

By Email

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Centre:

Our Ref: EIR 7730
Your Ref:

Date: 5th.March 2018

Dear Madam,

**Request for Information
Environmental Information Regulations 2004**

Thank you for your email dated 12th February 2018 requesting information about Safeguarded Land at Lodge Farm Lane, Arnold.

The information you request is considered to be “environmental information” therefore your request has been dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations.

You have asked the following question:

Background to reclassification of Safeguarded Land to Protected - Please can you clarify the chain of events and decision making progress that have lead to the land at the rear of Arch Hill now being reclassified as "Protected" within the Gedling Borough Local Plan? This is adjacent to plot H5 which is allocated for housing. Specifically, why is this land protected and not the neighbouring plots?

I set out our response below:

The land referred to located to the east of Arch Hill is designated as Safeguarded Land in the Local Planning Document Publication Draft May 2016. This document was submitted for examination in October 2016 to an independent planning inspector. The hearing sessions have now closed and following the recently published Main Modifications, consultation is currently ongoing and the Inspector's report is awaited.

Safeguarded Land is defined as Land outside of the main urban areas of Nottingham specifically excluded from the Green Belt but safeguarded from development unless a future local plan is adopted that allocates it for development.

The Local Planning Document Publication Draft May 2016 includes two categories of Safeguarded Land; firstly for possible longer term development needs and secondly as a planning policy “tool” to cover land where it is not considered appropriate for it to be included within the Green Belt or for it to be developed.

The recently published Main Modifications have sought to clarify the distinction between the two categories by identifying those areas of Safeguarded Land on the Policies Map which are unlikely to be developed with the letter **P** as protected from development. In relation to your query in general we would emphasise that the Main Modifications do not reclassify Safeguarded Land as Protected land (which is already covered by Policy LPD16) but rather just modify how the sites are shown on the Policies Map.. The Main Modifications published on 12th February 2018 confirm the designation of the Safeguarded Land at Lodge Farm albeit with greater clarity that it is inappropriate for development i.e. Safeguarded Land (Protected) and the Policies Map has the **P** notation applied.

Turning to your more specific questions first, you ask why this land is Safeguarded Land (Protected) and why not the neighbouring plots. It is assumed “neighbouring plots” is mainly a reference to the adjoining land to the south at Lodge Farm Lane, allocated for 150 homes and referenced H5.

In order to answer this question it is necessary to set out some background context to the preparation of the Local Planning Document. The Local Planning Document forms Part 2 of the Local Plan for Gedling Borough and has to be in conformity with the adopted Aligned Core Strategy (ACS) 2014 which is Part 1 of the Local Plan. The ACS sets out a strategy of urban concentration and establishes the hierarchy for site selection as follows:

- Sites within and on the edge of Arnold/Carlton;
- Sites adjoining Hucknall;
- Sites at Key Settlements; and
- Sites in Villages for local needs only.

The ACS requires 7,250 new homes to be built in Gedling Borough by 2028. It was accepted by the Inspector who examined the ACS that not all of these homes could be found within the urban area requiring Green Belt release. The ACS requires approximately 4,045 homes to be located within or adjoining the main built up area of Arnold/Carlton. The Borough Council has carried out an assessment of approximately 114 reasonable alternative sites in order to allocate sufficient housing land to meet the ACS housing requirements.

The site selection process has taken into account a wide range of evidence contained in a number of studies such as the Green Belt Assessment, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the SHLAA assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, highways assessment, Heritage Assessment, infrastructure; and the results of consultation. This evidence is weighed together and a judgement made about which of the realistic alternatives sites could be considered for allocation. The results of this site selection are summarised in the Site Selection Document available here:

<https://www.gedling.gov.uk/lpdexamination/examinationlibrary/>

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The Lodge Farm Site was submitted for consideration by the developer as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA reference 6/48, see below for more details). After, taking into account all the available evidence, the Lodge Farm Lane housing site (6/48) was considered suitable for allocation for 150 homes as H5. The site has two boundaries to the urban edge and the western boundary is the A60. The northern boundary which is irregular runs in part along a footpath and field boundary before turning south and west at which point it does not follow any recognisable feature on the ground. In order to ensure the Green Belt boundary follows a recognisable feature on the ground it was determined that the inner Green Belt boundary would follow the footpath and field boundary as it runs north west from the edge of the Stockings Farm development as far as the track to Stockings Farm and then run along the farm track to the A60 (see reference to Green Belt Assessment below). The intervening land between this inner Green Belt boundary and the H5 housing allocation would not be in the Green Belt but designated as Safeguarded Land. However, it was not considered appropriate for potential future development on this Safeguarded Land due to its sensitivity in landscape terms based on the recommendations of the Landscape and Visual Impact Study (see below).

