



Planning Statement

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR UP TO 53 DWELLINGS,
INCLUDING ASSOCIATED VEHICULAR ACCESS, AFFORDABLE
HOUSING, LANDSCAPING AND DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

LAND TO THE EAST OF LUTTERWORTH ROAD, BLABY

OCTOBER 2023



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Project Client:

Davidsons Development Ltd

Project Location:

Land to east of Lutterworth Road,
Blaby,
Leicester,
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared to support an outline planning application (“The Application”) submitted to Blaby District Council (“The Council”) for the proposed residential development of up to 53 dwellings, including affordable housing, vehicular access, associated drainage and public open space at Land to the east of Lutterworth Road, Blaby (“The Site”).
- 1.2. The application is submitted by Planning and Development Consultants, Andrew Granger & Co Ltd., on behalf of Davidsons Development Ltd. (“The Applicant”)
- 1.3. This Planning Statement provides an assessment of the site and its characteristics, an appraisal of the surrounding land uses, and outlines the proposed development submitted for consideration. It examines national and local planning policy context relevant to this application, against which the proposal it to be assessed by the Council.
- 1.4. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.5. We consider that the following assessment demonstrates that the Application represents sustainable development, in line with the definition outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (the ‘NPPF’). It provides a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits, whilst ensuring that it is policy compliant.
- 1.6. To establish how the development proposals will assist toward delivering housing to meet a local housing need and to justify how the site is deliverable, available and – subject to the grant of planning consent – achievable immediately, this statement is set as follows:
 - Site appraisal and Context – provides assessment of the site and the character of its surroundings;
 - Planning Policy Context – outlines the national and local planning policy relevant for consideration as part of the development;
 - Development Proposal – describes the proposal, the material considerations and the mitigation proposed;
 - Principle of Development – assesses the principle of development at this location;
 - Planning Considerations – identifies the benefits of the proposed development alongside mitigation measures;
 - Conclusions – offers the overall outcome of considerations.
- 1.7. In addition, this Statement should be considered together with the following list of supporting documentation:
 - Site Location Plan : n1063_001A (Nineteen47 Ltd.)

- Masterplan : n1063_005A (Nineteen47 Ltd.)
- Topographical Survey Plan : S4071-01C (Phoenix Survey Services Ltd.)
- Design & Access Statement : (Nineteen47 Ltd.)
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment : JAC25714 (RPS Group Plc.)
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey : P2129/0721/02 (CBE Consulting)
- Tree Survey : P2129/0721/01 (CBE Consulting)
- Review of Ecological and Arboricultural Reports : P2771/0923/01 (CBE Consulting)
- Biodiversity Impact Assessment : BG21.307 (Brindle & Green)
- Flood Risk Assessment: E3646-FRA-1121-rev0 (Wormald Burrows Partnership Limited)
- Drainage Strategy Plan : E3646-500E (Wormald Burrows Partnership Limited)
- Phase I Site Appraisal : GRM/P7791/DS.1 (GRM Development Solutions Limited)
- Phase II Site Appraisal : P7791 (GRM Development Solutions Limited)
- Gas Addendum Letter : 12th March 2021 (GRM Development Solutions Limited)
- Transport Statement : E3646-blaby-acc-tsreport-rev0 (Wormald Burrows Partnership Limited)
- Means of Access Plan : E3646-700C (Wormald Burrows Partnership Limited)
- Stage 1 Road Safety Audit : Lutterworth Road, Blaby/RSA1 #2 Sept 2022 (Mrs E Sands)
- Utilities Assessment : E3646-Utilities Report-0219-Rev1 (Wormald Burrows Partnership Limited)
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment : GL2232 (Golby + Luck)

