

Oadby and Wigston Local Plan Examination

Further Statement submitted on behalf of Leicester Racecourse Holdings Ltd

Matter 10: Green Wedges

Issue: Whether the retention and designation of Green Wedges in the Local Plan is justified?

March 2018

Introduction

1. This Statement has been prepared by Turley and Landmark Planning on behalf of our client, Leicester Racecourse Holdings Ltd. It follows previous representations submitted on behalf of Leicester Racecourse in relation to the Oadby and Wigston Local Plan Pre-submission consultation.
2. This Statement relates to Matter 10 (Green Wedges). It responds directly to the questions identified by the Inspector, specifically Question 1.

Question 1: Is the retention and designation of Green Wedges in the Local Plan supported by a robust evidence base?

3. As set out in our previous representations, the retention and designation of Green Wedges is not supported by a robust evidence base.
4. The purpose of the Council's Green Wedge Review (2017) is to assess the boundaries of the existing Green Wedge designations. The Review does not, however, provide a detailed assessment of individual parcels of land within the Green Wedge. Instead it provides a more generic assessment of whether the designation as a whole (at a 'macro' level) meets the four objectives identified.
5. The evidence base therefore fails to take account of the significant variations between the different parcels of land making up the wider Green Wedge designation. In doing so, it fails to fully assess where parcels of land should be released from the Green Wedge and proposes the retention and designation of land that fails to meet any of the defined objectives. By including land unnecessarily within the Green Wedges, the Local Plan limits the ability of what are otherwise sustainable sites from being brought forward for development during the plan period.

6. This is evident in the inclusion of land within our client's ownership within the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge. Our client's wider land holding at Leicester Racecourse is included within the defined Green Wedge. It is, however, argued that part of this land holding (c.3.1 ha) should be removed from the Green Wedge designation. This land was considered as part of the Council's 2017 Review, but at a 'macro' level in the context of the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge as a whole. No detailed assessment of the land parcel was undertaken as part of the evidence base.
7. A detailed assessment of how this parcel of land performs against the four criteria set out in the Green Wedge Review was submitted in support of our previous representations. This assessment is not repeated as part of this Statement. In summary, the assessment demonstrated that, when subject to a detailed review, the parcel of land does not contribute to the role of any of the four objectives of including land within the Green Wedge. The report concluded that the site is separated from the remainder of the Green Wedge by Palmerston Way and has the potential to accommodate development that would not fundamentally impact upon the separation of Oadby and Leicester, or the openness of the Green Wedge in this location.
8. The above example demonstrates the limitations of the Council's Green Wedge Review. By failing to undertake a detailed and robust assessment, the evidence base does not fully assess where the existing boundaries of the Green Wedge should be reviewed. As a result, the evidence base does not robustly identify land that should be removed from the Green Wedge.
9. In conclusion, the retention and designation of land within the Green Wedge is not supported by a robust evidence base. The Review does not provide a detailed assessment of whether land within the existing designation meets the objectives of including land within the Green Wedge. As a result, the Local Plan would lead to land which does not meet any of the prescribed objectives being retained as part of the Green Wedge. This unnecessarily impedes the ability of otherwise sustainable sites in meeting future development and infrastructure needs over the plan period.