You also ask that we set out the chain of events leading to this decision, it is stressed that the Local Planning Document site allocations are based on judgments using a variety of sources of evidence pulled together over a substantial timeframe. This includes various studies and the results from consultation undertaken at various stages of the preparation of the Local Planning Document. However, to answer your question we have set out the key strands of evidence and their source in chronological order which relate to the allocation of Lodge Farm Lane as H5 and that part of Lodge Farm Lane designated as Safeguarded Land.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Review 2013 (SHLAA)

The SHLAA is a database of potential housing sites and a means of assessing whether sites are physically capable of development being free of significant constraints and available to the market. It is updated annually. The Lodge Farm housing site (H5) was submitted by the developer in 2013 as a potential development site for consideration and referenced as site 6/48. The SHLAA conclusion was that the site was suitable for development subject to changing the Green Belt boundaries in this location which would need to be considered as part of the preparation of the Local Planning Document. The area to the north of H5 has also been submitted as part of a much larger potential development site called New Farm reference 6/462 but this site was assessed as not being suitable for development.

Local Planning Document Issues and Options Draft (October 2013)

Gedling Borough Council approved the Local Planning Document Issues and Options for public consultation (Cabinet meeting 13/09/2013). Site 6/48, then described as North of Redhill, was identified as a potential development site and published in the Issues and Options document for consultation between October and December 2013. The results of the consultation were published in May 2014 and have been taken into account in the site selection process.

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Landscape and Visual Assessment December (2014)

Consultants were commissioned to carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment of all reasonable alternative development sites including site 6/48. In respect of site 6/48, the consultants recommended a landscape buffer should be retained on the higher ground at the eastern end of the site. The land immediately to the north of 6/48, including the area east of Arch Hill, is part of a larger area called New Farm (reference 6/462). This site, 6/462, was also assessed and it was noted that it extends over the ridgeline and it was therefore considered to be far more sensitive as it would extend into open countryside. The consultants also concluded that by extending over the ridge, development of the site would negate the role the ridgeline performs in screening the Arnold conurbation.

Green Belt Assessment (July 2015)

The site (6/48) and the land immediately to the north (up to the aforementioned track and field boundary) was assessed as site 5 against the purposes of Green Belt and also to look at achieving defensible boundaries. In terms of checking urban sprawl the Green Belt assessment findings for site 5 was that there was some containment provided by the ridgeline to the north of the site with the southern part being more enclosed. The adjacent land extending north over the ridge (called site 6 in the Green Belt assessment) is assessed as being more prominent and open with weak defensible boundaries.

Site Selection Document

As stated earlier the various studies, assessments and results of the various consultations have fed into the site selection process. The results of this process are set out in a summary form in the Site Selection Document Appendix A – Urban Area and Adjacent to Hucknall (available from the link above). This document was published in May 2016 as part of the supporting evidence base to the Publication Draft Local Plan May 2016 (see below).

The assessment at page 45 concludes that the Lodge Farm Lane site (6/48) can be considered for allocation. The adjoining site Lodge Farm Phase 2 was also assessed as worthy of being considered for further allocation. Paragraph 3.6 of the same document explains the reasons for the allocation of the site 6/48 and also states that the north of the site will be set aside as a landscape buffer. The adjoining site Lodge Farm Phase 2 was not selected for allocation due to lack of clear defensible boundaries. The land to the north of 6/48 site (reference 6/462) was also not considered further for allocation due to impact on landscape and Green Belt issues.

Publication Draft Local Plan May 2016

At its meeting on 17th March 2016, Gedling Borough Council agreed to consult on the Local Planning Document and to submit the document for examination.

Site 6/48 is allocated in the Local Planning Document for 150 homes and the land to the north and to the east of Arch Hill designated as Safeguarded Land.

Additional Proposed Housing Allocations and Modifications

Following the Cabinet decision on 7/09/2017, the Council consulted on additional housing sites during October 2017 and Cabinet authorised the publication of main modifications to the Local Planning Document. The additional housing sites consultation did not result in any changes to the Lodge Farm H5 allocation or designated Safeguarded Land at Lodge Farm.

Main Modifications

The main modifications were published on 12th February 2018 and include MM 12 which clarifies the Safeguarded Land to be protected including at Lodge Farm and MM 62 proposes a change to the text to the effect that land in the north eastern corner of the housing allocation should be left open as a landscape buffer in order to minimise landscape and visual impact.

I appreciate that the information provided above is lengthy and somewhat technical but I have endeavoured to provide a comprehensive response to your query.

I trust that this satisfies your request but if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me on telephone 0115 9013733.

If you are not satisfied with how your request has been dealt with then you should complain by writing to Mr. J Robinson, Chief Executive. This letter should be marked for the attention of Caroline McCleary in the Chief Executive's Secretariat at the Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 6LU.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint then you have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF Telephone 01625 545 700 or www.ico.org.uk

Yours faithfully



Alison Gibson
Service Manager – Planning Policy

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