2. Site Appraisal and Context

- 2.1. The Site, shown outlined on the accompanying Site Location Plan, comprises an area of dense vegetation formerly used as allotments and part of the neighbouring Golf Course located to the east of Lutterworth Road, on the southern side of the village of Blaby. The site measures at approximately 1.9 hectares (4.695 acres) and is considered greenfield, at present.
- 2.2. Sloping gently from east to west, the Site bounded to the north by rear gardens of existing residential properties and to the east by further residential development. Lutterworth Road lies directly adjacent to the west, with Blaby Golf Centre located to the south of the site.
- 2.3. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will be taken directly from Lutterworth Road, with an existing Public Right of Way (Z56) crossing the site east to west from Winchester Road.
- 2.4. The Site is located outside of the “Settlement Boundaries”, as set out in the Council’s Local Plan Policies Maps. It is therefore considered as “open countryside” in accordance with policy, although adjoins the existing built form of the village. The site is also current considered to be located within the Green Wedge, under Local Plan (Core Strategy) Policy CS16.
- 2.5. The Site is not within the designated Conservation Area for Blaby and is not considered to be within the setting of any Listed Building. In addition, the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designation that would restrict its development for residential purposes.
- 2.6. The Site is located solely within Flood Zone 1 of the Environment Agency’s Flood Risk Maps. Therefore, the Site is assessed as having low risk of flooding (less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding).
- 2.7. There is no relevant planning history relating to the Site, although it benefits from a Reserve Allocation for housing development under policy BNP6(b) of the Blaby Neighbourhood Plan 2018.
- 2.8. Further details on the Site and the area are set out within the accompanying documents, as previously stated.

3. Planning Policy Context

- 3.1. Having studied the national, local and neighbourhood planning policies that affect the site, we have concluded that the following below policies are relevant to the application and have highlighted how the proposed development meets these requirements.

National Planning Policy Framework (revised September 2023)

- 3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] was first published in March 2012, and was subsequently revised; with the latest version adopted in September 2023. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local communities and their authorities can produce distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of the locality.
- 3.3. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that *'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'* and with the key objective summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future to meet their own needs. This is achieved through the three overarching objectives of the planning system: economic well-being, social progress, and environmental protection.
- 3.4. Paragraph 10 confirms a **'presumption in favour of sustainable development'** at the heart of the Framework to ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.
- 3.5. This means, with regard to decision-taking, that LPAs should approve *'development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay'*. Where there are no relevant development plan policies or policies which are most important for the determination of the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless (paragraph 11d):
- 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.*
- 3.6. We consider that the proposals put forward accord with the aims of the NPPF and constitute sustainable growth. The proposed development site is in an accessible location close to key services and facilities. Therefore, the proposals benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.7. Paragraph 38 outlines how Local Planning Authorities should approach decision making in a positive and creative way, and places an emphasis on Decision-makers to seek approval of applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 3.8. Section 5 of the Framework ("Delivering a sufficient supply of homes") seeks to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Paragraph 60 confirms the objective to significantly boost the supply of homes by bringing forward a *'sufficient*

amount and variety of land’, with Paragraph 62 confirming that this should include the size, type, and tenure of housing for different groups in the community.

- 3.9. It is proposed at Paragraph 69 that *‘small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built out relatively quickly’*.
- 3.10. Paragraph 74 says that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. The proposed scheme accords entirely with this national policy objective in so far as it will deliver new housing development which will assist in boosting the supply of housing across Blaby.
- 3.11. Through the latest Residential Land Availability Report issued by the Council in September 2023, it is evident that they can currently only identify a housing land supply of only 3.69 years. Therefore, if the acute need for housing is to be met, sites must be released outside of the development plan process. As such, the granting of permission on the proposed site would improve the Council’s supply of suitable, available, and achievable sites for housing.
- 3.12. Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land taking into account matters such as the identified need for different types of housing, local market conditions and viability, the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services, the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive, and healthy places (paragraph 119).
- 3.13. Paragraph 120 says that decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained, and available sites could be used more effectively.
- 3.14. The Government attaches great importance to good design, identifying it as a ‘key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities’ (Paragraph 126).
- 3.15. We consider the proposed development to be of high-quality design, taking into account the adjacent land-uses to ensure a good standard of residential amenity for existing and future occupants.
- 3.16. Section 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) states that decisions in planning should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment (paragraph 174). This can be through the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and through the provision of net gains for biodiversity.
- 3.17. The NPPF also states the local planning authorities, in determining application, should take account of (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets;

(b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities and (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

3.18. It is our view that the submitted proposals comply with the objectives set out within the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development – the ‘golden thread’ running through the Framework.

