



Our Ref: JS/MC

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21st May 2024

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Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Response to Regulation 18 Consultation – Local plan to 2040 – Draft Policy R18 – Land at Church Farm, Hoath**

I am writing on behalf of the landowner, St Nicholas Court Farms Limited, to support the residential allocation proposed in Emerging Draft Policy R18, land at Church Farm, Hoath.

The Draft Policy includes a requirement to provide 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in line with Policy DS21. The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) promotes 'securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'. It is noted that the Framework does not refer to any set percentage level of BNG provision for sites. This has been addressed through separate BNG guidance which came into force on 12<sup>th</sup> February for larger sites and 2<sup>nd</sup> April for small sites and is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. With some exceptions, development sites must now deliver a 10% BNG for each site to provide a better quality natural habitat than there was on the site before the development.

The proposed Draft Policy R18 goes far beyond this requirement, seeking double the required provision of 10% and seeks instead a 20% BNG provision. As we get to understand the requirements and implications of BNG provision, going far beyond the National requirement for BNG provision will affect the sites ability to be developed, given the other policy requirements including provision of a local shopping and community facility on the site as well as usual contributions to services such as education and healthcare and Open Space provision. Some Open Space provision may double as BNG provision, depending on habitat types and requirements for each individual site, however this should not be assumed until the BNG Matrix has been completed.

It is requested that the Policy wording be altered to reduce the BNG requirement on site to 10% in accordance with National BNG Legislation requirements.

Kind regards

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