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17th August 2026

Dear Land south of Desford Project Team,

Design Midlands Design Review – Tuesday 4th August 2026
Design Review of Land South of Desford, Leicestershire (Our Ref: DMHB01)

We write following the design review of Land south of Desford, Leicestershire. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for utilising the Design Midlands Design Review Service.

The Panel members who undertook the design review were Geoff Gardner – Transport / Connectivity
Clare Mitchel – Urban Designer and Masterplanning, Peter Neal (Chair) - Landscape architect and ecology
and Iqbal Rassool – Environmental planner. Design reviews undertaken by Design Midlands adhere to a set of key shared principles (see at end of this letter).

Site Context

The site is located immediately to the south of the village of Desford, within the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth. It occupies a series of agricultural fields that form part of the village's rural southern setting. The site is bounded on its western edge by Peckleton Lane, which connects northwards into Desford and southwards towards the wider countryside. To the east, the site is defined by Leicester Lane, a rural lane that provides access to local settlements and forms a clear eastern boundary. The northern edge is marked by a small brook, beyond which lies the built edge of Desford, including Bosworth Academy. The southern boundary is formed by a network of hedgerows and field edges that transition into open countryside.

The site itself is predominantly agricultural land, subdivided by a well-established pattern of mature hedgerows and occasional trees that contribute to its landscape structure and character. Three Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) cross the site broadly north-south, providing direct connections into Desford and out towards the wider rural area. One PRoW crosses the brook via a small footbridge, forming an important link between the village and the site. Additional informal tracks and field access routes run through the land, reflecting its agricultural use.

Landscape features include a network of hedgerows, several mature trees (including Oak and Ash), and a gently undulating topography that falls northwards towards the brook. The site's edges vary in character: the western boundary has a more urban influence due to the presence of the Caterpillar employment site and existing sports facilities, while the eastern and southern edges retain a distinctly rural feel.

Planning Context

Land South of Desford is a draft allocation in Hinckley and Bosworth Council Local Plan.

Policy PS12 allocates Land South of Desford for a minimum of 550 homes alongside new community facilities, requiring affordable housing, self-build plots, a new link road between Peckleton Lane and Leicester Lane, utilities upgrades, biodiversity measures, education and healthcare contributions, and outdoor sports provision. The policy emphasises high-quality, landscape-sensitive design with distinct character areas, higher densities near the existing village edge, a landscaped southern buffer, flood-risk mitigation, and protection of the Desford Conservation Area. Development must be supported by a Transport Assessment, a Framework Masterplan, a site-wide Design Code, and archaeological investigation to ensure a comprehensive, well-planned and sustainable extension to Desford.

Policy PS12 is provided in full at the end of the report Appendix 1.

The Proposed Scheme

The proposals for Land South of Desford is to deliver a sustainable, landscape-led village extension that is accessible, inclusive and beautiful. The development proposes approximately 550 new homes, a new GP surgery, a district centre, new sports pitches, extensive green and blue infrastructure, enhanced Public Rights of Ways, and associated movement, drainage and community infrastructure. The scheme will form a new southern gateway to Desford

“The vision for land south of Desford is to establish a new southern gateway: a sustainable, walkable neighbourhood that delivers much-needed housing, community facilities, and green infrastructure while respecting the village’s character and rural setting.”

The stated principles for the masterplan are as follows:

- Exemplar Placemaking – Establishing a walkable, legible and sociable neighbourhood structured around green corridors, active travel routes and a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces.
- Accessible and Inclusive – Delivering new homes, community facilities and everyday services within a compact, walkable structure that supports local residents and reduces reliance on private vehicles.
- Landscape-Led Approach – Placing landscape at the forefront of design, with a central green corridor, woodland edges and retained hedgerows shaping the development form.
- Biodiversity and Nature Recovery – Enhancing existing habitats, strengthening ecological networks and delivering measurable biodiversity net gain through SuDS, planting and connected green spaces.
- Sustainable Movement and Drainage – Embedding sustainability within transport and water strategies, including active travel routes, bus-ready streets, SuDS basins, swales and rain gardens.