Local Development Plan

3.19. Pursuant with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Local Planning Authority for Blaby is Blaby District Council.

3.20. The current development plan comprises:

- Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) DPD (February 2013)
- Blaby District Local Plan (Delivery) DPD (February 2019)
- Blaby Neighbourhood Plan (February 2018)

3.21. The principal housing policies contained within these documents are outlined below.

3.22. Blaby District Council are currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, with consultation under the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 taking place in early 2021. However, further works on the new plan have been delayed due to the programme of work for the sub-regional strategic evidence that supports the Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground in relation to the housing requirement for Leicester City. Therefore, it cannot be given any material weight in the consideration of application at this stage.

Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) DPD

3.23. The Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) DPD (the “Core Strategy”) was adopted in February 2013 and aimed to set out the strategic vision and spatial planning framework for the area. Whilst adopted following the introduction of the first incarnation of the NPPF, the technical evidence forming the basis of the DPD are considered to be significantly out of date. As such, policies on housing numbers and distribution cannot carry full weight in the planning balance.

3.24. With the District of Blaby located on the edge of Leicester City, Policy CS1 sets out that most new development within the District will be directed within or adjoining the Principal Urban Area (‘PUA’) of Leicester. The focus outside of the PUA will be within and adjoining Blaby and other settlement referred to as the ‘Larger Central Villages’.

- 3.25. Policy CS2 focuses on the design of new development schemes, seeking to “*respect distinctive local character and should contribute to creating places of a high architectural and urban design quality, contributing to a better quality of life for the local community*”.
- 3.26. Policy CS5 sets out the distribution of housing development per settlement, in accordance with the ‘most appropriate locations’, with Blaby town to accommodate a requirement of at least 420 dwellings across the plan period. Detailed locations of the proposed development were outlined to be determined through an ‘Allocation, Designations and Development Management’ DPD initially scheduled for adoption by 2014, however the Delivery DPD was not adopted until February 2019.
- 3.27. Policy CS7 requires the Council to seek to secure affordable housing on new developments of 15 or more dwellings. The policy requirement is a minimum of 25% of the total housing number proposed, and therefore this Application proposes delivery of up to 13 affordable dwellings.
- 3.28. Policy CS8 expects the provision of an appropriate mix of housing types, tenures, and sizes on developments of 10 or more dwellings to meet the needs of the District. Whilst the Application is merely in outline form at this time, an indicative mix has been provided within the Masterplan to comply with this requirement.
- 3.29. Policy CS10 looks to limit the impact of new development on transport infrastructure, and seeks to locate new housing in location that are easily accessible on foot or by cycle in order to reduce the need for travel by private car.
- 3.30. Policy CS11 seeks new developments to be supported by the required physical, social, and environmental infrastructure, with Policy CS12 outlining that the Council will seek planning obligations and developer contributions toward provision of infrastructure, services, and facilities where there is robust evidence of an arising need. In this instance, the Applicants are willing to enter in discussions with the Council on suitably worded planning obligation relating to the Application.
- 3.31. Policy CS15 sets out how the Council will seek to ensure all residents have proper access to sufficient, high quality open space, sports, and recreational facilities. Further consideration of requirements and standards are addressed in the supporting documentation that accompanies this application.
- 3.32. Policy CS16 establishes the importance of ‘Green Wedges’ as strategic area, to prevent the merging or settlements; guide development form; provide a green lung into urban area; and provide a recreation resource. It includes general locations where they shall be maintained including: (b) Between Whetstone, Blaby and Countesthorpe.
- 3.33. The policy goes onto state that Green Wedges, and the need to retain them, will be balanced against the need to provide new development (including housing) in the most sustainable

locations. As previously stated, Blaby is considered to be the main focus for development outside of the PUA.

- 3.34. Policy CS19 advises on the role of biodiversity and geo-diversity and sets out the safeguarding and enhancements of site considered to be of national, regional, and local interest. The Application Site is not considered to be within one of these designated areas, nor would it likely cause any adverse effect to one.
- 3.35. Policy CS21 deals with matters of Climate Change, and the support given to developments which mitigate and adapt to assisting the Council in achieving national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a number of measures.
- 3.36. Policy CS22 seeks to ensure that all developments minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to flooding, in part by directing development to locations at the lowest risk of flooding and by using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to ensure that flood risk is not increased on-site or elsewhere.

