report.
- 3.7 The table below provides a slimmed down assessment of Site SKPR-93 and all new allocated sites based on some of the key sustainability criteria provided within the Site Assessment Report. It also includes an additional criterion (not included within the Site Assessment Report) – distance to the nearest strategic or major road network junction. Each criterion is colour coded using the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating system used within the Site Assessment Report.

Table 1: Assessment of Site SKPR-93 and new allocated sites within the Draft Local Plan

Site Reference	Land Type Site Size	Distance to shops (km)	Distance to SRN / MRN junction (km)	Distance to public transport (km)	Agricultural Grade (1-3)
SKPR-93 - Land north of Uffington Road, Stamford	Brownfield / Greenfield 12ha	0.2	3.2	0.25-1	100% Grade 3
SKPR-117 – Land to the East of Sheepwash Lane	Greenfield 4ha	0.5-2	< 1	0.25-1	81.2% Grade 3 18.8% Grade 2
SKPR-268 – Land at Train Station – Mixed Use Allocation	Brownfield 7.4ha	0-0.5	< 3	0-0.25	N/A
SKPR-57 – Land Off Belton Lane	Greenfield 34.9ha	0.5-2	< 3	0.25-1	100% Grade 3
SKPR-62 – The Grantham Church High School Playing Field, Queensway	Greenfield 4.2ha	0-0.5+	> 3	0.25-1	56.26% Grade 3
SKPR-266 – Stamford Gateway (Exeter Fields)	Greenfield 10ha	0.5-2	< 1	0.25-1	90.85% Grade 3
SKPR-53 – Land at Mill Drove	Greenfield 21ha	0.5-2	> 10	0.25-1	100% Grade 2
SKPR-83 – Land at North of Mill Drove	Greenfield 15.5ha	0.5-2	> 10	0.25-1	96.74% Grade 1
SKPR-144 – Land to the West of Millfield Road	Greenfield 11.1 ha	0.5-2	> 10	0.25-1	100% Grade 3



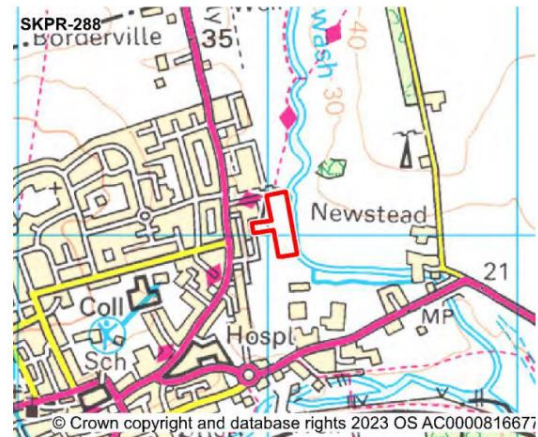
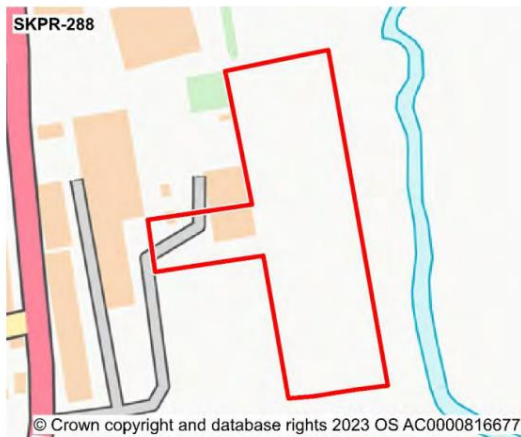
Site Reference	Land Type Site Size	Distance to shops (km)	Distance to SRN / MRN junction (km)	Distance to public transport (km)	Agricultural Grade (1-3)
SKPR-26 – Priory Farm Land, Deeping St James	Greenfield 26.3 ha	0-0.5	< 3	0.25-1	94.06% Grade 1
SKPR-58 Land to the East of Ermine Street	Greenfield 0.9 ha	0-0.5	< 8	0.25	100% Grade 3
SKPR-283 – Land off St Martins Way	Greenfield 2.6 ha	0-0.5	> 5	0-0.25	85% Grade 3
SKPR-242 – Lane East of Honington Road	Greenfield 2.7 ha	0-0.5	> 5	0-0.25	100% Grade 3
SKPR-109 – Land Fronting Deeping Road	Greenfield 4.8 ha	0.05	> 10	0.25-1	100% Grade 3
SKPR-61 - Former Aveland School, and Land to West of Pointon Road	Brownfield 1.7 ha	0-0.5	> 5	0.25-1	100% Grade 3
SKPR-103 - Land to the West of Pointon Road, NG34 0LW	Greenfield 5.5 ha	0-0.5	> 10	0.25-1	75.02% Grade 3 24.98% Grade 2
SKPR-120 - Land at the East of Stamford Road	Greenfield 13.6 ha	0.5-2	< 5	0-0.25	100% Grade 3
SKPR-247 – Land North of Bourne Road	Greenfield 8 ha	0.5-2	> 3	0.25-1	100% Grade 3
SKPR-241 – Land Off Church Lane	Greenfield 3.6 ha	0-0.5	< 3	0-0.25	Grade 3 100%
SKPR-74- The Land West of The Drift	Greenfield 1 ha	0.5-2	< 5	0-0.25	85.57% Grade 3 14.43% Grade 2
SKPR-71 – Land North of Dickens Close	Greenfield 2.3 ha	0.5-2	< 5	> 1	100% Grade 2
SKPR-135 – Land to the South of Edenham Road	Greenfield 2 ha	0-0.5	< 5	0.25-1	100% Grade 3
SKPR-56 – Land at Obthorpe Lane	Greenfield 3.6 ha	0-0.5	> 10	0.25-1	93.68% Grade 2 6.32% Grade 3



