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*By Email Only: [local.plan@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk)*

09 January 2025

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Re: North East Derbyshire District Council Call for Sites 2024/5 - Site Submission Form: Land off Oaks Farm Lane / Dark Lane, Calow**

I refer to the above Call for Sites (CfS) submission forming part of the Council's Land Availability Assessment and set out details below in support of promoting residential development at land off Oaks Farm Lane / Dark Lane, Calow. This Statement sits alongside the online submission form submitted earlier via the consultation portal, and demonstrates that the site is deliverable as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 i.e. that it is suitable, available, and achievable for residential development, adjoining Calow's settlement boundary and forming a well related, logical extension.

In this context, Calow is a sustainable, level 2 settlement as set out in the Local Plan's hierarchy and supporting evidence base, being well served by a broad range of services, facilities, amenities and employment opportunities, including the neighbouring Chesterfield Royal Hospital whom is a major employer in the locality and wider District area. As a sustainable settlement, it is therefore well placed to accommodate additional growth, minded of the Government's drive to significantly boost housing supply and deliver 1.5 million homes across the country over the next 5 years.

This is reflected through the introduction of the new standard methodology for calculating local housing need which aims to facilitate the significant boosting of housing numbers and results in an increased requirement of 591 dwellings per annum for North East Derbyshire District (367 dwellings higher than the current equivalent figure, 261 dwellings higher than the current adopted figure). Furthermore, the Government has made clear in the latest NPPF that Green belt boundaries should be reviewed through local plans where, for example, an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes in full.

This submission includes the following technical notes to assist, alongside this covering letter and the site submission form:

- Transport, Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note (Hexa - December 2024)
- Ecological Appraisal (FPCR - December 2024)
- Landscape and Visual Statement (Influence - January 2025), including illustrative figures and drawings

## Woodall Homes

This site is under control by Woodall Homes Ltd as a single local housebuilder, whom have an established track record of housing delivery within the area, both market and affordable provision. This includes successful delivery of a variety of sites specifically within the District itself, namely:

- Church Side, Calow - Churchfields
- Top Road, Calow - The Croft
- Clay Lane, Clay Cross - The Orchards
- Rectory Road, Long Duckmanton - The Pastures
- Brassington Lane, Old Tupton - Roman Rise
- Oaks Farm Road, Calow - Oakham Grange (currently under construction)

Notably, works have also recently commenced at our latest site off Oaks Farm Lane in Calow, referred to as Oakham Grange. This site sits directly adjacent that currently being promoted as part of this CfS submission, and is expected to provide the principal access into the site. It's delivery also creates the infill opportunity that helps strengthen the credentials of this CfS submission.

## Background

### *Site and Surroundings*

The site subject to this CfS submission measures approximately 3ha and comprises land off Oaks Farm Lane / Dark Lane, Calow, located to the southern edge of the settlement and approximately 2.5km to the east of Chesterfield. An extract of the site location is shown in Figure 1 below (a separate location plan is appended to this submission for clarity).



**Figure 1: Site Location (site outlined red)**

The site currently comprises two parcels of agricultural land, bisected and enclosed by perimeter hedgerows, accessed from Netherleigh Cottages off Dark Lane to the north of the site. A Public Right of Way (PROW) runs along the southern boundary of the site between Dark Lane and Oaks Farm Lane, referred to as Calow Footpath 11. A ditch runs centrally through the site, leading to an open watercourse which sits just outside of the site boundary towards the southeastern edge.

Beyond, the site is bound by Dark Lane to the north and west, residential development and allotments to the north, further agricultural fields with associated buildings to the south (and west), whilst our current development site at Oakham Grange sits directly to the east (see Relevant Planning History for further details).

### *The Development Plan*

The Development Plan relevant to the site currently comprises the North East Derbyshire Local Plan (2021). In terms of the adopted policy position as it stands, the site currently lies outside of, albeit directly adjacent to, the settlement edge boundary of Calow (see Figure 2 below).