Blaby District Local Plan (Delivery) DPD

- 3.37. The Blaby District Local Plan (Delivery) DPD was adopted by the Council in February 2019 and looks to allocate sites for housing and employment development across the Blaby District, whilst setting out development management policies that apply across the District and are to be used in the consideration and determination of applications for planning permission.
- 3.38. Policy DM2 sets out the development proposals in areas designated as 'Countryside', and that are consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS18, will be supported where that satisfy certain criteria. This includes: where development is in keeping with the appearance and character of the existing landscape, development form and buildings; where the development would provide a satisfactory relationship with nearby uses; and where the development would not undermine the vitality and viability of existing town, district, and local centres.
- 3.39. Policy DM8 establishes that housing developments will be required to provide an appropriate level of parking provision, in line with the most up-to-date Local Highway Authority guidance and justified by an assessment of the proposals and public transport availability and opportunity.
- 3.40. Policy DM11 requires that 5% of dwellings on development proposals of 20 dwellings or more must meet Accessible and Adaptable Homes standards under Building Regulations Standard M4(2), unless unviable or site-specific factors make it less suitable for compliance.

Blaby Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.41. Following a positive referendum result in February 2018, the Blaby Neighbourhood Plan (the "BNP") was formally 'made' by Blaby District Council and became part of the Development Plan for the area.

- 3.42. Compliant with the NPPF, as well as the Core Strategy and the then emerging Delivery documents, the BNP establishes the vision for the evolution and long-term sustainability of Blaby across a period until 2029.
- 3.43. The BNP outlines the Green Wedge under Character Area F, where Blaby is separated from Whetstone and Glen Parva.
- 3.44. Policy BNP1 seeks to ensure that all new development shall create a sense of place by reflecting the principal characteristics in regard to scale, layout, and material appropriate to its location and the adjacent area.
- 3.45. Policy BNP2 sets out the designation of Green Wedge land, including between Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone, identified in Character Area F. The policy aims to restrict development to that identified in Core Strategy Policy CS16, with the exception of the reserve development sites in accordance with Policy BNP6.
- 3.46. To ensure a sufficient supply of housing land in the Parish, Policy BNP6 identifies reserve housing sites which could be brought forward should need arise. Section (b) includes the Application Site – referenced S2 – as a reserve site for approximately 51 dwellings which would be brought forward if needed to address the most up to date housing evidence.
- 3.47. The explanatory text goes on to state that, although the chosen sites are within the Green Wedge, they abut recent development and are not considered to undermine the overall function to a significant extent.
- 3.48. Policy BNP9 looks at the Settlement Boundary and the location of future development being focussed within identified extents, whilst allowing for sustainable development of the reserve sites in accordance with Policy BNP6.

4. Development Proposal

- 4.1. The Application seeks outline planning consent for the erection of up to fifty-three residential dwellings will all matters reserved except for access; and should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 4.2. In order to demonstrate that a suitable scheme can be achieved and delivered, the Applicant has undertaken extensive pre-planning work and a master planning exercise. This is detailed further in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 4.3. The key aspects forming the proposal include:
 - The delivery 53 high-quality residential dwellings;
 - On-site provision of 25% affordable housing – equating to thirteen units;
 - Areas of open space and landscaping
 - Vehicular and pedestrian access from Lutterworth Road
 - Provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage System;
 - Retention of mature trees and enhanced planting.
- 4.4. The housing mix, type and tenure is subject to later agreement with the Council at the Reserved Matters stage however an illustrative mix of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5-bedroom properties has been used to inform the submitted masterplan. A key element of the mix is the provision of much needed bungalows.
- 4.5. In accordance with the Framework, and the local development framework, the Applicant intends to enter into detailed discussions with the Council in respect of planning obligations to be captured through a Section 106 Agreement.

