

Broxtowe Part 2 Local Plan Examination Hearing Statements

Matter 11 Greenbelt

Teresa Needham representing the Stapleford neighbourhood plan forum.

The Stapleford neighbourhood plan is in disagreement with the part two local plan as we do not agree with the land to the west of Coventry lane being removed from greenbelt for a housing development. In developing the Neighbourhood plan we followed the principles set out in part one but found that the methodology used to review the greenbelt was flawed. Our reasons are as follows.

The 5 basic purposes of Green Belts are:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In addition to these purposes of including land in Green Belts, Planning Policy Guidance: Green Belts (PPG2) which survived until 2012 recognised that Green Belts had a role to play in achieving certain other objectives These are now widely accepted, and can be said to include the following:

- providing individuals with opportunities for recreation and engaging in outdoor sport close to urban areas (i.e. not including large developments like football stadia);
- giving protection to farmland;
- assisting nature conservation by defending habitats and wildlife corridors;
- Protecting the individual and unique character of villages by saving them from absorption into cities.
- Improving the health of urban populations by safeguarding air quality (as the Green Belt is often referred to as a City's "green lungs") and by providing for healthy physical exercise in the countryside.

Although these have been superseded by the NPPF many of these issues have been included either in the sustainability appraisal or elsewhere in the part 2 local plan for Broxtowe. The proposed housing development West of Coventry lane is currently in greenbelt. This area of greenbelt not only serves most of the 5 basic principles but also has a much greater value to the local community in fulfilling the additional roles.

Being physically active, engaging with the natural world, having supportive social networks, appreciating or participation in the arts and feeling secure are all factors which contribute to health and wellbeing and can be directly influenced by the environment and facilities available within the neighbourhood.

The Hemlock Trail Association (HTA) is just one group who benefit from this area of greenbelt. It is a collective of local mountain bikers who have been working with Broxtowe Borough Council to maintain a small selection of off road mountain bike trails on Stapleford Hill. After a 500 person petition Broxtowe Borough Council suggested they needed a recognisable group in order to allow them to carry on biking at Hemlock Stone. A large part of what they do involves keeping the hill clean by carrying out regular litter picks to insure it is litter free. They aim to work with the council to protect the woodland by planting seeds on old trails to help nature reclaim areas no longer in use. This community has grown and people from all over the county come to enjoy what Hemlock Stone has to offer. 1,296 people follow this group on Facebook. HTA was also featured on Sports week on Notts TV highlighting the importance of this site to the mountain biking community and advocating Broxtowe Borough Council for working together to create this facility. The group has also captured rides using drone footage and head cameras along with convention filming to stunning effect.