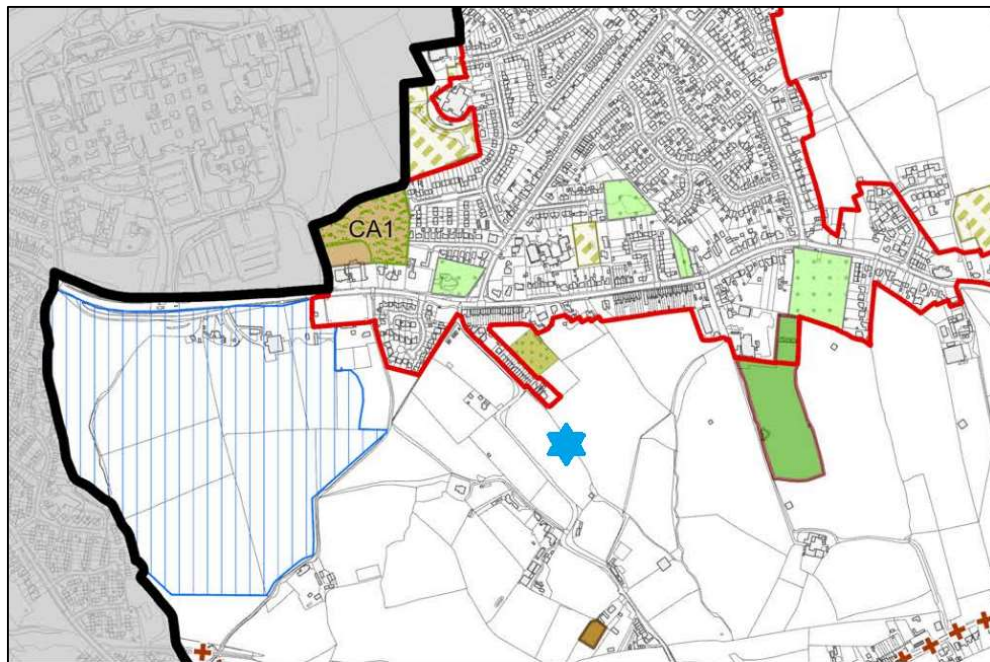


**Figure 2: Extract of 2021 Local Plan Proposals Map (\*blue star denotes the site)**

### *Relevant Planning History*

There is no planning history of relevance in relation to the site.

In terms of the wider area, Outline planning permission was originally granted for Oakham Grange directly to the east of the site in October 2020 (REF: 20/01005/FL), accessed via Oaks Farm Lane off Top Road (this being the area's primary distributor road):

*"Outline planning application for the construction of around 80 no. dwellings and associated works (all matters reserved except access)"*

A Reserved Matters application subsequently followed for 75 dwellings and this was approved in October 2022 (reference 22/00384/RM), latterly being tweaked in July 2024 (reference 24/00284/RM). The approved 2024 layout is shown in Figure 3 below.



**Figure 3: Approved Oakham Grange Development Layout (Reference 24/00284/RM)**

Directly to the north-west of the site off Dark Lane is a further outline permission for a 36 dwelling development (reference 21/00987/OL, dated 17/01/24), this being achieved via appeal (note the scheme received an Officer recommendation for approval), with access approved via Dark Lane. The approved access arrangements were marginally tweaked under a subsequent permission (reference 24/00621/OL). The approved masterplan for this site is shown in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 3: Dark Lane Outline Concept Masterplan (Reference 21/00987/OL)**

### *Sustainability*

Under Policy SS2 of the North East Derbyshire Local Plan 2014-2034, Calow is identified as a Level 2 Settlement, that is, a settlement with very good sustainability credentials. This policy sets out that, after Level 1 Towns and Strategic Sites, new housing development will be focused in Level 2 Towns such as Calow, reinforcing and acknowledging that this is a highly sustainable location. The Local Plan Inspector, in this regard minded of their sustainability, made clear that *"the level 2 settlements would be making a significant and ongoing contribution to housing delivery"*.

