

Re: 20/01021/OUT

The Market Bosworth Society is strongly against the progress of this proposed development. We intend to set out in overview the base of our objection and its negative impact upon the heritage of Market Bosworth. It is also our opinion that the Market Bosworth Neighbourhood Plan is being summarily ignored due to performance of the Borough Council. The argument that there are insufficient new homes being created in Market Bosworth is a fallacy which we aim to expose. This is no more than an opportunistic attempt to take advantage the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) and more specifically the Planning Department as a whole.

Currently in Market Bosworth there are 984 homes. Within the Neighbourhood plan was a requirement to provide 100 plus dwellings (this is now accepted to mean 108) as Market Bosworth's fair share of the target for new homes in Leicestershire and of course, the borough of HBBC. The Station Fields development is moving ahead, HBBC have published the Master Plan for the development and the next stage is a consultation. Market Bosworth is on target to deliver well above target.

Station Fields will add around 110 houses (44 of them affordable) to the existing 984 making a total of 1094 homes or an increase of 11%. When the Neighbourhood Plan was constructed it was also known that Sedgemere may proceed and there is outline planning permission for 57 homes (possibly more) with 22 of them affordable. Add to that another 36 (Ambion Court and single, random builds) and that adds another 93 dwellings or another 9.5%.

Therefore, we have, currently, 984 dwellings and plans for a further 203 have been agreed, taking the total to 1187 or an increase of 20%. This is bound to impose a strain on our infrastructure but that would be the case anywhere in the country.

If speculative applications, such as this one (a further 63 dwellings) outside of the Neighbourhood Plan are permitted this will increase this already challenging rise in houses to an impossible 27%

When residents have voted at referendum to meet the required target share, and are on track to deliver over 200% of their target it is preposterous to expect even more development. The infrastructure (schools, dentists, parking, roads, doctors, etc.) is unlikely to escape unscathed by a 27% increase in houses.

To reiterate, Market Bosworth is well on track to deliver over 200% of the original requirement of 100 plus. It is impossible for the requirement to be increased by more than 200% in 5 years. When HBBC finally develop and deliver their new local plan we are confident that the contribution made by Market Bosworth toward satisfying the housing needs of the Borough will remain robust.

There is no doubt whatsoever that this site was not a preferred option by the residents of Market Bosworth. This site was given full consideration in the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan and the resulting consultation demonstrated that the residents preferred the open space to the possibility of development.

The original Neighbourhood Plan consultation identified two potential sites for development; land to the North and land to the South of Station Road. The outcomes from the 500 households who answered this question were:

	No	%
North of Station Road (Golf Course side)	<b>131</b>	<b>28</b>
South of Station Road (Industrial Estate side)	<b>328</b>	<b>64</b>
Nil response	<b>41</b>	<b>9</b>

The clear preference by 64% of the respondents was for the South of Station Rd, and this was subsequently endorsed in the final Neighbourhood Plan by 89% of respondents in the referendum prior to its adoption.

So far we have sought to provide a logical explanation of the inappropriate nature of this development and also refer to the wishes of the residents of Market Bosworth.

This proposal seeks to destroy the Vista number 11 in the MBNP which is protected by policy CE3

*Development that harms important views into or vistas out of Market Bosworth will be resisted. The location and direction of these views and vistas are indicated on the Views and Vistas map and described in Section 6.1p*

*New development will not be supported if it has a significantly adverse impact on an important view or vista.*

We note that document Illustrative Masterplan Dwg No. P20-1243-02B acknowledges Vista 11 and appears to attempt to suggest the vestige of the vista, which would remain, is adequate. This is quite offensive to the residents of Market Bosworth, almost laughable. So much for attention to the Heritage of Market Bosworth.

2.2 It is noted and accepted by the Council that the housing policies in the Local Plan are out of date. The planning officer's report for the nearby site at Sedgemere, Station Road, Market Bosworth set out that "housing policies in the development plan are considered to be out of date as they focus on delivery of a lower housing requirement than required by the up-to-date figure identified in the Governments Housing Delivery Test and the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply". This is applicable to both Borough level documents and the MBNP, which is over five years old and thus no longer afforded the greater protection provided by paragraph 14 of the Framework.

Whilst it is indeed lamentable that not only has HBBC lost their five year land bank and also that they have failed to bring forward a new local plan there are protections to communities built into the legislation. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) *states to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.* There is no evidence provided that this development will support local services in fact all of the evidence is to the contrary. It should also be remembered for the purpose of paragraph 14: a) up to and including 11 December 2018, paragraph 14a also includes neighbourhood plans that became part of the development plan more than two years before the date on which the decision is made; and b) from November 2018 to November 2019, housing delivery should be at least 25% of that required over the previous three years, as measured by the Housing Delivery Test. Further the legislation which this application relies, specifically NPPF Section 11 d also states d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. We are confident that when added together the addition of these dwellings on top of those already sanctioned and in train satisfies this condition.

DM1 provides: *Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Borough Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:*

- a) Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- b) Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

We believe that we have demonstrated beyond doubt that 63 additional dwellings to those already benefiting from grants of permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits even if the local plan is out of date.