These ambitions are supported by a set of Design Principles:

- A Holistic Masterplan – A coordinated and collaborative design process informed by detailed site analysis, landscape character, heritage context and stakeholder engagement.
- Green and Blue Infrastructure Network – A connected system of green corridors, SuDS features, orchards, play spaces and parkland forming the structural spine of the development. The central

green corridor links neighbourhoods, while woodland belts and hedgerow-based routes reinforce local landscape patterns.

- Walkable Neighbourhood Structure – A compact, permeable layout that encourages walking and cycling, with homes located within a short distance of community facilities, open spaces and recreational routes.
- Village Heart & Community Facilities – A new district centre providing local services, community space and a GP surgery, complemented by sports pitches, allotments and play areas distributed across the site.
- New Places to Live and Thrive – Residential neighbourhoods arranged around green corridors and focal spaces, with a mix of house types and tenures integrated throughout.
- A Well-Connected Settlement – Two vehicular access points from Peckleton Lane and Leicester Lane, a primary tree-lined spine road capable of accommodating bus services and upgraded Public Rights of Way forming a coherent movement network.

An outline planning application has been submitted for the development.

The Panel's Comments

The Panel made the following comments and recommendations for your consideration:

The Design Approach

The work undertaken to date was well received, with the Panel recognising the strength of the comprehensive site analysis, the early engagement with the existing community, and the clear emphasis on landscape infrastructure both 'green' and 'blue' as a structuring element of the masterplan. The Design Team's focus on views, character and context from the outset has informed a genuinely strategic approach. The Design and Access Statement is a robust and well-considered document, and the Panel acknowledged the Design Team's efforts in developing a clear set of design principles, including the ambition for a walkable neighbourhood, strong connections to green infrastructure, and a transparent presentation of the design process leading to the Illustrative Framework Plan.

Creating A Well Connected Development

Creating a well-connected development is fundamental to ensuring Land South of Desford becomes a genuine extension of the village. The Panel stressed the recent development to the northwest demonstrates the risks of poor integration, and that this scheme must deliver a permeable, strongly linked neighbourhood with clear, direct connections into Desford and beyond. A development that encourages active travel, rather than simply accommodating it, will be key to reducing reliance on the private car and ensuring the new neighbourhood is fully integrated, accessible and part of Desford from the outset.

It is essential that residents can travel by sustainable modes, with the layout enabling significant internalisation and modal shift by making walking and cycling an attractive and convenient choice. This requires mapping actual connectivity routes, understanding the subtleties of the site's topography and existing movement patterns, and ensuring that proposed links respond directly to how people already move through the landscape. By analysing desire lines, gradients, existing PRoWs and the relationship between the site and key destinations particularly schools, the village centre and employment areas, the

movement strategy can deliver routes that feel natural, direct and intuitive. A clear understanding of these nuances will be critical to designing a network that genuinely encourages active travel and embeds sustainable movement into everyday life.

A new three-metre-wide bridge, connecting to Forest Rise and the centre of Desford, will provide an attractive pedestrian and cycle link. However, the Panel emphasised that this connection alone is not sufficient. Following on from the above, the development must actively explore additional opportunities to connect to the north, ensuring multiple, legible and convenient routes into the existing village. Further links whether through upgraded Public Rights of Way or new street-based connections will be essential to strengthen permeability, support active travel and ensure the new neighbourhood integrates seamlessly with Desford. A network of connections will be critical to achieving a well-connected and fully integrated development.

The movement strategy should protect and enhance the existing north–south Public Rights of Way, designing routes that are safe, legible and easy to navigate. These routes do not need to feel rural to their entire length; they can transition into more semi-urban and then more rural sections where appropriate, provided the overall alignment remains clear, direct and attractive for everyday walking.