- 3.8 The above table illustrates that (based on key sustainability criteria) Site SKPR-93 is a more suitable and sustainable site for residential development than several other newly allocated sites within the Draft Local Plan. In this respect, six other allocated sites are over 10km from the nearest SRN / MRN junction, whilst one site is over 1km from any public transport. Ten sites are over 0.5km from the nearest shops and services.
- 3.9 Notably, five other allocated sites comprise either Grade 1 or Grade 2 agricultural land, which is entirely contrary to national planning guidance contained within the NPPF (Footnote 62) and local planning policy contained in New Policy 2 (Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land) of the Draft Local Plan. This guidance is clear that the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 and 2) should be protected ahead of poorer quality agricultural land (Grade 3).
- 3.10 For the reasons set out above, we dispute the findings of the Site Assessment Report insofar as they relate to Site SKPR-93. We suggest that the site is re-assessed against the key sustainability criteria alongside the proposed allocated sites.

4. Comments on the findings of the Site Assessment Report (2024) and Employment Land Study (2023) in respect of Site SKPR288 (Employment Allocation)

- 4.1 The area of overgrown and rough ground to the north of the existing industrial units (which forms part of Site SKPR-93) remains allocated for B2 and / or B8 uses under Policy E2 of the Draft Local Plan. A red-line plan showing the extent of the site area is provided below:



- 4.2 The Employment Land Study (2023) does not provide any in-depth assessment of the site, whilst the Site Assessment Report simply concludes that the site is suitable for employment use as it is allocated within the existing Local Plan (2020).
- 4.3 In line with our previous submissions to the Council's Call for Sites, we consider this area of land should be re-allocated from employment to residential use for the following reasons:
- the site is not viable for employment development due to its poor land quality and high abnormal costs;



- the site is not as suitably located as other potential employment sites in terms of proximity and access to the A1;
- the site is no longer an appropriate location for employment use given its proximity to new residential development coming forward to the south and west of the site (STM1:H2 Stamford East);
- land allocated for residential development under Policy STM1:H2 was subject to a planning permission for a new Aldi store (Ref: S20/0955) in October 2020. The store has since been constructed and is now in operation, effectively removing part of the existing residential allocation from the Local Plan. Re-allocating Site SKPR288 from employment use to residential would compensate for the loss of allocated residential land. Moreover, the recently constructed Aldi store employs approx. 40 full time staff which effectively offsets the loss of employment land;
- the site has been allocated for employment use since 1995 but has remained undeveloped for almost three decades, clearly demonstrating the lack of demand for employment use in this location. This lack of demand will only be exacerbated as new residential development comes forward to the south and west of the site;
- the loss of a mere 3.9ha of employment land will not have a detrimental impact on the overall supply of employment land given the flexibility of supply proposed across the district as part of the Draft Local Plan.

