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KIRKBY AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Forward Planning Team  
Ashfield District Council  
Urban Road  
Kirkby-in-Ashfield  
Nottingham  
NG17 8DA

17 January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Draft Ashfield Local Plan Public Consultation (Regulation 19)**

I write to submit the following comments on behalf of the Kirkby Area Residents' Association (KARA).

KARA is very pleased to see that this latest Local Plan does not include the major Mowlands allocation to which KARA previously objected so strongly. KARA notes that the draft Local Plan spreads development across the district, with numerous smaller and medium sized development sites that infill and consolidate the urban areas, rather than major urban extensions into the countryside. KARA considers this to be a sound development strategy.

We note that the draft Local Plan allocates the former Mowlands School site to the west of George Street as a site for up to 54 dwellings. The site is described as 'land at Doles Lane, Kirkby-in-Ashfield' (housing site allocation reference H1Kc). The land is identified as a brownfield site (i.e. previously developed land). The site was used as a school until the mid-1960s and KARA understands that the land remains in the ownership of Nottinghamshire County Council. KARA raises no objection to development of this specific site, provided vehicular access is not taken via Cowpasture Lane. The latter is an attractive, narrow and unsurfaced historic lane which is an important part of the Kirkby Cross Conservation Area and its setting. Upgrading it to accommodate vehicular traffic generated by development of site H1Kc would be extremely harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the Kirkby Cross scheduled monument/listed building. Extension of the Kirkby Cross Conservation Area further westwards along Cowpasture Lane would assist in the protection of this area.

The Kirkby Cross part of the Kirkby Cross Conservation Area continues to look very run-down, largely as a result of the blight caused by the previous Mowlands development proposal. The Waggon & Horses pub remains closed and boarded-up and the two garage sites continue to degrade the area. We understand these properties were acquired by the potential developer of the former Mowlands scheme. KARA is disappointed that the draft Local Plan does not include specific proposals to sensitively redevelop the garage sites, bring the Waggon & Horses pub back into use and secure a general enhancement of this area. The plan offers an opportunity to secure substantial enhancement of the setting of the Kirkby Cross monument and the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area. Failure to include a policy to this effect, as suggested by KARA in the 2021 Regulation 18 consultation, is a missed opportunity. Proposed Policy EV9 essentially re-iterates the heritage policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, which is unnecessary. Specific pro-active policies for such assets as the Kirkby Cross Conservation Area and other neglected conservation areas would be far more appropriate for the Local Plan.

Similarly, the draft Plan does not include specific commitments for the improvement of Kirkby Town Centre or any substantial measures to deal with the traffic congestion in the town centre. The draft Plan cross refers to a separate Town Centre Spatial Masterplan, which has been drawn up by the Council without any consultation with KARA. Critically, the Spatial Masterplan would not seem to form part of the Local Plan. It is simply cited in draft Policy S11 and Town Centre Policy SH1 as a consideration when determining planning applications in the town centre. In our view, the content of the Spatial Masterplan should be reconsidered and made the subject of wider consultation and the Local Plan should contain a policy that gives a commitment to implementation of a revised Spatial Masterplan within a reasonable timescale.

KARA trusts that the above comments will be taken into account in finalising the Local Plan.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Slack', with a stylized, looped flourish at the end.

Mike Slack  
Chairman