

P19-2768

14th June 2023

Planning Policy
Charnwood Borough Council
Council Offices
Southfield Road
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 2TN

Dear Sir/Madam

Cossington Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Examination (Regulation 16) Consultation

This representation is submitted by Pegasus Group on behalf of Carbide Properties Ltd (trading as Tungsten Properties), in response to the Pre-Examination Draft Cossington Neighbourhood Plan Consultation.

Tungsten Properties are a Leicestershire based employment land developer with an interest in land adjoining Charnwood Edge Business Park, Syston Road, within the Parish of Cossington and Neighbourhood Plan area. The response below sets out our client's comments on Draft Policy BE2: Support for New Business and Employment.

Draft Policy BE1: Support for Existing Business and Employment Opportunities

We note that the Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan, in the supporting text for Draft Policy BE1: Support for Existing Business and Employment Opportunities, highlights Charnwood Edge Business Park as providing employment opportunities within the Parish. This is supported. The business park lies to the south east of Cossington village, within the Neighbourhood Plan area and is a key employment area within the parish and the wider Borough.

We also note that the Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan supports the continued success of the business park, with a strong presumption against the loss of commercial premises or land that currently provides employment or future potential employment opportunities in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is also supported.

This policy approach is aligned well with the Charnwood Local Plan Saved Policy E/7 Control of Employment Uses in Primarily Employment Area which identifies Charnwood Edge Business Park as a primary employment area for business and industrial uses. It is also well aligned with the new emerging Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Draft Policy E2: Existing Good Quality Employment Sites which safeguards this site.

Draft Policy BE2: Support for New Business and Employment.

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Draft Policy BE2: Support for New Business and Employment sets out requirements for additional employment opportunities to be supported in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The proposed policy is not supported in its current form as it is inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Section 6 of the Framework states that planning policies:

'should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt with significant weight placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.' (paragraph 81).

It goes on to set out that planning policies should:

'be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.' (paragraph 82).

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan, whilst taking account of new working practices, is not flexible enough to support economic growth or respond to the current significant changes in economic circumstances arising from the pandemic, Brexit and the war in Ukraine. Draft Policy BE2 can, however, be made compatible with Section 6 of the Framework with some small changes to the proposed wording of the policy set out below.

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan states that *'there are few employment opportunities in Cossington currently and it felt important for the community to maintain the opportunities currently available and further grow employment opportunities'*. The proposed amendments to Draft Policy BE2 below will ensure the policy is not too restrictive to allow for this to happen over the plan period.

It is suggested that Draft Policy BE2 is amended to state that new employment development will be required to fall within the settlement boundary of Cossington village **or within or adjoining existing employment areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area**, unless it relates to small scale leisure or tourism activities, or other forms of commercial/employment related development appropriate to a countryside location.

As currently drafted the policy will restrict further growth of employment opportunities to those within the settlement boundary of Cossington. This is likely to provide very limited opportunities and fails to recognise the role of employment areas outside but closely associated with the settlement, which provide local employment.

The remaining bullet points within the policy and the Local Plan policies will ensure any new development related to the existing employment areas is appropriate for the area and protects the character of the village.

The Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan notes that that new employment initiatives can help to boost and diversify the local economy and provide more local employment opportunities. The



proposed changes above will ensure the Neighbourhood Plan supports this whilst ensuring that new employment is sensitive to the character of the Parish and mitigates against any harmful impacts.

I would be happy to discuss the proposed changes and intentions of our clients in relation to their land interests adjoining Charnwood Edge with the Neighbourhood Plan Group if this would be welcomed.

Yours sincerely,

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Enc.