4.4 For the reasons set out above, we consider that Site SKPR288 should be reallocated from employment to residential development. It is highly unlikely that the site will come forward for employment purposes in the plan period and the Employment Land Study (2023) does not provide any robust evidence to suggest otherwise.

4.5 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF is clear that allocated sites which have no reasonable prospect of coming forward should be reallocated for more deliverable uses that can address identified needs. In this respect, the reallocation of the site to residential use represents a more deliverable use which would link with the existing residential allocation to the south (STM1.H2: Stamford East). It would also compensate for the loss of allocated residential land following the development of the Aldi store on Uffington Road.

5. Comments on Policy STM1.H2 (Stamford East)

5.1 We support the retention of Policy STM1.H2 (Stamford East) and the proposed change to the indicative number of units (320) which reflects planning permission S21/0938 and submitted planning application S22/1591. However, we consider that criterion a, which requires a comprehensive masterplan to be provided for the entire site, is no longer applicable or justifiable following the grant of planning permission ref: S21/0938.



5.2 In January 2022, planning consent was granted for 200 dwellings on the western half of the Stamford East allocation. The application was approved based on an indicative masterplan for the wider site, rather than an agreed comprehensive masterplan, which is not listed on the relevant planning permissions (including subsequent variations) as an approved document.

5.3 For the reasons set out above, the continued requirement for a comprehensive masterplan (as set out in criterion a) is no longer applicable or justified and, therefore, should be deleted from Policy STM1.H2.

6. Comments on the Sustainability Criteria of the Site Assessment Report (2024)

6.1 We note that paragraph 3.3 of the Site Assessment Report (2024) states:

‘Following consultation, it may be necessary to amend certain assessment criteria and include some additional criteria. This section will be updated and amended accordingly dependent on the outcomes of the consultation on the Draft Local Plan’.

6.2 Having reviewed the Site Assessment Report, we note that the assessment of sustainability criteria related to access to shops and services does not distinguish between the type and variety of shops and services. For example, Site SKPR-93 is within walking distance of two supermarkets and is within 1km from Stamford Town Centre which provides a wide range of shops and services. However, under the RAG rating system the site is given the same rating as other sites in rural locations that are only served by a limited range of shops and services.

6.3 The same is true in respect of access to public transport services. Sites that are served by multiple and regular bus services, or within walking distance of national rail services, achieve the same rating as those sites that are only served by limited or irregular public transport services.

6.4 We suggest that the sustainability assessment criteria is amended to distinguish between sites that are in proximity to a wide range of shops, services, facilities and public transport, and those that are only served by limited shops and services in rural locations.

7. Summary

7.1 Having reviewed the Draft Local Plan and supporting evidence documents, we summarise our key comments and concerns below:

- the proposed distribution of housing development, as set out within the Draft Local Plan, shifts housing development from the largest and most sustainable settlements to smaller and less sustainable settlements in rural locations. It does not represent the most sustainable pattern of development for South Kesteven District and, therefore, does not accord with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out at paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023);



- the findings of the Site Assessment Report (2024) are inaccurate insofar as they relate to Site SKPR-93. Our review of Site SKPR-93 alongside the newly allocated sites in the Draft Local Plan clearly demonstrates that it is a more suitable and sustainable location for development than several other allocated sites;
- Site SKPR-93 is a suitable and sustainable site and should be allocated for residential development for the reasons set out at paragraph 1.6. More specifically, the area of land allocated for employment use (Site SKPR288) should be re-allocated to residential use for the reasons set out at paragraph 4.3;
- Policy STM1.H2 should be amended to remove reference to the requirement of a comprehensive masterplan as this is no longer applicable or justifiable following the grant of planning permission ref: S22/2109;
- the assessment criteria of the Site Assessment Report should be amended to distinguish between sites that are in proximity to the wide range of shops, services, facilities and public transport, and those that are only served by limited shops and services in rural locations.

7.2 We highlight that our client intends to promote the merits of land in their ownership for residential development during the Local Plan consultation and examination period, including the preparation of robust evidence to support their proposals. Once this evidence work has been undertaken, we would welcome a meeting with planning policy officers to discuss the merits of the wider site.