Pre-Application Discussions

- 4.6. In drawing up the development proposals, the Applicant has undertaken some informal pre-application discussions with Blaby District Council, and a number of statutory consultees.
- 4.7. Following the positive reaction, contact is also ongoing with Members of Blaby Parish Council to arrange a suitable meeting to discuss the proposal and any additional benefits that can be provided to the local community.
- 4.8. The Applicant has shown a willingness to engage with the local community in the proposed delivery of new housing across the site in a manner that respects and enhance the qualities of the area. As such, the Application demonstrates how the Site can be brought forward to deliver new homes in a sympathetic manner, which reflects the existing character of Blaby.

5. Principal of Development

Development within Blaby

- 5.1. The application site comprises a greenfield site immediately adjacent to the existing built form on the edge of Blaby. In line with Paragraph 47 of the NPPF, applications are required to be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan, with proposals that accord approved without delay (Para. 11c). As such, a key consideration for the proposal is demonstrating that the principle of development in this location is acceptable.
- 5.2. Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy identified that the focus for new development outside of the PUA will be within and adjoining Blaby, and other settlement referred to as the 'Larger Central Villages'. Therefore, it can be considered an appropriate location for accommodating a suitable level of development in line with the range of local services facilities.
- 5.3. Core Strategy Policy CS5 goes on to set out the distribution of housing development per settlement, with Blaby town to accommodate a requirement of at least 420 dwellings across the plan period – although does not look to allocate a specific site(s) for delivery this requirement.
- 5.4. Whilst it is acknowledged that this requirement has been exceeded by built and committed development, it is important to stress that the figure represents a minimum figure and the above referenced policies set out a continued strategy for achieving the appropriate balance for focussing development across the District.
- 5.5. As circumstances relating to housing need and delivery continue to change, the strategy and distribution of housing must remain consistent in focussing development to the most sustainable locations and communities.
- 5.6. The latest Residential Land Availability Report issued by the Council in September 2023 shows that they can currently only identify a housing land supply of only 3.69 years, resulting in an acute need for further land to be released for development. As such, the settlement of Blaby must be considered as a focus to improve the Council's supply of suitable, available, and achievable sites for housing.
- 5.7. The Blaby Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges this role within the settlement hierarchy and identifies reserve housing sites which could be brought forward for development should the need arise. These allocations include the Application Site; therefore, it must be considered that the Site is appropriate to deliver the ongoing shortfall in housing requirement and is wholly compliant with the development plan.
- 5.8. The supporting documents prepared to accompany the Application have given significant consideration to ensuring that the proposed development reflects the character of Blaby and as such accords with the development plan.

Development within the Location

- 5.9. Whilst designated as part of the Green Wedge, the location of the site adjacent to the existing built form of Blaby means that development would not cause any issues in terms of coalescence of settlements and lends itself to creating an inclusive development.
- 5.10. The Site lies within easy commuting distance of Leicester City centre, with excellent public transport links, providing a wide range of job opportunities, higher order services and facilities. The site is also within walking distance of a range of facilities, including retail food stores, medical services, and educational facilities, each within around 15-20 minutes' walk.
- 5.11. Assessed as part of the production of the 'made' Blaby Neighbourhood Plan, which was overwhelmingly support by the local community, the Site was considered suitable for 'reserve' allocation for housing development.
- 5.12. In line with the development framework and the NPPF, the above assessment has clearly demonstrated that the proposed residential scheme is a sustainable development and as such the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply. It has identified that there are no material considerations which suggest that development on the site should be restricted, therefore the proposal should be considered acceptable and approved without delay.