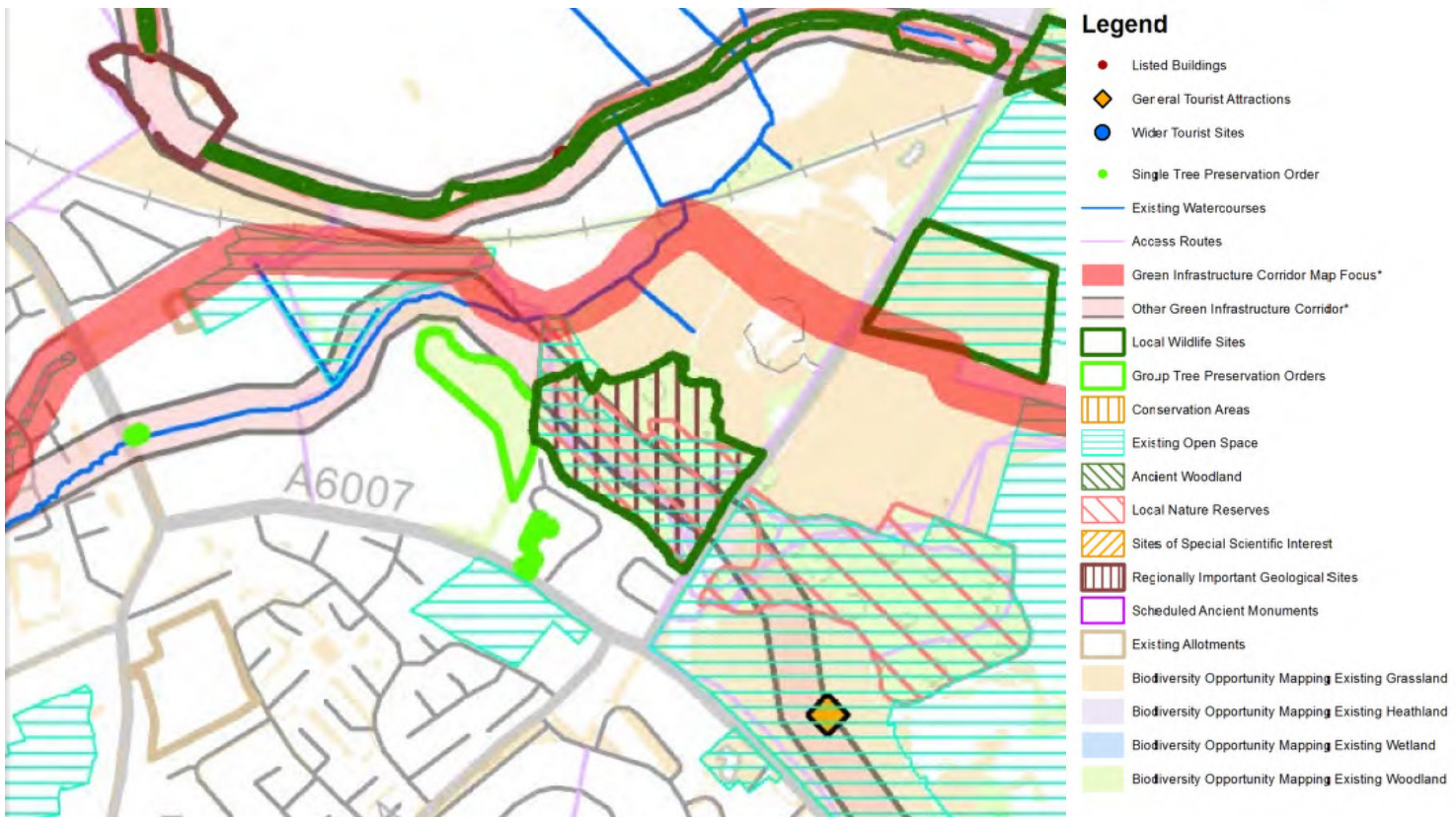
Another group who benefit are walker and ramblers. Many of Stapleford's boundaries are walkable by existing footpaths which cross areas of woodland, farmland canal paths and parks. The topography of Stapleford is such that there are viewpoints from Stapleford Hill, which look out over greenbelt land. This also includes the Robin Hood Way long distance footpath which passes through the yet to be developed Fields Farm site and Stapleford Hill. The original route of 84 miles from Nottingham Castle

to Edwinstowe Church was opened in 1985 with the intention of linking all the places in Nottinghamshire with connections to the legend of Robin Hood. The Way has remained largely unchanged and has been enjoyed by ramblers from in and outside Nottinghamshire.

Only 12% of England is covered by forests making air quality and suitable wildlife habitat highly problematic. As can be seen from the aerial image below, this section of greenbelt has much tree cover providing a physical barrier between urban areas and the countryside and potentially improving air quality in urban areas around. Much of the tree cover in the area is mixed deciduous containing mature Oak trees.



Unsurprisingly this area has as two secondary wildlife corridors passing through it as identified in Broxtowe Borough council's green infrastructure policy (see map below). Boundary brook forms part of a wildlife corridor along the boundary between this site and the Fields Farm development. There is a serious threat to this wildlife corridor as the Stapleford neighbourhood plan had suggested habitat enhancement on the Coventry lane site to mitigate the effects of the field Farm development. Natural England recommend a minimum 30m width to a wildlife corridor but a 50m corridor would be better suited to protect amphibians, reptiles and birds of prey which could utilise this waterway corridor. Additionally a mature Oak tree can have a canopy 25-30m across and provide a home for up to 2500 different species so 50m would be required to accommodate trees reaching maturity. A second wildlife corridor is shown passing through the wooded Stapleford hill open assess land which is to be removed from Greenbelt. If this site is developed this will have much more than a moderate impact on habitat and wildlife.



Some areas of green belt land in Broxtowe have much less value for the environment and urban population such as land that is used for intensive agriculture. These sites do not provide recreational opportunities nor significantly have diverse habitat for wildlife yet these sites not been put forward for development. I therefore conclude that the methodology used by Broxtowe Borough Council to review the greenbelt is flawed and that this site should remain in the green belt.