In this context, Calow presents a broad number and range of services, facilities, amenities and employment opportunities situated within close proximity of the site, accessible on foot. Alongside the notable presence of Chesterfield Royal Hospital, these also include:

- Primary school
- Community centre and church
- Medical centre
- Convenience shopping (including a Co-op store) and post office
- Pharmacy
- Nursing homes
- Day care nursery
- Public houses, restaurants and hot food takeaways

- Car sales, repair, maintenance and valeting
- Play areas, recreation ground and open space provision
- Football pitches, cricket pitches and bowls club

The site benefits from an excellent level of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, which includes lit footpaths, Rights of Way and Bridleways, along with local cycle networks linking through and connecting to the wider network, including the National Cycle Network / Trans Pennine Trail. Public Transport options are readily available too, with a number of bus stops available along Top Road (with shelter, flag and pole arrangement including live travel time information) providing hourly and regular services to Chesterfield, Bolsover and Killamarsh for example, as well as other surrounding settlements and villages. Chesterfield Train Station is also accessible via an hourly bus service, with the station providing regular access/services to a number of major destinations, including London, Nottingham, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Leeds, and Liverpool.

The site is therefore located in a very sustainable location with excellent, well maintained transport links and as such represents a logical focus area for further housing growth. This is demonstrated through nearby developments which equally benefit from strong sustainability credentials as recognised strategically by the Local Planning Authority.

## **Site Assessment – Key Considerations**

### *Access*

Vehicular access via adopted routes is available directly to the site boundary from Top Road (via the Oakham Grange development) and Dark Lane (the latter with the potential to provide a secondary / private drive access), both having pedestrian footways and existing street lighting.

It is expected that the main access would be achieved via the Oakham Grange development which connects with the existing highway network on Oaks Farm Lane and A632 Top Road, following the upgrade of Oaks Farm Lane itself to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) adoptable standards (upgraded to include a 5.5m two-way carriageway with a 2m footway on the western edge, and an additional pedestrian facility provided on the east of the carriageway). The internal access would likely be provided in the form of an extension to the road currently being constructed to adoptable standards in front of plots 44-47.

As outlined earlier, the site is within readily available walking/cycling distance of a range of services, facilities, amenities and employment opportunities in Calow and the wider area (including Chesterfield), and is well served by public transport links. As such, the site is extremely well placed to encourage more sustainable patterns of travel and reduced reliance on the private car, consistent with the sustainable principles set out in the NPPF.

### *Topography*

The site gently slopes from slightly high points on the northern boundary, to low points southern boundary. The site's topography is not therefore considered to be a constraint to development.

### *Ground Conditions*

Given the site predominantly comprises arable and pasture fields, there are no known contamination constraints associated with the development of this site.

### *Flood Risk and Drainage*

The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding) as illustrated on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning and reaffirmed in the accompanying Drainage Feasibility Report prepared by Hexa Consulting. Furthermore, there are no known surface water drainage issues on the site. On this basis, the site's development would be consistent with the sequential approach to development prescribed in the NPPF.

It is envisaged that infiltration will be a viable means of surface water disposal. Such disposal could also be achieved via the nearby watercourse if so required. Foul water can be discharged to the Yorkshire Water combined sewer northeast of the site, by way of a gravity system.

Matters of flood risk and drainage are not therefore considered to be a constraint to development.

### *Legal/Operational*

There are no known legal/operational issues associated with the development of the site for residential purposes.

### *Environmental*

The accompanying Ecological Appraisal details that the site is not designated as a statutory or non-statutory site of nature conservation interest, nor is any significant ecological or protected species interest likely to exist. Where isolated constraints may be present, standard ecological mitigation measures could be employed. Opportunities include the potential to improve upon the relatively low ecological baseline of the site, with compensation and enhancement opportunities providing habitats of higher quality and diversity as well as habitat features that could support a range of wildlife and provide strengthened ecological connectivity. The appraisal concludes that there are therefore no significant ecological constraints to the development of the site.

