

Planning Application 25/00931/FUL

Redevelopment of a logistics park for storage and distribution (Class B8), general industry (Class B2), ancillary office space (Class E) and associated infrastructure at Cliffe Hill Farm Little Shaw Lane Markfield Leicestershire LE67 9PP

Please accept this document as an **objection** to the above development proposal.

This document seeks to set out reasons as to why this development fails on a number of the sustainability criteria, with both real examples and in relation to national and local planning policies.

Under Chapter 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, **sustainable development** is defined as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

This is based on the Brundtland definition, but in planning it is applied through three interdependent objectives.

1. Environmental

Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment by:

- **Minimising pollution and waste**

- Residents have raised concerns regarding constant noise, light and air pollution created by a 24/7 logistics operation
- There is a high pollution risk to the Quorn Brook catchment which could affect red data book species, Annex II species of the EU Habitat Directive, such as bullhead and otter, and the habitats it runs through, including ancient grass lands and woodland.

- **Protecting biodiversity, habitats, and landscape character**

- The proposed site lies within a highly sensitive and visible area and is a gateway site into Charnwood Forest. The proposal will see the loss of an existing area of ecological significance with hedges, trees and established habitats removed

The site is in an elevated position, and the development would create a significant impact on the setting of Charnwood Forest. Proposed landscaping will not adequately hide the units as currently planned.

- These plans do not meet the 10% biodiversity target and Charnwood Biodiversity experts have stated they believe balancing the requirements for tree planting as well as those for the grassland will be difficult to achieve, and as such, proposed compensation measures highly unlikely to succeed.
 - Any planting would take many years to mature and may not survive, meaning harm would be immediate and long-lasting. Young saplings cannot compensate for the loss of mature trees and established habitats. Mitigation must deliver immediate environmental equivalence, including the retention of mature trees and planting of mature or semi-mature replacements.
 - Historically this area has been kept as a dark zone to protect habitat. 24 hr lighting of both the site and new road junctions will disrupt bat commuting routes, deter nocturnal mammals and alter insect behaviour and food chains.
 - Higher volumes of traffic on local roads are likely to increase mortality rates for hedgehogs, badgers, amphibians, bats, foxes and nocturnal birds such as barn owls.
- **Using land efficiently (especially brownfield)**
 - The land to the north and south of Cottage Lane are recognised as a historic Local Wildlife Site and can be properly considered locally important. This is an inappropriate site for such a development when there are more suitable sites available.
 - **Addressing climate change, flood risk, and resource use**
 - Residents have reported existing issues with flooding to the LLA, at Altar Stones (from M1 ditches) and along Priory Lane from Whitwick Road. A 28-hectare development will only exacerbate these issues with surface water planned to feed into existing drains.

In planning terms: development should avoid environmental harm and ideally deliver net environmental gain. **This proposal does not meet this requirement.**

2. Social

Supporting healthy, inclusive communities by:

- **Ensuring access to services, open space, and green infrastructure**
 - The site is separated from Markfield by the A50 dual carriageway on J22 M1. Access to the local Coop by foot is a mile (25 mins from the site) and the Post Office 1.3 miles (30 mins). The site is proposed to operate 24/7, however, local services are shut by 10pm. The proposal does not include adequate on-site facilities for staff.
- **Protecting amenity (noise, light, traffic, air quality)**

- This development would cause lasting harm to the mental health and wellbeing of the local community. The loss of mature trees and natural landscapes removes an essential source of calm and restoration for residents and cannot be mitigated by future planting.
- 24/7 operation and additional traffic volume will create constant noise, light and air pollution for local residents, fundamentally changing the character of the area. These impacts would be immediate and continuous.
- **Supporting wellbeing and safety**
 - This development breaches Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (the Right to Respect for private and family life and home), national policies and the Council's Public Health duties, for those residents immediately adjacent to the site.
 - There has been insufficient consideration given to the cumulative traffic volume impacts of all the planned developments in the area and narrow local lanes are already barely passable by two cars.
 - The proposed site of a Toucan crossing so close to J22 M1 is dangerous and could result in fatalities.

In planning terms: development should meet genuine local needs without harming quality of life. **This proposal does not meet this requirement.**

3. Economic

Supporting a strong and competitive economy by:

- **Providing employment opportunities**
 - Although the proposed development claims to provide 1000 jobs, it is noted that the developer boasts in their literature that Leicestershire salaries are 12% cheaper. Jobs will be largely unskilled, possibly zero-hour contracts. Recent Amazon news regarding the shedding of jobs with increased use of AI is only likely to become a more common issue – are these jobs really sustainable?
- **Supporting local businesses**
 - This proposal will do the opposite. Existing local businesses are linked to the countryside/tourism, for example, two Airbnb properties, an Alpaca Sanctuary connected to work with SEND children, Shuttlewood Clarke Foundation charity etc.
 - UNESCO status would bring far more long term, sustainable income and employment and may be jeopardised if this development is approved.
- **Ensuring development is viable and appropriately located**
 - There is no evidence provided for proof of a real need for this space with several existing empty warehouses locally and an acknowledgement of low demand currently in the county.
 - This site is totally inappropriate, forming part of the Ulverscroft landscape, distinctive to Charnwood Forest. There are other, more suitable sites elsewhere which should be exploited.

- **Reducing unsustainable commuting patterns**

- The site is divorced from the nearest settlement. A bus service runs hourly at best, from Leicester - Coalville/Swadlincote.
- The dual carriageway and M1 make cycling dangerous beyond Markfield.
- Walking distances to the nearest shops are such that there will inevitably be an increase in car journeys.