Evidence / information is needed to demonstrate how pupils will walk and cycle to both the primary and secondary schools, ensuring that routes are direct, safe, attractive and suitable for all ages. This should include a detailed mapping of actual connectivity corridors, an understanding of existing desire lines, and an assessment of gradients. Equally important is showing how employees can reach the Caterpillar site to the west by sustainable modes, supported by clear pedestrian and cycle links. Consideration should also be given to the provision of a bus stop at the Caterpillar entrance to enable convenient access for both workers and residents, reinforcing the potential for public transport use.

Cycling and Cycle Parking

Cycling should be a defining feature of the development, with the layout and infrastructure enabling a place where choosing a bike for everyday movement is both practical and appealing. The Panel emphasised the need to evidence direct, safe and convenient cycling routes to key destinations both within and beyond the site, including Desford and other local facilities i.e. to the secondary school, demonstrating how residents can realistically cycle for daily needs. This should also include identifying what needs to happen / works to be undertaken (including outside of the site / red line boundary) to enable active travel routes to be provided to access the facilities / destinations. The Panel did not consider the Link Route requires a dedicated cycle lanes for the level of use; instead, direct, straight routes for both cycling and walking should be prioritised.

Cycle parking for homes must be accessible, convenient and integrated, avoiding sheds in rear gardens which are remote and instead providing secure, easy-to-reach storage that supports everyday / frequent use. A coherent approach to cycling which prioritising straight, legible routes and high-quality parking will help embed active travel into everyday life and reinforce the development's sustainability ambitions.

The Link Road

The Link Road, connecting Peckleton Lane to the west and Leicester Lane to the east, is a critical element of the scheme. The Panel emphasised that terminology matters: the route should be renamed to give it a

more appropriate identity that reflects the site's context and placemaking ambitions rather than a purely highways-driven function.

Clarification was provided at the meeting on the function of the Link Road which is a street / avenue and not as dual carriageway / bypass; this is positive. The Link Road must be designed as a street or avenue and this distinction should be reinforced through its spatial character, scale and landscape treatment. As the principal movement corridor within the development, the Link Road should be an attractive, character-defining feature which accommodates pedestrians, cyclists where appropriate, buses and cars. The Panel were clear that the Link Road must be conceived as a tool for place-making, shaping identity, supporting active travel and establishing a coherent, high-quality environment from the outset.

While the Panel recognise that the application is in outline, clear detailed design work is required at this stage to ensure the Link Road and its interfaces function as intended. The proposed 20mph speed limit is welcomed and must be supported by a fully developed approach to the three existing PRoWs, each of which must prioritise pedestrians over vehicles through surface treatment, crossing design and clear visual cues. The street should integrate green and blue infrastructure from the outset, with space reserved for street trees, swales and SuDS features that enhance legibility, create interest and establish a distinctive landscape character – one which unifies landscape. This early clarity will enable a functional, attractive and place-led street scene that supports walking, cycling and biodiversity while reinforcing the identity of the wider masterplan.

Enclosure will be essential to shaping the character of the Link Road, ensuring that buildings positively address the street and create a well-defined, legible street environment. The Link Route will be a quiet street, and the opportunity to integrate parking directly into this route should be actively pursued. Parking should form part of the structure / overall composition of the route. This approach will allow the Link Route to provide a residential street character while still accommodating parking which is discreet, well-considered and supportive of a people-focused environment.

A bus gate could be introduced at a future stage to manage movement through the development, restricting general traffic while maintaining essential access for buses, emergency vehicles and active travel. This approach would allow the street to function as a quieter, safer route. The bus gate should be an imaginative, flexible, place-led intervention—using surface materials and landscape to ensure it is integrated and not engineered, and capable of adapting i.e. accommodate changes in travel behaviour.

Strengthening the Gateways

The gateways into and within the site are critical thresholds that establish identity, signal arrival and connect the development to destinations beyond its boundaries. The Panel recommended a clear gateway strategy that defines the design approach for the two points of entry, recognising that their character varies on location and landscape context. The west gateway should read as a more urban point of arrival, with buildings addressing the street to create enclosure and a strong sense of entry. In contrast, the north-east gateway will have a distinctly landscape-led character, shaped by wetland and ecological features, boardwalks and open views while acknowledging that some hedgerow removal will be necessary to achieve the above. Across both gateways, the landscape and built structure will need to work together to strengthen legibility and create a context-specific arrival space.

