

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL – NEW LOCAL PLAN

Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Consultation

Representations on behalf of Church Farm Billesdon Ltd.

May 2025

**c. green
planning**
LIMITED

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. These representations have been prepared by C. Green Planning Limited on behalf of our clients, Church Farm Billesdon Ltd. (the 'Landowner'), in response to the Regulation 19 'Proposed Submission' consultation (the 'Consultation') as part of the preparation of the Harborough District Council New Local Plan. This consultation ends on Tuesday 6th May 2025.
- 1.2. These representations are made in relation to the promotion of the Landowner's potential development site at Gaulby Road, Billesdon. The subject land was previously submitted as part of the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment 2021 ('SHELAA'), published by Harborough District Council (the 'Council') in August 2022, under the site reference 21/8155. The site, which measures at approximately 7.87ha, was considered to be 'deliverable within 5 years' with an estimated capacity of approximately 50 dwellings.
- 1.3. It should be noted that the landowner's site was subject to a planning application – Council ref. 23/01104/OUT – for the erection of up to 48 dwellings, including 30 custom build plots and 18 affordable First Homes, with associated vehicular access, school drop off area with 40 spaces, landscaping, and drainage infrastructure (access only to be considered). This scheme was consented at appeal – PINS ref. APP/F2415/W/24/3346350 – on 6th February 2025.

2. Site Appraisal and Context

- 2.1. The Landowner's site consists of land located off Gaulby Road to the south of Billesdon, a rural settlement designated as a 'Medium Village' within the Council's settlement hierarchy.
- 2.2. The Site covers a total area of approximately 7.87ha and consists of several fields of agricultural pasture. The southern parcel of the site is bounded to the west by the former Leicestershire County Council transport depot and further agricultural fields, with the eastern boundary adjoining residential properties and the built-up form of the village.
- 2.3. Access to the site is currently served by existing field gates from Gaulby Road, with the adopted highway running north-east to south-west through the centre of the site. The northern parcel benefits from an extant planning consent for the development of 5 new dwellings, including improved access provision, whilst the currently live application provides proposed access design drawings that indicate suitable arrangements can be made to accommodate development to the land both north and south of Gaulby whilst meeting the necessary standards.
- 2.4. The Site is located approximately 800 metres from the village centre, which serves a thriving community as well as the surrounding rural area. The large, compact village is located just 9 miles east of Leicester City centre, accessed via the A47, and within close proximity of the B6047 which leads south to Market Harborough (12 miles) and north to Melton Mowbray (14 miles). Effectively a cross-roads village, the existing local facilities contained throughout the village – including a primary school, surgery, village stores, public houses, etc. – provide for a number of the daily requirements for existing residents, whilst the Site is within reasonable walking distance of a regular bus service connecting the village with wider Leicestershire.
- 2.5. Lying adjacent to the built-up form of the village, the Site is outside of the "Planned Limits of Development," as set out in the 'made' Billesdon Neighbourhood Plan (BNP). However, beyond the south-west sits the Leicestershire County Council depot site, comprising of large industrial-style units which – in combination of the associated woodland cover, and local topography – provides a degree of visual containment and separation to the surrounding landscape.
- 2.6. The majority of the site is not within the designated Conservation Area, bar a small parcel adjacent to the local school, or covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation that would restrict its development.
- 2.7. The Landowners are in full agreement on the promotion of the site for development, with no legal or ownership issues which would prevent potential development from being delivered. As such the land is considered to be suitable and immediately available, with residential development achievable within the short-term to meet necessary housing needs.

3. Proposed Submission Representations

- 3.1. Having studied the documents published as part of the six-week consultations, we wish to make the following comments.

Policy DS01 Development Strategy: Delivering Homes

- 3.2. We support the Council in planning for a medium scale of housing growth, a requirement of 657 new homes per year, although believe this should be as an absolute minimum. This is to ensure the Local Housing Need is met and the commitment to accommodate agreed unmet need from the HMA local authorities is delivered.
- 3.3. However, we believe that, in order to generate growth across the District and deliver the necessary improvements to required to meet the ambitious vision for the Local Plan, it is imperative that the Council seek to deliver a scale of growth at a minimum of 780 new dwellings per annum.
- 3.4. We support a balanced approach of delivering the much need sustainable development across the settlement hierarchy to ensure the rural settlements and villages - which are a main attraction of the rural District - are kept viable and can support existing and future services.
- 3.5. This would allow for the delivery of new homes and infrastructure in a wide mix of location, offering people a choice and the opportunity to remain living in existing settlements as families grow and expand. Housing development within the sustainable rural settlements, such as Billesdon, should be of an appropriate scale in line with access to services, however should be of a level to assist in the retention of key services – which may be lost if future development is not directly appropriately – and to attract new services and facilities into the community.
- 3.6. With regard to Billesdon specifically, we support its designation as a Medium Village within the policy, although believe it has capacity to suitably deliver above the 63 dwellings. This is explored later in this document.

Policy SA01: Site Allocations

- 3.7. C. Green Planning Limited and the landowners supports the allocation of site ref. B1 (Land at Gaulby Road, Billesdon) within the Local Plan, along with the allocation boundaries. The recent appeal decision granting consent across the site shows unequivocally that the residential development can come forward without unacceptable harm to the village and wider landscape. However, whilst they retain a commit to delivering custom-build housing plots and afford policy compliant levels of affordable housing across the site, it is evident that the land offers an opportunity to deliver a larger scale of development, in the region of 60-70 dwellings.

- 3.8. It is almost unnecessary for the Local Plan to make express reference to the landowners offer to the local school in relation to the school drop off area within the policy, given the comments made by the Inspector in their decision.
- 3.9. With regard to the allocation of site ref. B2 (Billesdon Depot, South of Gaulby Road), it is clear from the allocation in the 'made' Neighbourhood Plan – as well as the ongoing application across the site – that the provision of any housing across the site is highly unlikely to come forward, with the site instead being utilised by Leicestershire Fire & Rescue. As such, the required numbers should be re-allocated to the larger scale development of site ref. B1.

Policy HN01 Housing Need: Affordable Homes

- 3.10. We wholeheartedly support the policy to deliver appropriate levels of affordable housing to meet local need. However, policies should allow flexibility to enable individual sites to adapt to their specific constraints and needs, accounting for viability.

Policy HN02 Housing Need: Mix of New Homes

- 3.11. We consider that policy to ensure the appropriate mix of housing in submitted development applications is necessary, although believe that the policies should allow flexibility to enable individual sites to adapt to their specific constraints and needs, accounting for viability. It is crucial that housing mix should not adversely impact upon the deliverability of a site, with a method based upon the most up to date evidence base – reviewed regularly to ensure it remains accurate – considered to be appropriate.

Policy HN03 Housing Need: Housing Type and Density

- 3.12. We support the minimum densities set out within the policy, and believe this provides further evidence of the need to increase the allocated housing numbers across site ref. B1 within Policy SA01.

Policy AP01: Development in Settlements

- 3.13. C. Green Planning Limited and the landowners endorse this policy to support development within built-up areas in villages, and on land adjoining the existing built-up areas.