In planning terms: development should be appropriately located so economic benefits are not outweighed by social or environmental costs. **This proposal does not meet this requirement.**

The submitted Planning Statement for the proposed B2/B8 industrial and logistics development at Cliffe Hill Farm, Junction 22 of the M1, fails to adequately demonstrate that the proposal constitutes sustainable development when assessed against national and local planning policy.

Conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF 2024 establishes that sustainable development must achieve economic, social and environmental objectives in a mutually supportive way. The Planning Statement places disproportionate weight on economic benefits and strategic road accessibility, whilst providing limited and largely qualitative evidence in relation to environmental sustainability. This imbalance is contrary to the core sustainability principle set out in national policy.

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, but this does not override the requirement that adverse environmental impacts must not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The proposal involves the development of approximately 28 hectares of greenfield agricultural land in open countryside for a large-scale logistics park, which inherently carries significant environmental impacts that are not robustly assessed in sustainability terms.

Paragraphs 85–87 of the NPPF support economic growth but require planning decisions to recognise the locational requirements of storage and distribution uses alongside sustainable transport and decarbonisation objectives. The Planning Statement explicitly justifies the site primarily due to its proximity to the M1 and strategic road network, which reinforces HGV and car dependency rather than promoting genuinely sustainable transport patterns. This is inconsistent with the wider objectives of reducing transport emissions and supporting sustainable travel.

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF requires developments to give priority to sustainable transport modes and ensure that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are maximised. While the document references a nearby bus stop and internal pedestrian routes, the nature, scale and out-of-settlement location of the development means the scheme will be predominantly car and freight-dependent. The Planning Statement does not provide compelling evidence that sustainable transport will realistically be the primary mode of access for employees or visitors.

Chapter 15 of the NPPF (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), notably paragraph 187, emphasises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the need to minimise impacts on the natural environment and secure net environmental gains. The proposal results in the permanent urbanisation of open countryside and agricultural land, and the mitigation measures outlined (tree planting, attenuation ponds and landscaping) do not amount to a clear net environmental gain in sustainability terms.

Conflict with Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy (2009)

Core Strategy Spatial Objective 1 requires development to provide “sufficient, sustainably located” land. The application site lies outside the Markfield settlement boundary and within open countryside, which raises fundamental concerns about whether the location can reasonably be described as sustainably located, particularly given its reliance on road-based access.

Policy 21 (National Forest) and Policy 22 (Charnwood Forest) require development to respect the character, setting and landscape of the countryside and be appropriately related to its context. The Planning Statement downplays landscape value due to proximity to the motorway, yet the development introduces large-scale industrial buildings and extensive infrastructure into a rural landscape character area, which conflicts with the requirement to protect landscape character and environmental quality.

Conflict with Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016)

Policy DM4 (Safeguarding the Countryside) states that development in the countryside will only be acceptable where it is sustainable and does not adversely affect the intrinsic value, open character and landscape character of the countryside. The Planning Statement acknowledges that the site is greenfield agricultural land outside the settlement boundary yet does not convincingly demonstrate that the environmental impacts of a major logistics park in this location are sustainable or that harm to countryside character is avoided.

Policy DM20 (Provision of Employment Sites) supports employment development outside allocated sites only where sequentially preferable locations (such as within settlement boundaries, previously developed land, or adjacent to existing employment areas) are not suitable. The Planning Statement relies heavily on market demand and strategic road access but does not provide a robust sequential sustainability assessment demonstrating why more sustainable or previously developed locations cannot accommodate the proposed floorspace.

Policy DM6 (Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest) requires major development to deliver genuine biodiversity enhancements and ecological networks. While a Biodiversity Net Gain report is referenced, the Planning Statement frames ecological measures primarily as mitigation for development impacts rather than as integral sustainability-led design.

Policy DM17 (Highways and Transportation) requires development to make the best use of sustainable transport and ensure safe and convenient access by walking, cycling and public transport. Given the scale of B2/B8 uses and the site's out-of-settlement location, the scheme is likely to generate significant car and HGV movements, which undermines compliance with the intent of this policy.

Conflict with the Markfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

Policy M2 requires development to be sensitive to its landscape setting and to retain and enhance the distinctive qualities of the landscape character area. The introduction of large-scale warehousing, service yards, lighting columns and extensive hardstanding represents a substantial urbanising form of development that is not inherently landscape-led in sustainability terms.

Policy M3 requires development to avoid significant harm to key Green Infrastructure networks and to mitigate and compensate where harm is unavoidable. The Planning Statement presents landscaping and habitat creation as compensatory measures, but these do not negate the permanent loss of greenfield land and rural character.

Lack of Robust Climate and Environmental Sustainability Evidence

The Planning Statement does not include quantified carbon assessments, operational energy modelling, or clear commitments to low-carbon construction, renewable energy generation, or net-zero targets. This omission is significant given the NPPF's emphasis on climate change mitigation and the need for developments to support the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Conclusion

When assessed against the NPPF, the Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy, the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, and the Markfield Neighbourhood Plan, the Planning Statement fails to demonstrate that the proposal represents sustainable development. The scheme relies heavily on strategic highway accessibility, promotes a transport-intensive land use on a greenfield countryside site, and provides insufficient evidence of environmental sustainability, climate mitigation, and genuinely sustainable transport.

Accordingly, the development does not adequately meet the sustainability requirements of national and local planning policy and should be afforded limited weight in the overall planning balance.

Yours sincerely,

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For and on behalf of CPRE Leicestershire