Sufficient land is available to the developer to achieve the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

Environmental matters are not therefore considered to be a constraint to development.

### *Landscape and Trees*

The site carries no designations for landscape quality at national or local level, and is visually well contained by scrub, hedgerows and existing built form bounding the site. Views are available from the wider PRoW network and higher ground to the southeast, however these are panoramic and encompass the whole of the settlement edge and the landscape either side and to the foreground. Clearly these will be read against the backdrop of the existing settlement and the approved developments, and will not therefore appear incongruous or out of context.

There are no trees within the site, albeit mature vegetation exists beyond the site boundaries in isolated locations, none of which are understood to be subject to Tree Preservation Orders or considered to be of high value. Any residential development proposed could be suitably designed to provide an appropriate buffer, where considered necessary.

Notwithstanding the above, the extent of any root protection areas would be assessed as part of any development proposals and trees/hedgerows would be retained wherever possible. Proposals would be supported by a comprehensive landscaping scheme in accordance with adopted policy, with any such planting assisting integration within the surrounding landscape.

Such matters are not therefore considered to be a constraint to development.

### *Cultural Heritage*

The site does not contain or form part of any designated heritage assets, namely conservation areas, listed buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Beyond, the spire of St Peter's Church (positioned on Top Road), which is a Grade II listed building, is visible within the site and from the surrounding area. However, these views are restricted between the church and site, with these due to be further restricted by the development approved off Dark Lane (21/00987/OL). Given this and the suburban setting of the church, the distance between the site and the listed building, as well as the intervening built development, the site subject to this CfS process does not contribute to the understanding of the heritage asset, or how it is experienced. As the appeal Inspector found for the neighbouring development (paragraph 42 of the decision notice), which is significantly closer to the Church, it is similarly the case that site being promoted would have a neutral effect on the heritage asset and would preserve the special interest of the listed building.

Heritage matters are not therefore considered to be a constraint to development.

### *Utilities and Infrastructure*

There are no known constraints with regards to the availability of gas, electricity, water, foul sewerage or telecommunications networks.

Utility and Infrastructure matters are not therefore considered to be a constraint to development.

### *Sensitive Receptors*

Minded of the neighbouring residential properties and in the interests of safeguarding amenity, any proposed dwellings would be positioned and orientated to provide a satisfactory separation and acceptable relationship, particularly in terms of preventing issues of overlooking or loss of privacy, whilst ensuring that sufficient private outdoor amenity space exists for occupier enjoyment.

It is therefore considered, in this context, that such matters would not be a constraint to development.

## **Site Capacity**

Taking into account the modest site constraints and the form of the neighbouring developments approved, effectively creating a logical infill opportunity with broad landscaped buffer, it is considered that the site is capable of delivering around 40 dwellings on the basis of a 30 - 35 dwellings per hectare, accounting for robust landscaping proposals and appropriate buffers.

A development of this size would make a significant contribution to meeting the District's identified need for new additional housing and 5 year housing land supply position. It is envisaged that the development could deliver policy compliant affordable housing to meet local needs, for example by way of affordable homes for rent, first homes, discounted market sales housing or other affordable routes to home ownership (e.g. shared ownership) in accordance with the definition of affordable homes at Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) and the Government's Ministerial Statement (concerning First Homes) published 24/05/21. Note that our Oakham Grange development is policy compliant from this regard.

## **Deliverability**

The glossary to the NPPF confirms that in order for a site to be considered deliverable, it should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

The NPPF glossary also confirms that to be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

The below therefore assesses the site in terms of its suitability, availability and achievability.

## *Suitability*

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) confirms that a site can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 3-018-20190722).