DM3 provides: *Where development will create a need to provide additional or improved infrastructure, amenities or facilities, developers will be expected to make such provision directly or indirectly through the appropriate funding mechanism.*

*In order to secure and co-ordinate the timely delivery of infrastructure, the Borough Council will work in partnership with other local delivery bodies, local authorities, developers and service providers, throughout all stages of the development process to deliver the infrastructure required to support the policies in the Local Plan and, but not limited to, the prevailing Infrastructure Delivery Schedule.*

*Where, because of the physical circumstances of the site and/or prevailing and anticipated market conditions, a developer can demonstrate that the viability of a development proposal affects the provision of affordable housing and/or infrastructure provision, the Borough Council will balance the adverse impact of permitting the scheme on the delivery of such provision, with any identified planning benefits of the scheme. Where current viability is proposed as a justification to deliver a reduced level of infrastructure provision, than that required by policy, developers are required to provide the appropriate evidence to support this justification.*

An answer of sorts is attempted within the design statement:

2.7 Support the improvement of GP facilities in Market Bosworth to support the increase in population. It is well known that the existing facilities cannot be extended as there is no land available. To suggest that an estate of 63 houses will create sufficient Section 106 funding to provide a complete new Medical Practice Surgery defies credibility and underestimates residents understanding of this process.

DM4 Provides: *To protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character, the countryside will first and foremost be safeguarded from unsustainable development. Development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where:*

- a) It is for outdoor sport or recreation purposes (including ancillary buildings) and it can be demonstrated that the proposed scheme cannot be provided within or adjacent to settlement boundaries; or*
- b) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting; or*
- c) It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or diversification of rural businesses; or*
- d) It relates to the provision of stand-alone renewable energy developments in line with Policy DM2: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development; or*
- e) It relates to the provision of accommodation for a rural worker in line with Policy DM5 - Enabling Rural Worker Accommodation.*

The plan does not bring forward any improvements to employment in the area (beyond the initial building of the houses). The open character will be destroyed, and this estate will have an urbanising effect which is against this policy and not wanted by the residents of Market Bosworth as demonstrated clearly in their vote detailed above. The vote against developing this piece of agricultural land was almost three to one.

DM11 Provides: *The Borough Council will protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment throughout the borough. This will be done through the careful management of development that might adversely impact both designated and non-designated heritage assets.*

*All development proposals which have the potential to affect a heritage asset or its setting will be required to demonstrate:*

- a) An understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting; and*
- b) The impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset and its setting, including measures to minimise or avoid these impacts; and*
- c) How the benefits of the proposal will outweigh any harm caused; and*
- d) Any impact on archaeology in line with Policy DM13*

We have already demonstrated how this development will exceed the reasonable pressures which can be applied to rural Market Towns by the provision of housing. Market Bosworth has at its core a Market Place (The Square) which can be dated back to the fifteenth Century. This historic environment was not designed for twenty first century needs or traffic. An increase of 20% in the housing stock will have a serious detrimental impact and increase of 27% even more so.

Referring again to the design statement we were amused to read: *2.7 Address the existing deficiencies in the quality, quantity and accessibility of green space and play provision in Market Bosworth.* The photograph chosen to introduce the Design Statement shows the Ashby Canal. Several miles of towpath easily accessible and enjoyed by thousands of people (residents and visitors) throughout the year. Adjacent to the site in question is the Kyngs Golf Course where permission has been granted for a Golf Club House and six golf chalets. Almost across the road are the Sports Club and football playing fields. There are four play areas two of which offer fully maintained play equipment. At the other end of Market Bosworth is the Market

Bosworth Country Park which also includes a fully maintained and equipped play area. There is also the Parish Field where not only regular outdoor events take place, but families also meet to picnic and play sports in safety. Adjacent to that facility is the Memorial Gardens which offer even more green space for quiet reflection and contemplation. The Area is bordered on one side by the Leicestershire Round and is crisscrossed by dozens of footpaths. We are at a loss to understand how developing this site, over burdening an already challenged infrastructure and destroying an important vista could possibly be seen as addressing the deficiencies in the quality, quantity and accessibility of green spaces and play provision.

We would also comment on other sections of the Design Statement.

*3.4 Along with the existing footway located on the northern side of Station Road, there is the potential to upgrade the to provide a 6.0m wide carriageway, with 10m radii, and 2.0m wide footways on both sides of the road.* There is no evidence that this would be possible. Private land borders the pavements otherwise the footpaths would have already been widened.

*3.6 The nearest bus stops to the site are located on Station Road, adjacent to the site access. The stop is served by the number 153 service providing an hourly service between Market Bosworth and Leicester. Additional services are available from the centre of Market Bosworth which provide links to Hinckley.* The service begins at 06:03 and ends at 7:40 Monday to Saturday. There is no bus service on Sunday. This effectively traps residents in their homes unless they have access to a car or other personal transport. There have been several fatalities of pedestrians and cyclists in the surrounding area and the B585 to Atherstone and the A444 to Nuneaton are extremely hazardous to pedestrians and cyclists. The development will not accord with green policies as public transport is not available.

*2.7 Deliver safe cycle routes.* The only cycle routes referred to are actually on the development. There are no opportunities to develop cycle routes from this side of Market Bosworth into the town centre. The B585/A444 are very dangerous for two wheeled transport and fatalities have occurred.

*3.7 Atherstone and Nuneaton railway stations are the two closest stations to the site. These stations are equipped with car and cycle parking. Both of these stations provide regular links to destinations such as Nuneaton, Rugby, Birmingham and Leicester.* This is correct but there is no way of accessing them.

Overall, and in conclusion we have found this application to be nothing more than a cynical attempt to take advantage of a weak and ineffectual legislation which exposes Borough Council's at the expense of residents. The case for this development being sustainable is not made against the background of development already agreed, embraced and in train. The damage to our heritage and quality of life far outweighs and perceived benefit in the provision of 63 dwellings when there are already 203 new dwellings, 20% of the existing housing stock, sanctioned.

We strongly recommend that this application be turned aside as unsustainable as it significantly and demonstrably outweighs any benefit gained.

Nigel Palmer  
Chairman

