



MATTER 9

RESPONSES OF LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL ("LTC")

ISSUE 1

Generally

1. There is an inconsistency between policy SP6 District Open Land (Plan p 51) and NPPF (ed. 12.03.12) paragraphs 76 – 78 Local Green Space.
2. DOL purports to be LGS (paragraph 2.144), but:
 - (a) only ex-Green Belt land is designated as DOL¹, the justification being to prevent the alteration of the Green Belt boundary resulting in "holes" in the Green Belt; and
 - (b) the definition or characteristics of DOL (SP6B) are not consistent with those of LGS (NPPF paragraph 77), in particular the statement in the policy itself that "*it is not necessary for each of these characteristics [of DOL] to be present*" is inconsistent with NPPF paragraph 77 that all the criteria there set out should be present.
3. Policy SP6B should accurately reflect NPPF paragraph 77.² Thereafter, a proper inquiry should be made as to which areas are suitable to qualify as LGS, rather than simply allocating small areas of ex-Green Belt land. The policies map should show Jessel Green as LGS (or DOL if that nomenclature is to be retained) since Jessel Green complies with all the requirements of paragraph 77 of NPPF.

¹ There are only three small areas of DOL identified on the Policies map – THOR R2, CHIG R9 and a parcel in North Weald: see also p. 229 of the Plan.

² See paragraphs 99 – 101 of the latest edition of the NPPF. There is little material difference between the 2012 and the latest version as regards LGS.

Inspector's Questions

4. Q1: It appears to have been the intention of the draftsman precisely to equate DOL with LGS. However, the definition or characteristics of DOL are not consistent with those of LGS: see above. It would be preferable to use LGS terminology.

5. It is far from clear whether the DOL designations fulfil the criteria found in paragraphs 76-77 of the NPPF.

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