Parking Strategy

A coherent parking strategy that reinforces active travel is essential to the success of the development. The Panel recommended providing a range of parking solutions, ensuring parking designed in a way that supports walkability, reduces car dominance and maintains high-quality streets and spaces. The Panel suggested exploring parking courts, where used, they should be designed with future flexibility in mind, enabling them to be repurposed or converted over time as travel behaviours shift and car dependency reduces. A varied, adaptable parking approach will help create a more resilient, sustainable neighbourhood while supporting active travel.

Street Design Guidance

The Panel highlighted Building for a Healthy Life (2026) and its companion document Streets for a Healthy Life (2022) as valuable design tools to support the design of the streets. These design tools provide clear guidance on walkability, street character, active travel, landscape integration and the creation of sociable, well-connected places and should be utilised in developing the proposals

Strengthening the Density

The Illustrative Framework Plan specifies three density bands: 40 dwellings per hectare in lower-sensitivity areas closest to the existing village, 35 dwellings per hectare in medium-sensitivity central neighbourhoods and 30 dwellings per hectare in higher-sensitivity areas along the southern and eastern rural edges.

The Panel noted that the densities currently envisaged appear low and emphasised the importance of making more efficient use of land to create a sustainable and sociable neighbourhood for example what would be the distance / time to walk from the southern edge into Desford - is it walkable?

The Panel recommended grounding the density strategy in a clear understanding of Desford's character. The village was observed during the site visit to have a relatively compact centre with clearly defined green spaces, and the strategy should examine how its edges behave, whether they feather out or maintain a stronger built form to ensure the proposals respond appropriately to local context.

Within the masterplan, the areas to south and east edge are currently identified at around 30 dwellings per hectare (dph). The Panel considered that these locations should accommodate higher densities to ensure land is used efficiently and to reinforce street structure and neighbourhood compactness. Increasing density in these areas would strengthen internalisation and support the long-term viability of local amenities. A clearer rationale is therefore required to explain why certain areas are set at 30 dph and to demonstrate where and how higher densities can be appropriately introduced to support placemaking, sustainability and long-term community needs.

The Design Team were encouraged to explore more compact typologies that define streets and spaces more clearly, shorten everyday travel distances and support walkable, cyclable patterns of movement. A compact development also enables greater internalisation, helping local amenities become more viable and accessible.

Landscape Strategy

The landscape led approach to the masterplan was well received. The Illustrative Framework Plan proposes a range of spaces combining natural and semi-natural green space, amenity greens, parks and gardens, a series of green corridors that structure the development and link neighbourhoods. Active recreational elements include sports pitches, play areas, a skate park.

The Landscape Strategy proposed the retention of the existing landscape features. The Panel noted that while the proposals currently include extensive areas of green space, it is important to test whether the amount is genuinely necessary or whether it risks diluting the clarity and performance of the landscape. Achieving the right critical mass of open space is fundamental to creating a coherent and well-functioning environment.

The landscape must be underpinned by clear performance criteria that articulate how each space will function, what the character of the spaces will be, how will the spaces connect to other spaces as part of a hierarchy of spaces for the development and how the spaces contribute to the wider development. This requires additional work, tightening and structuring the landscape framework so that every space has a defined role i.e. ecological, recreational, social or visual. A strong narrative for the green spaces is needed, setting out how they relate to one another, how they support movement and legibility, and how they reinforce the identity of the neighbourhoods, for example, how will the Linear Park be defined. This narrative should be captured within the Design Code to ensure consistency and deliverability.

The character and function of landscape spaces should draw from the local context. The Panel recommended undertaking a figure-ground study of Desford to demonstrate an understanding of the existing village spaces – how are they defined, enclosed and structured. Analysing the spatial qualities of Desford - its greens, verges, edges, boundaries and public spaces will provide valuable insight into how new spaces can be shaped in a way that is authentic and rooted in place. This contextual understanding should guide the scale, proportion, enclosure and treatment of landscape areas within the development, ensuring that they respond to local patterns while meeting current needs.

