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24 April 2024

Our Ref: 88114768/1/BE/MB

**Submitted via email:** [planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk)

Dear Sirs,

## **SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL: REGULATION 18 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION**

These representations have been prepared by Freeths LLP on behalf of our client, AFS Dean ("our client"), in response to South Kesteven District Council's Regulation 18 draft Local Plan consultation.

In summary, our client **objects** to Draft Policy H1: Housing Allocations and Draft Policy H4: Meeting All Housing Needs as it is imperative that a variety of size and types of sites are allocated for housing across the District, including housing for older people, in order to provide choice to the market and headroom for delivery, especially given the national housing crisis and critical need for housing for older people. As it stands, neither of these draft policies provide any specific allocations or targets for specialist housing for older people, despite there being a requirement of between 749 no. to 1,309 no. beds over the proposed Plan period, or 37 no. to 65 no. beds per annum (as set out in the Council's own Local Housing Needs Assessment, prepared by Aecom – September 2023). While these figures have not been externally tested by any interested parties such as key stakeholders, in any event, they show that there is a clear unmet requirement for additional beds for older people.

To assist in meeting this critical requirement for housing for older people, these representations continue to promote Land to the North of Wilsford Lane, Ancaster, Grantham, NG32 3PU for residential (Class C3) development, along with a care home (Class C2). Ancaster, being a Larger Village, is an appropriate location for such growth. As is demonstrated through this submission, the Site should be reconsidered for allocation in the emerging Local Plan as it is deliverable as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) i.e. suitable, available, and achievable, and it can make an important contribution towards the critical need for specialist housing for older people, as well as catering for housing needs in general, which there is also a pressing need for, due to the national housing crisis.

## Key Background Information

A Call for Sites submission was made to the Council in September 2022 (see letter dated 14 September 2022), whereby Land to the North of Wilsford Lane, Ancaster, Grantham, NG32 3PU (“the Site”) was promoted for residential (Class C3) development, or residential (Class C3) development, along with a care home (Class C2). A meeting was subsequently held with the Council’s Principal Planning Policy Officer in order to further discuss the merits of the Site.

As set out in the above referenced written submission, the Site is located to the east of Ancaster and comprises approximately 2.4 hectares of Grade 3 agricultural land. The Site comprises around one third of a wider field and is well contained by existing hedgerow planting to the northern, eastern and southern boundaries. The other part of the field (to the west) is allocated in the Council’s adopted Local Plan for residential development (site ref. LV-H1 Wilsford Lane (SKLP315)). This site benefits from reserved matters consent (approved 22 March 2022) for the development up 96 no. dwellings (ref. S21/2500). This is being progressed by Bellway Homes.

The Council has not however put forward the Site for potential allocation as part of the emerging draft Local Plan (other sites have been allocated in Ancaster). The Site Assessments Report (February 2024) sets out an assessment of each site put forward for potential development. The conclusion as to why this Site has not been put forward for allocation is as follows:

*“Site has been identified to fall within an area affected by a minerals and waste policy from the adopted Lincolnshire County Council Minerals and Waste Plan (2016). Appropriate measures would be required to ensure compliance with the affected policy. Other more suitable sites are available to meet required need across the plan period.”*

Our client’s objections to Draft Policy H1: Housing Allocations and Draft Policy H4: Meeting All Housing Needs are discussed in detail below, including an assessment of why the Site should be reconsidered for allocation in the emerging Local Plan, through Draft Policy H1.

## Objection to Draft Policy H4: Meeting All Housing Needs

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) is clear that the achievement of ‘Sustainable Development’ is key aim of the planning system. To do so, planning authorities must deliver a sufficient number and range of homes, whilst ensuring that communities are served by accessible services and facilities that reflect current and future needs.

In addition, it imperative that a variety of size and types of sites are allocated for housing across the District, including housing for older people, in order to provide choice to the market and headroom for delivery, especially given the national housing crisis and critical need for housing for older people.