6. Planning Considerations

Compliance with the adopted Development Plan

- 6.1. In the context of the adopted development plan, the previous sections of this statement have outlined how the application accords fully with the requirements of the NPPF, as well relevant policies of the local development plan.
- 6.2. As previously discussed, Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy – alongside Policy CS5 - establishes the overarching spatial strategy for the District, as well as the sustainability and suitability of Blaby for supporting further sustainable development. It is therefore considered that the Application proposals would be fully in accordance with these policies and no spatial strategy harm would arise from the granting of planning consent.
- 6.3. The Blabay Neighbourhood Plan establishes that, whilst minimum housing requirements have been facilitated within the settlement, further reserve allocations may be required where schemes may not be completed during the period of the BNP or should circumstances change.
- 6.4. The allocated ‘reserve’ sites, of which the Application Site is one, are included to be brought forward if needed to address the most up to date housing evidence. Latest data published by the Council in September 2023, as part of their Residential Land Availability Report, currently shows an identified housing land supply of only 3.69 years against a 5-year requirement. As a result, and in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, policies most relevant for determining the application are considered to be out-of-date and the ‘tilted balance’ applies.
- 6.5. Given that there is clear evidence that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, it must be accepted that the ‘trigger’ for bringing forward the reserves site allocation has been activated. We therefore conclude that the Application fully accords with the relevant policies set out in the development plan.
- 6.6. The most effective and sustainable approach to addressing the immediate housing land shortfall will be to grant planning consent for those reserve allocations, considered to be in the most sustainable locations, without delay.

Affordable Housing

- 6.7. There is a need for new residential development to meet both market and affordable housing needs within Blaby. It is considered that the quantum of development – up to fifty-three new dwellings – is appropriate in order to assist in achieving the levels of affordable housing.
- 6.8. Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy, supported by the reserve allocation under Policy BNP6 of the Neighbourhood Plan, requires the on-site provision of 25% affordable dwellings on new development sites of 15 dwellings or more. Therefore, the proposal will provide up to 13 affordable units, secured through a suitably worded planning obligation.

Design

- 6.9. The Government attaches great importance to good design, identifying that it is a key aspect of sustainable development, whilst creating better places in which to live and work and helping to make developments acceptable to communities (Para. 124, NPPF).
- 6.10. Whilst the Application seeks outline planning consent with all matters reserved except for access, significant consideration has been given to the formulation of the landscape led development proposal to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the local character and responds positively to the built form. The accompanying Design and Access Statement, prepared by Nineteen47, provides a detailed analysis of the design.
- 6.11. The proposed masterplan takes account of the key relationship with adjoining residential properties to the north and east, making the most of the active street frontage along Lutterworth Road and creating an offset from the neighbouring golf course with the introduction of a new planting buffer.

Transport Impact and Sustainable Transport

- 6.12. Section 9 (*Promoting sustainable transport*) of the NPPF requires development opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes, where safe and suitable access can be achieved.
- 6.13. Para. 109 goes on to state that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.14. The Transport Statement that accompanies the Application, prepared by Wormald Burrows, identifies significant opportunities for sustainable travel to and from the Site, sufficiently proportionate to the scale and location of development. The Site is considered to be very sustainably located, with access to bus services on Southway, cycle routes and cycleways on Lutterworth Road and Winchester Road, and with many local amenities within walking distance for an able-bodied person. Key facilities, such as several Primary Schools and numerous food stores, are well within the preferred maximum walking distance, whilst sufficient cycle connectivity and access to a regular bus service are locally available.
- 6.15. The statement calculates that development of the Site would generate up to 29 vehicle trips in a peak hour. The proposal would not materially alter existing highway conditions, nor result in a severe adverse impact.
- 6.16. As such, it has been demonstrated that a safe and suitable access to the Site can be achieved and the traffic arising from the development can be easily accommodated whilst will not resulting in severe cumulative impacts. It is therefore considered that the package of highways measures proposed accord wholly with the aims of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

- 6.17. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF requires new development to be directed away from areas at the highest risk of flooding – whether existing or in the future. The NPPF goes on to state that local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- 6.18. The Application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, which has been prepared by Wormald Burrows on behalf of the Applicant. The report identifies that the site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered to be at low risk from fluvial flooding, as well as from other sources of flooding.
- 6.19. With underlying ground conditions not appearing to be conducive to infiltration, a suitable surface water drainage strategy has been designed to include attenuation via a detention basin and discharge into an existing ditch. The basin feature is to be located to the western boundary of the Site and has been designed to attenuate surface runoff for events including a 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event.
- 6.20. Foul water drainage will be suitably managed, with flows directed via gravity connection to a mains connection to the adopted Severn Trent Water sewer network within Lutterworth Road.
- 6.21. The main foul and surface water drainage systems will be offered to Severn Trent Water for adoption under a Section 104 agreement.
- 6.22. As such, it is considered that the Application proposals fully accord with the requirement under the NPPF and the local development plan and will minimise vulnerability to provide resilience to flooding.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 6.23. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that planning decisions made by local planning authorities should contribute and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity. As set out previously within this statement, the Site is not subject to any nature conservation designations which would suggest that development should be restricted.
- 6.24. The proposed development will seek to retain the existing boundary hedgerow and trees where possible, as well as providing additional planting and improved site landscaping.
- 6.25. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report, prepared by CBE Consulting, summarises that the site contains a limited range of habitats of ecological value, with only minimal evidence of any protected species.
- 6.26. Precautionary mitigation measures and ecological improvements, including those to avoid disturbance to any bird nesting activity or individual reptiles during clearance works, are to be secured through suitably worded conditions and detailed landscaping schemes.