The existing landscape contains mature trees, including Oaks and Ash, which contribute significantly to the character of the site. The Ash trees specifically are likely to have a limited lifespan. The development presents an important opportunity to plan and plant for the future by introducing a new generation of legacy trees. Establishing landmark trees now will reinforce landscape structure over time and secure a robust, high-quality treescape for future residents. The Tree Strategy will need to balance the retention of valuable mature trees with a proactive approach to new planting, creating an enduring landscape that evolves as older specimens decline.

Hedgerows form an important component of the site's landscape structure, contributing to its character, enclosure and ecological function. During the site visit, the Panel noted that while the hedgerows are generally well managed, some are not particularly diverse, with particular sections of hedgerow offering limited ecological value. A hedgerow regulations assessment will be essential to identify which hedgerows are important culturally and environmentally, whereby those considered less significant sections could be removed or realigned without compromising landscape integrity. At the same time, there is a strong opportunity to enhance and expand the existing hedgerow network. Reviewing historic maps of Desford will help determine where historic hedgerow lines once existed and where reinstatement or extension

could positively contribute to biodiversity and landscape character. Strengthening the network through new planting and increased species diversity would create a more ecologically rich system. In some locations, hedgerows could be accompanied by ditches, reflecting traditional landscape patterns and helping to prevent hedgerow decline by improving drainage.

Blue Infrastructure / Water Management

Effective surface-water management is a fundamental component of delivering a successful and resilient development. The site presents an exceptional opportunity to create an integrated blue and green infrastructure network that supports place-making, biodiversity net gain (BNG), amenity, recreation and long-term flood attenuation. The strategy must ensure that water is both functional and visible, forming a clear narrative throughout the development and reinforcing its identity.

The Panel emphasised the importance of making blue infrastructure visible, illustrating the journey of water across the site. Water should be expressed through open channels, wetlands and swales rather than culverted wherever possible. This approach will strengthen landscape character and function, improve ecological value and create memorable, engaging spaces. The central watercourse running through the site should be open and celebrated as a landscape feature; only culvert where absolutely necessary.

Opportunities should be taken to enhance the northern watercourse, recognising land-ownership constraints but also addressing localised clearance issues where the watercourse has become constricted. Restoring and widening this feature will improve flow, habitat quality and visual amenity.

The northeast corner represents the wettest part of the site and experiences surface-water ponding. Rather than treating this as a constraint, the Panel identified it as a significant opportunity to create a wetland or permanent water feature. Water should be directed /cascaded towards this area, forming a downstream focal point that can accommodate play, boardwalks and ecological enhancement. This space has the potential to become a distinctive destination within the development and create a strong gateway into the site from the east.

The drainage strategy must combine both blue and green infrastructure to maximise amenity, ecological value and resilience across the development. Permanently wet features should be incorporated to provide year-round habitat and visual interest, ensuring that water remains a visible and celebrated part of the landscape. Alongside these, predominantly dry drainage features should be used to introduce seasonal variation and support a wider range of ecological communities, contributing to a richer, more diverse and resilient environment.

SuDS features must be designed to be shallow, safe and user-friendly, with gentle shelving that allows them to integrate safely and naturally into streets and open spaces. The Panel stressed that fencing SuDS represents a design failure, as it undermines their role within the public realm and diminishes their contribution to placemaking. Instead, SuDS should be treated as positive landscape elements that enhance character and accessibility.

Verges and swales should be used to animate streets, strengthen the street hierarchy and create clear connections between open spaces. These features will help embed water management within the

everyday experience of the development, reinforcing legibility and supporting a coherent blue-green network. The Panel drew attention to the opportunity the Link Road presents for green and blue infrastructure.