At a national level, the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is clear on the importance of providing housing for older people. Under ‘housing for older and disabled people’, it states:

*“The need to provide housing for older people is **critical**. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million. Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for*

*longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-taking.” (our emphasis) (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-001-20190626)*

The Council's Local Housing Needs Assessment (“LHNA”) (Aecom, September 2023) indicates a need of 3,923 no. - 4,053 no. specialist homes for older people over the Plan period, based on the age and likely health needs of the population (the need for these homes is incorporated into the overall need for housing and is not additional to the overall housing requirement up to 2041). While the needs of some older people may be accommodated within mainstream housing, particularly if they have limited care and support needs, the LHNA identifies that 28% of the population aged 75+ will require dedicated specialist accommodation.

As set out in the LHNA, there are presently 68 no. specialist accommodation schemes, with 2,220 no. beds across the District. A very high proportion (93%) of the existing offer is retirement or age exclusive housing with no on-site care. Only five of the 68 schemes (148 no. or 7% of the total 2,220 no. beds available) offer on-site care as “Extra Care Housing”, “Housing with Care” or “Close Care Housing”. This means that there is a significant demonstrable gap in the existing supply.

The LHNA has included three estimates of the likely need for additional care home accommodation over the Plan period for South Kesteven, based on different data sets, as follows:

- HLIN - 1,309 no. over the Plan period or 65 no. per annum.
- POPPI data - 859 no. over the Plan period or 43 no. per annum.
- AECOM estimate -749 no. over the Plan period or 37 no. per annum.

Paragraph 9.77 of the LHNA goes on to state that: *“New care and nursing home provision will be required to remedy the current shortage, as well as further provision to cater for the projected increase in the older population (27,396 by 2041). If provision remained static, by 2041, based on the 27,396 individuals aged 75+ likely to reside in South Kesteven by the end of the plan period, the current provision would equate to:*

- *28 residential care beds per 1,000 people aged 75+ (compared to a recommended rate of 65); and*
- *18 nursing care beds per 1,000 population aged 75+ (compared to a recommended rate of 45).”*

Based on the above, our client therefore **objects** to Draft Policy H4 as it does not include any specific targets for delivering Class C2 accommodation to cater for the needs of older people, other than requiring new residential development above a threshold of 10 no. or more dwellings to provide a target of at least 10% of new dwellings as ‘Accessible and Adaptable’. This will not deliver specific specialist older person accommodation and as such, the identified need of between 749 no. to 1,309 no. specialist accommodation beds over the Plan period, or 37 no. to 65 no. beds per annum, will not be met by Draft Policy H4 Meeting All Housing Needs, and the Plan is therefore unsound in this respect.

To confirm, Draft Policy H1: Housing Allocations does not include any specific allocations for specialist housing accommodation, and our client also objects to this policy on this basis – this is discussed in further detail below.

### **Objection to Draft Policy H1: Housing Allocations**

Draft Policy H1 allocates a number of sites for residential development over the Plan period. 8,971no. dwellings are allocated in the District's four main towns, and 1,532no. dwellings are allocated in the Larger Villages (14.6% of total allocations). 126no. dwellings are allocated in Ancaster, over 3no. sites (for 35no., 26no. and 65no. dwellings). Of these allocations, only Stamford North (SKPR-281 / STM1-H1) and Linchfield Road (SKPR-37 / DEP1-H2) require the development to accommodate specialist housing provision. Even if these two sites were each to provide 100no. specialist care beds (i.e. 200no. in total), then this is still a significant way off meeting the identified need of between 749no. to 1,309no. specialist accommodation beds over the Plan period. As such, our client also **objects** to Draft Policy H1, as it again does not fully meet the critical need for providing specialist housing for older people and is therefore unsound.

As noted in the Call for Sites submission, our client's Site at Land to the North of Wilsford Lane, Ancaster, could deliver a circa 60 no. bed care home (Class C2), alongside around 34no. dwellings, therefore making an important contribution to the critical delivery of housing for older people, for which there is a demonstrable shortfall and insufficient identified provision for currently. While two options were put forward as part of the Call for Sites submission i.e. for a fully Class C3 scheme, or a reduced number of Class C3 dwellings, together with a Class C2 care home, given the demonstrable need and lack of provision identified, it is the intention to promote allocation of the Site for the latter option i.e. a c.60 no. bed care home, alongside a reduced Class C3 residential provision.