As set out, the site is located to the edge of a Level 2 Settlement, that is, a settlement with very good sustainability credentials where new housing development would be focused and expected to make and ongoing contribution to housing delivery. The site is within walking and cycling distance of the numerous facilities, services, amenities and employment opportunities, including the National Cycle Network. Bus stops are available along Top Road, circa 400m north of the site, providing hourly services to Chesterfield, Bolsover and Killamarsh for example, as well as other surrounding settlements and villages. Chesterfield Train Station is also accessible via an hourly bus service (and bicycle), with the station providing regular access/services to a number of major destinations, including London, Nottingham, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Leeds, and Liverpool. As such, the site is therefore well placed to encourage more sustainable patterns of travel and reduced reliance on the private car, consistent with the sustainable principles set out in the NPPF.

In terms of technical matters (including access, drainage, landscape, ecology and biodiversity), these are all capable of being addressed and where required, mitigated, through a sensitively designed layout such that they are not considered a barrier to development.

The site is therefore considered suitable for residential development.

#### *Availability*

The PPG states that a site can be considered available for development, when, on the best information available, there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development. Land controlled by a landowner who has expressed an intention to develop may be considered available (Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 3-019-20190722).

The site is under option by us as a local housing developer (Woodall Homes) with the landowner, and a signed contract is in place. As a local housebuilder with an established track record in the local area, it is our intention to develop the site for residential purposes.

The site is therefore considered available for residential development.

#### *Achievability*

The PPG confirms a site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 3-020-20190722).

Whilst no specific viability work has been undertaken to date (other than internal assessment), on the basis that there are no known/overriding technical constraints at this stage, the development of this site for housing is likely to be economically viable as has indeed been the case for our nearby Calow sites.

As the site is greenfield and no significant level changes exists, there are not expected to be any significant abnormal costs associated with contamination, ground conditions or access arrangements for example. This is highlighted through the supporting documentation enclosed, which supports the suitability of delivery from an access, drainage and ecological perspective.

Indeed, delivery of our Oakham Grange site immediately adjacent demonstrates achievability.

The site is therefore considered achievable for residential development.

#### **Summary and Conclusions**

This Statement has been prepared in support of a CfS submission, promoting residential development at land off Oaks Farm Lane / Dark Lane, Calow.

Calow is identified as a Level 2 Settlement where new housing development will be focussed, being expected to provide an ongoing contribution to housing provision due to its excellent sustainability credentials. It is well served by services, facilities, amenities and employment opportunities, as well as public transport links, footpaths, cycleways and the National Cycle Network.

It is imperative that a variety of size and types of sites are allocated for housing across the District, to provide choice to the market and headroom for delivery against the objectively assessed requirement and economic growth aspirations. A development of this size would make a significant contribution to meeting the District's identified need for new additional housing and 5 year housing land supply position, at a time of the ongoing national housing crisis and economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, minded also of the Government's drive to significantly boost housing supply and deliver 1.5 million homes across the country over the next 5 years. It is envisaged that the development could deliver policy compliant affordable housing to meet local needs.

This Statement demonstrates that the submitted site is suitable, available and achievable for residential development, such that it is deliverable as defined in the NPPF, with evidence of other such successful schemes nearby, including those developed by Woodall Homes. Indeed, as a housebuilder, we have an option agreement in place with the landowner and are promoting the site accordingly. The site has no unusual constraints and we provide in support of our submission initial highway, ecology, landscape and drainage technical notes which confirm that no significant barriers to development exist. Development of the site for housing would enable the Council to make efficient use of land and maximise the delivery of housing for the Plan period, forming a well related and logical infill extension to the settlement, on a well contained parcel of land.

I trust that this CfS Site Submission Form and enclosures is to your satisfaction and would welcome the opportunity to discuss further. Of course, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Darren Abbott  
Planning Director

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Enc. CfS Site Submission Form (January 2025)  
N241213 (03)001 Constraints and Opportunities  
N241213 (03)002 Parameters Plan  
N241213 (08)001 Context and Designations  
N241213 (08)002 Local Amenities Plan  
N241213 (08)003-010 Contact Sheets

N241213 (08)011 Location Plan  
Transport, Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note (Hexa - December 2024)  
Ecological Appraisal (FPCR - December 2024)  
Landscape and Visual Statement (Influence - January 2025)