National SuDS guidance places increasing emphasis on rainwater re-use, and the Panel highlighted the need for this to be fully integrated into the strategy. The development should demonstrate where rainwater can be harvested and reused and provide clear evidence where reuse is not feasible. Bringing rainwater re-use to the forefront will support sustainability objectives.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The aspirations for Biodiversity Net Gain will be a key driver in shaping the proposals, with BNG developed in close conjunction with the blue and green infrastructure. As outlined above, significant opportunities exist within the blue infrastructure network, the hedgerow system and the tree strategy, all of which can contribute meaningfully to ecological enhancement. For example, the northern green boundary of the site and riparian corridor could be strengthened to provide a more diverse wildlife corridor, to form part of a local nature recovery network.

While studies have been undertaken including for Skylarks. Further understanding of existing wildlife on the site and within the wider area will be fundamental to establishing a strategic approach to BNG. The site's agricultural character means it currently attracts specific bird species, and the proposals must consider how these species can be retained and supported as part of the development. This requires identifying the habitats they rely on, understanding how these habitats will change, and determining what additional features or enhancements are needed to ensure their continued presence. Such information should be used to inform the design approach to BNG, ensuring that interventions are targeted, evidence-based and responsive to ecological needs.

This detailed understanding will also help identify where attention should be focused, both in terms of opportunities and constraints. Knowing what is present on-site, what is absent, and what could be introduced will support the Design Team to shape the BNG strategy. This includes determining where habitat creation is most appropriate, where enhancements will deliver the greatest ecological uplift, and where existing features must be protected or strengthened. By basing the BNG strategy in ecological evidence and aligning it with the blue and green strategy, the development can deliver a very valuable contribution to nature recovery.

The District Centre

A District Centre is proposed central to the development which will comprise a GP surgery and a shop. The Panel questioned the proposals from whether a shop and GP surgery can be defined as a District Centre - is this the correct terminology? What is the performance criteria, can the role of the centre work with and complement the existing facilities in the wider community and the centre of Desford? What facilities are needed strategically and what is missing in the area? Who will use it? Is it walkable and cyclable for the new and existing community? What and where are the connections both physically and visually, for example, is there a view of the Church Spire from the centre? What is the parking arrangement for the District Centre and could this be designed as a hard landscape space or courtyard which supports a range of uses as well as accommodating parking i.e. a square. How would you ensure the centre is animated? Does it need a relationship with the employment uses, including the Caterpillar

site to the west? Is it in the right place? Increasing the accessibility and strengthening the reach of the centre will add to its vibrancy and appeal. Further work was encouraged in developing options for the proposals for the centre to address the above – i.e. what is the physical and visual experience for those accessing from Desford, the south and southeast of the development.

Design Coding

The outline application establishes the overarching principles and key moves for the development, much of the material presented at this stage is necessarily flexible and indicative. To ensure the proposals evolve into a coherent and high-quality place, the design principles that underpin the outline application were supported by the Panel. These principles articulate the intended character of the development, setting out what the place will look and feel like and providing a clear narrative that guides future design decisions.

There was discussion on what stage the Design Code should be provided. The Panel appreciate that the scheme is for an outline application and recommend a Design Code be produced and submitted as part of that application. It is essential that the Design Code and its associated parameters plan are not treated as indicative documents. Instead, they must translate the agreed design principles into a definitive, enforceable framework that shapes the form, character and quality of the development. A clear vision, supported by a well-defined set of design principles and articulated character areas, will place the Design Team in a strong position to produce a comprehensive and concise Design Code i.e. typically a 40–50 page document which sets out precisely what must be done to achieve the vision. In producing a Design Code to enshrine ideas and in communicating and delivering the Illustrative masterplan, this should include matters such as land use, street hierarchy, parking, building density, building height, open spaces, landscape, drainage etc. This progression from outline principles to a detailed, mandatory code is critical to ensuring consistency, deliverability and a place-led outcome.

SUMMARY

The Panel thanked the design team for presenting the emerging proposals for Land South of Desford and acknowledged the constructive engagement from Emma Baumber and Matt Jedruch, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council officers, Suraj Dave and Richard Kelly, Leicestershire County Council.