- 6.27. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has also been provided to accompany the Application, produced by Brindle & Green. Based upon the illustrative design proposals and using the Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (JP039) Calculator, the condition of habitats on site were considered as 'poor', with an existing value of 5.94 'biodiversity units'.
- 6.28. In addition to the above assessment, the Application is supported by a detailed Arboricultural Survey prepared by CBE Consulting. The assessment concluded that the majority of high value trees within the site, or within the hedgerows, will be retained and protected as part of the wider landscaping.
- 6.29. As a result of these assessments, it is considered that the Application proposals can come forward in accordance with relevant policy, with sufficient capacity to provide enhancement to the natural and local environment.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 6.30. Local planning authorities, under paragraph 189 of the NPPF, should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets likely to be affected, including any contribution made by their setting.
- 6.31. Positioned outside of the Conservation Area and the historic core of the village, the Site is not considered to cause likely harm to any designated or non-designated heritage assets in the local vicinity.
- 6.32. An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been commissioned by the Applicant and conducted by RPS. The report considered the theoretical potential for any as-yet to be discovered archaeological assets and concludes that there is low to moderate potential for Prehistoric and Roman remains, and a low potential for remains dating to all other periods to be identified within the site. As such, a scheme of further investigation through trial-trenching could be undertaken in accordance with an appropriately worded planning condition.
- 6.33. In summary, the assessment of the site and the historic environment concludes that there are no fundamental archaeological constraints to the high-quality proposal, which comply as required with the policy set out.

Sustainability

- 6.34. The suitability of a site for development depends on a number of factors, with Paragraph 8 of the NPPF suggesting that in order for a development to be considered sustainable it should achieve a balance of the three overarching objectives: economic, social, and environmental factors.

Economic Factors

- 6.35. Development of the Site through the proposed scheme will bring in approximately 122 new residents to the village (based upon a 2.3-person occupancy across the fifty-three dwelling scheme). This will provide further support to the existing local village services and facilities, ensuring greater vitality.
- 6.36. The Application aims to deliver the required 25% on-site affordable housing contribution, adding up to thirteen new affordable units to the locality to assist in meeting the affordable housing shortfall identified locally.
- 6.37. The Site will also provide clear economic benefits through the creation of jobs within the construction industry and related suppliers, whilst also providing funding for the Council through the New Homes Bonus.
- 6.38. As the proposal does not result in any loss of employment land locally, it is considered that there are no identified adverse impacts with regard to Economic Factors.

Social Factors

- 6.39. The settlement of Blaby is considered to be an appropriate location for residential development as set out in the adopted development plan. As such, the Site provides an immediately deliverable opportunity to deliver a range of housing types and sizes to meet a local need in a sustainable location.
- 6.40. The provision of a range of high-quality housing types, tenures and sizes will also support the continuation of a balanced community in Blaby and will attract a range of prospective residents to the locality.
- 6.41. The proposed scheme is considered to be of a high-quality design, which has been directly informed by a full suite of technical reports. The Design and Access Statement sets out the evolution of the design and outlines its credentials.
- 6.42. The Application will secure a number of financial contributions towards local infrastructure, such as education, as well as other mitigation measures through the required Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Agreement.
- 6.43. It is considered that there are no known adverse social impacts generated by the proposal.

