Gladman Hearing Statement
Kettering Site Specific Plan Part 2 Examination

Matter 2: Spatial Strategy
MATTER 2 – SPATIAL STRATEGY

Question 2. What context does the JCS provide in terms of the distribution of development in Kettering borough? Is the proposed distribution of development in Kettering as the Growth Town and Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell as Market Towns in accordance with the JCS and sustainable development principles?

1.1.1 The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy sets out the housing requirements for Kettering Borough. Policy 29 and table 5 of the JCS set out how the housing requirement for Kettering Borough will be distributed in line with the spatial strategy. This includes 700 dwellings related to the allocation at Desborough North.

1.1.2 Gladman supports the recognition in both the JCS and the SSP2 that Desborough as a ‘market town’ is a sustainable settlement in an accessible location and should:

“**To provide a strong service role for their local community and wider rural hinterland.**”

1.1.3 As a market town it is therefore crucial that the housing requirements are delivered. Gladman note that the relevant planning application relating to development at Desborough North was submitted in 2011, and a resolution to grant was issued by Kettering Borough Council in 2014. The Section 106 agreement was only formally signed in 2017. To date only an application relating to a highways upgrades and a variation of condition application has been received by the Council, and as such, Gladman query the Council’s assessment of delivery rates on this scheme. Given the significant delays in the site coming forward, and the fact that aside from the applications mentioned above, no reserved matter applications have been received by the Council, we consider it necessary that the Council consider a range of smaller sites within Desborough that can deliver quickly and can support development to meet local housing needs in the short term.

1.1.4 Policy HOU1 adds nothing to the policies contained in the JCS nor does it provide sufficient clarity and consistency in how proposals outside of development boundaries will be assessed. Whilst Policy LOC1 refers to policies within the JCS and SPP2, it is unclear which policies or considerations regarding specific elements of those policies would apply.
**Question 3. Does the Plan include sufficient flexibility and contingencies to take account of any changes in circumstances, including any review of the JCS?**

1.1.5 Gladman are concerned that the plan does not provide sufficient flexibility for the Council to respond to changes in circumstance over the plan period.

1.1.6 Gladman consider the Council’s approach to development beyond the settlement boundary is far too restrictive and leads to conflicts with the Framework and may result in delivery problems over the course of the plan period due to the significant reliance of SUEs as identified in the NNJCS to deliver the majority of the Council’s housing needs.

1.1.7 Gladman consider additional flexibility should be provided by the SPP2 to allow for the consideration of sustainable development opportunities across the Borough that are located outside of settlement boundaries but are well related to settlement.

**Question 4. Was the methodology used to assess and select the proposed site allocations appropriate? Were reasonable alternatives considered and tested? Are the reasons for selecting the preferred sites and rejecting others clear?**

1.1.8 Gladman consider that the Plan is jeopardising the delivery of meeting the borough’s housing needs in full due to the reliance on Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) to deliver the majority of the borough’s housing requirement. Whilst Gladman do not object to the principle of development of the NNJCS allocations, it is clear that these sites have failed to come forward as previously anticipated. This trend is likely to continue even before taking into account any additional delays due to the Covid-19 global pandemic and additional allocations beyond those already proposed will be necessary to ensure the deliverability of the Local Plan. Gladman consider the SA should be revisited to test the Plan’s ability to deliver an increased buffer of sites.

1.1.9 As outlined in Matter 1 Question 5, Gladman has significant concerns with the assessment of reasonable alternatives for the allocation of additional housing land. The Council has not considered land at Braybrooke Road as a reasonable alternative for housing but rather considered it for employment use despite the site being actively promoted for residential development since 2018.

1.1.10 The SA is obliged to give adequate reasons for selection of particular options as “reasonable alternatives”, and reasons for rejecting those options it did reject. The current SA and associated Site Assessment evidence base does not do so in consideration of the current preferred options. The SA in its current form fails to explain why land off Braybrooke Road
was not included as a reasonable alternative for residential development given that it was subject to a live planning application. Gladman consider that it is necessary for the housing sites within the SA to be reassessed in this regard.