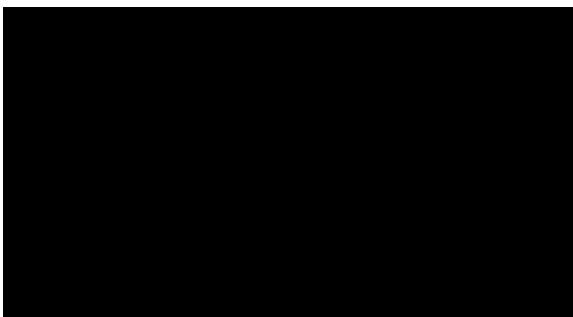
The site is recognised as having considerable potential, with its established hedgerow network, mature trees, varied topography, long views, and existing PROWs providing a strong foundation for a landscape-led and walkable village extension closely connected to Desford.

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review the scheme at this formative stage and commended the Design Team on the work undertaken to date, including the comprehensive site analysis, early community engagement, and the clear emphasis on green and blue infrastructure as structuring elements of the masterplan. The Design and Access Statement was considered robust, with the Panel commending the ambition for a walkable neighbourhood, strong connections to landscape, and a transparent design process leading to the Illustrative Framework Plan.

Further refinement is now required to ensure the proposals fully respond to context, deliver strong integration with Desford, and achieve the level of placemaking ambition for this important strategic site. To progress the project positively, the Panel advised the next stages should:

- Strengthen movement and connectivity, providing multiple direct links into Desford and clear evidence of safe, attractive walking and cycling routes to schools, the village centre and Caterpillar.
- Embed cycling and active travel, prioritising straight, legible routes and secure, accessible cycle parking.
- Redefine the Link Road as a place-making street, with enclosure, integrated SuDS, street trees and pedestrian-priority PRow crossings.
- Develop a clear gateway strategy that reflects the differing landscape and urban contexts of the west and east entrance points.
- Refine the parking approach to reduce car dominance and allow future flexibility.
- Increase and better justify densities, ensuring efficient land use and a compact, walkable neighbourhood aligned with Desford's settlement pattern.
- Strengthen the landscape framework, defining the role, character and performance of each space and establishing a coherent hierarchy.
- Enhance blue infrastructure, making water visible through wetlands, open channels and SuDS integrated into streets and open spaces.
- Base Biodiversity Net Gain on ecological evidence, aligning habitat creation with blue-green infrastructure and hedgerow/tree enhancement.
- Clarify the role and function of the District Centre, ensuring it is accessible, animated and appropriately scaled to community needs.
- Produce a comprehensive, enforceable Design Code at outline stage to secure quality across streets, density, landscape, drainage and character areas.

We trust that the feedback provided will prove to be of benefit to you and provide an opportunity for further discussions with the determining authority. We would be happy to give further design advice on the project and we will ensure that the composition of the Panel remains the same throughout any ongoing review.



Design Midlands Design Review adheres to Design Network's principles for design review as follows:

INDEPENDENT Operates free from vested interest. Design Review is conducted by people who are separate from the scheme promoter and decision-maker, ensuring impartiality and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

EXPERT Conducted by leading practitioners and thought leaders. Design Review Panels are comprised of members who are recognised regionally, nationally and internationally for their expertise, innovation and best practice.

COLLABORATIVE Promotes shared aspirations for good design. Design Review enables a constructive dialogue, and is pragmatic, and solution focused, working with both the planning authority and applicant teams for public benefit.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY Draws on the combined perspectives of built and natural environment experts. Design Review Panels include expertise in urban design, architecture, sustainability and the climate emergency, planning, landscape architecture, ecology, engineering, development economics, social inclusion, active travel and heritage.

LOCAL Rooted in essential local knowledge and understanding. Design Review Panels bring an in-depth understanding of local context and planning policy, and offer a site visit to fully appreciate context.

REPRESENTATIVE & INCLUSIVE Reflective of the communities the Panels serve. Design Review Panels are comprised of the best established and emerging practitioners, recruited through an open and transparent process, to ensure diversity of lived experience.

