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March 3rd 2011

RE: Protecting Green Spaces- the views of Garendon Park & Countryside Protection Group (GPCPG)

The GPCPG submit the following comments on the green space policy.

Background -Securing the Garendon Estate & Listed Park for Future Generations

The GPCPG have been campaigning for many years to protect the Garendon green wedge from successive development scenarios. During this current campaign and because of decades of encroachment, we have concluded that it is necessary to secure protection of the ENTIRE estate as a permanent green space for future generations in the locality.

The Garendon Estate, including the Listed Park & Garden, is a green wedge central to the communities of Shepshed, Hathern and Loughborough. Highly valued by many local people as a place of tranquillity, of solitude easily accessible, from the doorstep, between busy towns. Its loss would not be in the interest of sustainability, as local people would then need to travel to experience open space of comparable recreational quality (for example the Outwoods), which is readily accessible to communities South east of Loughborough, but not within convenient walking distance of West of Loughborough, Shepshed and would result in increased pressure on those areas.

The Garendon green wedge deserves full protection not only for its historical and archaeological importance, but also for its community and biodiversity value.

Biodiversity

Wildlife Corridors along which many rare and protected species, move, breed and feed.

Wildlife Habitats include a wealth of plants, old and new woodlands long established hedgerows and field margins. Blackbrook and tributary streams, ditches, and bank sides. Established fallow/set aside fields. Lakes and ponds all support a rich variety of breeding and visiting wildlife a number of which are protected from interference.

Public Access, Rights of way—Traffic free environment and pathways for horse rider, walkers and cyclists that meander through the farmland from the doorstep of Shepshed, Hathern and Loughborough residents.

Garendon Heritage Listings - has 14 listed buildings ranging from Grade I, Grade II* to Grade II all of national and local importance. This is heritage on our doorstep!

Agricultural Land- This is important in all the above and to the future of food production.

To summarise the Garendon Green Wedge Provides

- Landscape value
- Natural value
- Recreational value
- Community value
- Historical value
- Heritage value
- Food Production, local and global commodity value

This unique area is of particular importance and deserves your protection under the Coalitions Government policy 'to protect green spaces/wedges' that provides a stronger voice for local communities.

Please find enclosed map (outlined), DVD of area and public rights of way starting from Shepshed.

Yours Sincerely

The Garendon Park & Countryside Protection Group

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