

SCRUTINY – 8 DECEMBER 2011

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY DIRECTION)

RE: Addendum - Green Wedge Review

PURPOSE OF ADDENDUM

The Green Wedge Review was finalised in September 2011. The Review makes reference to the Glenfield Park planning appeal which was ongoing during the production of the document and highlights that the appeal decision had not been released. The appeal site falls within the current wider green wedge boundary in Blaby District and is within close proximity to Ratby and Groby.

The planning appeal was recovered for the Secretary of State's determination and a decision was issued on 24th October 2011. The Secretary of State agreed with the Planning Inspectors decision and allowed the appeal and planning permission was granted.

As this is a significant development which will take place adjacent to Glenfield and will result in the wider green wedge boundary being amended it is important that the Green Wedge Review is updated to consider the appeal decision in more detail to ensure the document reflects the latest situation.

The proposed amendments to the Green Wedge Review appended to the Committee Report are set out in this addendum.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE GREEN WEDGE REVIEW

The following amendments are suggested (insertions are identified as underlined text and deletions are identified through strikethrough):

Chapter 12

- 12.12.4 *It was identified during the consultation event (Chapter 7) that as the green wedge spans across administrative boundaries the Review should take note of the 'Glenfield Park' planning appeal which falls within the wider green wedge in Blaby District. The appeal is for a mixed use scheme which consists of employment development (B1, B2 and B8) (maximum 30ha), residential development (maximum 250 dwellings), provision of a local retail/community facility (maximum 1400 sq m), with associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure. The application site is known as Glenfield Park and is 62.2 hectares and is located between Western Park Golf Course to the south, Glenfield to the north east, Mill Lane Industrial Estate to the north and the significant road corridors of the M1 and A46 to the west.*
- 12.12.5 *The planning application was considered at Blaby District Council Planning Committee on the 13th May 2010 and was refused.*
- 12.12.6 *Subsequently, the applicant ~~has~~ appealed the decision and a Public Inquiry took place in March 2011 ~~and the Inspector is currently deliberating the result of the appeal.~~ The Planning Inspector determined that the appeal should be*

allowed within the green wedge and this was supported by the Secretary of State. The impact of this decision will be discussed in sections 15 and 16.

12.12.7 *There are no other significant planning appeals within the area'.*

Chapter 13

It is recommended that this reference is removed as it is not the role of the site survey section to make recommendations in this section. This should be carried out after the consultation and evaluation stage).

13.7.2 *'The public right of way is well used and this is visible from the condition of the track. The entrance to the Parish Council site from Sacheverell Way is of good quality with kissing gates to the two access points. It provides a positive recreational opportunity to the residents of Groby which can be accessed from the modern housing estate through a wooded walk. The wooded walk to the east is well used, which was evident from the site visits with dog walkers and school children. ~~There is an area of private land which is not publically accessible and is fenced off to all sides with clear signs noting that it is private land and not for use by the public. This area of land does not achieve the objectives of the green wedge. The cemetery and public right of way could provide a clear alternative boundary to the green wedge.'~~*

Chapter 15

15.2.5 *'~~If the Glenfield Park appeal is allowed this will have a significant impact on the function of the green wedge and a substantial portion of the green wedge between the Leicester conurbation and Groby and Ratby will be lost, reducing the separation of the villages from the urban area. As highlighted in paragraph 12.12.2 the Glenfield Park development is a significant encroachment into the existing green wedge within Blaby District and this will result in the urbanisation of this area which will consequently dramatically alter the landscape to the west of the M1 and A46 and the green wedge boundary will need to be revised to take account of this development by Blaby District. The function of the surrounding green wedge will intensify the need to retain the green wedge around the conurbation of Leicester, Groby and Ratby due to the reduction in the separation between the villages from the urban area.'~~*

Chapter 16

16.5.4 *'~~If the Glenfield Park appeal is successful this will further~~ The Glenfield Park development will reduce the gap between Glenfield, Groby, and Ratby and this area (along with area E) of the green wedge will be vital in preventing any further coalescence between the settlements. The topography falls down towards the existing industrial units within Glenfield and this results in the perception of the settlements being within close proximity. The area also plays an important role as a noise buffer and air quality management for residents of Groby and 'The Brantings' from the A46.*

16.6.4 *'The consultation event identified that this area was particularly sensitive to coalescence and as highlighted in Area D ~~if the Glenfield Park appeal is successful~~ will make this area will become even more crucial in preventing coalescence between Glenfield, Groby and Ratby'.*

- 16.7.3 *'A large section of land in Area F is not publically accessible and in private ownership, although it is recognised that it was formerly accessible to the public which is clearly shown in aerial photography. As this area is no longer accessible as an informal open space it is not recognised in the Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Study; and this plot of land therefore can not be classed as performing a recreational function. In terms of the role of the plot in guiding development form and merging of settlements, the recent Planning Appeal decision within the area should be considered. One of the reasons the appeal was dismissed was due to its impact on the green wedge, the Inspector highlighted that the appeal site had an open and largely rural aspect recognising that it was tempered by the surroundings identifying that the surroundings added to suburbanising and semi-rural feel of the area. One of the main criticisms was that a thorough green wedge review (including consultation) had not been undertaken and therefore arguments in relation to the removal of the green wedge were not robust. It is important to consider the recent appeal decision at Glenfield Park. The appeal site is visible from Area F particularly from the inner edge of the Parish Council owned area of open space. The built development will dramatically change the current landscape and there will be a significant reduction in the separation of the area between Groby and Glenfield.*
- 16.7.4 *The Local Plan Inspector also considered this parcel of land and highlighted that development would intrude into the green wedge at this structurally vital and vulnerable point. At this time there was a preferred site for development which was not within the green wedge which also added to the dismissal of this parcel land.*
- 16.7.5 *Now that this review has been undertaken for the entire green wedge it is acknowledged that this plot of land does provide a sense of openness highlighted in the planning appeal decision, however, the Inspector was considering this planning application in isolation and an 'open aspect' is not one of the functions of the green wedge set out in the Methodology. The Inspector was also not considering the green wedge at a strategic level as this assessment has. Ratby and Groby are within close proximity although there is not intervisibility between the settlements. It is anticipated that the development as a result of the Glenfield Park Appeal will mean that there will be intervisibilty between Area F and Glenfield over the plan period. and it is evident that Areas E and G play a critical role in terms of preventing coalescence. The consultation event and appeal decision have highlighted that the area of green wedge performs the separation of settlements and helps to guide development form. When looking at the green wedge strategically and considering the development pressures around Groby and the Core Strategy housing requirement in comparison to other areas of the green wedge this plot of land would have a more limited impact on the overall functioning of the green wedge to other more sensitive areas.*
- 16.7.6 *~~'As discussed previously, Sacheverell Way acts as the edge of the built up area of Groby and this plot of land does not breach this road. The area of private land does not currently achieve the objectives of the green wedge. and this area would have the least impact on the functioning of the green wedge and should be considered as the least sensitive area of the green wedge abutting Groby. Any release of green wedge land should only be undertaken if there are no other viable, developable sites which could accommodate the housing requirements set out in the Core Strategy. it has~~*

~~been in terms of providing a recreational resource on this piece land and there is evidence to show that this is the case, this area could remain part of the green wedge. This may mean however, that other parts of the green wedge would have to be investigated further as an addendum to this review to identify sufficient land to meet the Core Strategy housing requirements to inform the Site Allocations and Generic Development Control Policies DPD.~~