ALLIED & TIMELY Embedded early in planning processes. Informed by the local policy context, Design Review Panel feedback supports efficient design development and informed decision-making.

CONSISTENT & ACCOUNTABLE Ensures consistent delivery standards and stakeholder management. High-quality Design Review Reports provide a clear and concise set of recommendations and actions for improvement.

REGULARLY EVALUATED Seeks constant feedback to inform improvement. Processes and panellists are reviewed and refreshed annually to build consistent best practice across England

Appendix 1

Policy PS12 - Strategic Site: Land South of Desford, Desford Policy PS12 – Strategic Site DES001

Land South of Desford, Desford Land South of Desford, as identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for a comprehensive residential and community facilities led development comprising of a minimum of 550 homes, all of which are expected to be delivered within the plan period. Development will be expected to deliver:

- a) At least 20% on-site affordable housing, in accordance with Policy HH02;
- b) At least 5% of plots for dwellings for self-build and custom housebuilding, as part of an appropriate mix of dwellings, in accordance with Policy HH08;
- c) Appropriate active travel, cycling, public transport, and highways infrastructure, including a road link through the development between Peckleton Lane and Leicester Lane;
- d) Appropriate network capacity upgrades, as required, including water, electric, gas, and wastewater, in alignment with development phasing;
- e) Proportionate measures in Areas that Could Become of particular importance for biodiversity and wider environmental benefits (ACBs), as identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, where possible and relevant;
- f) Contributions to primary and secondary school, post-16, and primary and secondary SEND capacity;
- g) Contributions to waste facilities, where required;
- h) Provision for waste and recycling storage and collection in accordance with Policy HPD07;
- i) Enhancement and/or extension to existing healthcare infrastructure;
- j) Further infrastructure improvements, mitigation and financial contributions as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Schedule, in accordance with Policy IU01;
- k) Provision of a district centre to meet demonstrated community needs, including: i. Improved healthcare facilities; and ii. A central park and greenspace, allotments/community orchards; with new recreational routes and
- l) Provision of outdoor sports facilities, including playing pitches and associated ancillary facilities, in accordance with the most up-to-date Playing Pitch Strategy, its Action Plan and Policy LST04, and demonstrated through a Sports and Leisure Feasibility Study. Provision should be based on the scale and type of development, informed by Sport England guidance, and delivered on-site or off-site where robustly justified, with appropriate changing and ancillary facilities secured;
- m) A high-quality and sensitively designed site, in line with HPD01 and HPD02, which should, unless robustly justified: i. establish distinct character areas; ii. be informed by the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study, as per Policy NE05, and aim for higher density residential development adjoining the existing built form of Desford, and lower density to the south and east to respond to the rural edge setting; and iii. ensure that all development respects the features and characteristics of the local area, in accordance with Policy NE05; iv. Incorporate a landscaped green buffer to the south of the site to protect and enhance the southern setting of the village.
- n) Appropriate mitigation and opportunities integrated for flood risk management, in accordance with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), Policy ER06 and Policy ER07;
- o) Minimised or avoided impacts upon the designated heritage assets Desford Conservation Area by considering the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures identified within the Heritage Impact Assessment. These measures include softening edges to both roads on the west and east of the

allocation to retain a sense of rurality on the approach to Desford village and the Conservation Area; To inform the development, the following will be required:

p) A site-specific Transport Assessment addressing the full transport corridor, mitigation measures, and the provision of active and sustainable travel, in accordance with Policies HPD03 and IU04;

q) A site-wide Framework Masterplan, site-wide Design Code and associated parameter plans shall be submitted as part of any relevant planning application in accordance with Policies HPD01 and HPD02; and

r) An appropriate archaeological investigation - commencing with a desk-based assessment - to identify the presence and significance of any previously unknown archaeological remains across the site.

Appropriate mitigation measures shall be secured, which may include avoidance and preservation in situ, further investigation, or recording, proportionate to the significance of any remains identified.