Environmental Factors

- 6.44. Whilst the loss of a greenfield site can be considered as an adverse impact of developing the Site, this minor impact is considered to be outweighed by the range of environmental benefits the Application will bring.

- 6.45. The development of the Site will not involve the removal of any significant trees and will entail extensive tree planting within the development and to the boundaries. Alongside this planting, the provision of new open space will offer improved footpath links and areas of informal recreation.
- 6.46. The Application is supported by a robust Drainage Strategy which outlines how surface water will be managed across the Site. This strategy details the use of on-site Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) to ensure development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Planning Balance

- 6.47. In line with the above assessment, it is considered that whilst the development will represent a change in the character of the land, there are no adverse impacts that cannot be sufficiently mitigated. It is evident that development of the Site will result in the loss of a greenfield site, however it is clearly demonstrated that Blaby does not contain suitable locations within the settlement boundary to deliver the required level of housing growth, and the Application Site has been accepted by the local community through the overwhelmingly supported BNP.
- 6.48. Furthermore, there are a number of significant benefits that would be brought about from the scheme. Consequently, it should be considered that the proposed development of fifty-three dwellings at the Site signifies sustainable development, and there are no material considerations which would suggest otherwise. As such, the Application should benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.49. The proposed scheme supports economic, social, and environmental sustainability, as outlined in the NPPF, and looks to deliver new homes that respond positively to the local context in a location that the Council considers to be appropriate.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The submitted outline planning application at Land east of Lutterworth Road, Blaby seeks the residential development of up to fifty-three dwellings with associated access, affordable housing, landscaping, and drainage. It has been guided by a full range of technical studies, confirming that there are no technical constraints to development.
- 7.2. Whilst the Council's five-year housing land supply position has recently been confirmed to be below that required by national policy, it is regardless considered that the Application Site wholly complies with the relevant policies of the development plan. Benefitting from a 'reserve' allocation within the 'made' Blaby Neighbourhood Plan, the Site is identified as an acceptable location to accommodate housing development if needed to address the most up to date housing evidence.
- 7.3. If the local housing needs are to be met, land in sustainable locations must come forward to deliver the requirement. The potential constraints of the Site have been positively addressed and considered throughout the design process, and it is considered that the Site represents a suitable, available, achievable, and viable source of housing land which can be delivered now. As such, it allows the Council an opportunity to contribute towards addressing the housing shortfall in a manner that should be positively considered in its determination.
- 7.4. The Applicant has produced a high-quality scheme capable of delivering a well thought out residential development of fifty-three dwellings. The proposals are complimentary in character, size and material to the existing village and the local vernacular, with the accompanying Design and Access Statement providing further detail.
- 7.5. This statement demonstrates that there are no restrictive policies that direct development away for this location and there are no material considerations to indicate that development should not take place. The proposal fulfils the economic, social, and environmental objectives considered key to sustainable development by delivering high-quality growth in a suitable location, whilst ensuring protection of the environment and local character.
- 7.6. Consequently, in line with the NPPF and the adopted development plan, the proposed development should benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the Council are respectfully invited to grant permission without delay.

8. Section 106 Heads of Terms

- 8.1. The Applicant is committed to entering into a Section 106 obligation to ensure the delivery of such requirements which have an evidenced need and are in compliance with the relevant tests set out in legislation.
- 8.2. It is accepted that the proposed development, and the future residents of the development, will have some impact on the local services and infrastructure. As such, it is suggested that the following set of Head of Terms represent contributions which the Applicant may have to contribute in order to mitigate the development's impact on the local community.
- **Affordable Housing:** 25% of the proposed dwellings (up to 13 dwellings) on site will meet the 'affordable' definition.
 - **Education:** Financial contribution, where necessary, towards local schools proportionate with evidenced need.
 - **Healthcare:** Financial contribution, where necessary, towards local services and facilities proportionate with evidenced need.
 - **Public Open Space:** Provision of open space within, or a financial contribution toward local provision proportionate with evidenced need.
 - **Sustainable Transport:** Contributions to sustainable transport objectives through reasonable measures and incentives
- 8.3. Early engagement with the Council would be welcomed by the Applicant regarding the extent of contribution requests and the overall scope of any legal agreement.