Importantly, the LHNA, at paragraph 9.76, recognises the contribution this Site could make towards such provision, stating:

*"It is also worth noting that, as part of the recent Call for Sites undertaken by SKDC in 2020, a site is being promoted in Ancaster for the provision of either solely residential development (Class C3), or for residential development alongside a care home (Class C2). The potential indicative options for breakdown of uses, as submitted to the Call for Sites, envisaged either 54 dwellings if only residential uses (Class C3) were permitted, or 34 dwellings (Class C3) and circa 60 care home beds (Class C2), if there was to be a mix of uses, subject to planning permission. If this site was permitted and delivered for C2 and C3 within the plan period as proposed, the 60 additional care home beds provided would increase the provision slightly, from 50 to 53 care beds per 1,000 based on the 2021 population aged 75+."*

As such, our client requests that the allocation of this Site is re-considered. Allocation of this Site will ensure the delivery of much needed Class C2 accommodation, for which there are currently no specific allocations or targets in the emerging Local Plan. It will also provide much needed Class C3 accommodation (alongside the much-needed Class C2 provision), assisting with the national housing crisis, through providing a mix of housing for which there is a nationally identified need.

Whilst it is noted that our client's Site was discounted from allocation due to it being located within an area affected by a minerals and waste policy from the adopted Lincolnshire County Council

Minerals and Waste Plan (2016), this is not considered a barrier for its development or allocation. The minerals and waste consultation response stated:

*“Safeguarded Mineral Site (Castle Quarry) to south west (M12), Limestone MSA (M11), STW to north (W8) Adjacent land to the south of Sleaford Road has also been nominated as a potential eastern extension to Castle Quarry in the recent call for sites for the MWLP - however this site has not yet been assessed/preferred sites have not been identified at this stage.”*

It is important to note that all of the 3no. sites proposed for allocation in Ancaster are also located within the Minerals Safeguarding Area for Limestone, albeit this was not raised when assessing the suitability of these sites. Additionally, proposed allocation ref. SKPR-271 (LV-H2) Wilsford Lane (South) is also located within the specific Minerals Safeguarding Area for the active Castle Quarry site (as is this Site). As such, the assessment of the suitability of these two sites is not considered consistent, as this was not mentioned or assessed for Wilsford Lane (South) as a barrier to development. Indeed, Wilsford Lane (South) is located closer to the active Quarry site (which is located to the south of Sleaford Road) than this Site.

The Minerals and Waste Local Plan gives no indication that the minerals industry has either considered or promoted this Site as a potential working area, given it sits within what is a much wider, extensive overall limestone resource. It is understood that land adjacent to the existing Quarry site has been identified for potential further expansion through a Call for Sites exercise (in respect of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review). This does not comprise any land forming part of our client's Site.

Even if there was any mineral operator interest in this land (which is considered highly unlikely), it is clear that the Site's location to the north of Wilsford Lane (i.e. separated from the existing Quarry site by both Sleaford Road and Wilsford Lane) and location immediately adjacent to new residential dwellings on the edge of Ancaster means it would be heavily constrained by amenity / noise-based considerations. Any feasibility study would identify this, meaning it would be highly likely discounted from any further consideration.

In addition, it is clear that allocation of this Site would not prejudice the existing safeguarded mineral operations at Castle Quarry by introducing a sensitive residential land use nearby, given the separation from the existing Quarry site by both Sleaford Road and Wilsford Lane. Any future planning application(s) that may come forward on the Site would ensure that any impacts on the development from Castle Quarry are assessed as part of this, and appropriate mitigation incorporated into the site design (if required); this could be secured by an appropriately worded condition on any future planning permission.

As such, the minerals and waste designations are not considered a barrier for the Site's development or allocation in the emerging Local Plan, and we request that the Site's potential allocation is re-considered in light of the above.

We trust that these representations will be taken into consideration in the formulation of the draft Local Plan. In the meantime, should you require any further information, or wish to discuss any element of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my colleague, Mark Bassett.

24 April 2024

Page 6

Yours sincerely

*This letter is approved but unsigned as it is sent electronically.*

Beth Evans

Senior Associate

Please respond by e-mail where possible