

Inspectors Housden and Baugh-Jones  
c/o Ian Kemp

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Date: 7 March 2022

Dear Inspector Housden and Inspector Baugh-Jones,

### **Charnwood Local Plan Examination**

Thank you for your letter 1 March 2022 in which you sought to follow up on a variety of preliminary matters from the Council's earlier response. The Council's response to your questions is set out below.

#### Main Modifications

The Council confirms that the earlier letter, dated 21 February 2022, is the formal request to you to recommend main modifications as per Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

#### Five Year Land Supply

In terms of the date for the submission of the site proformas, updated trajectory and site-specific Statements of Common Ground the Council anticipates that these will be available by 29 April 2022. Some of the items listed may be ready in advance of this date, but as all are inter-connected in terms of providing a housing supply update, our objective is to submit them to you simultaneously.

#### Statement of Common Ground on Housing and Employment Needs (SCG-1)

Following consultation with Joint Strategic Planning Manager for Leicester & Leicestershire, the Council anticipates that SCG1 will be completed Summer 2022. Upon its completion it will need to be ratified by individual authorities. Work is ongoing to map out the governance processes for individual boroughs and districts to give a more precise date for overall completion of SCG1.



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Also attached is a letter from the Joint Strategic Planning Manager for the Leicester & Leicestershire authorities. This confirms the response sent by Charnwood Borough Council is the latest position on timing, scope and working arrangements for the Statement of Common Ground on Housing and Employment Needs (SCG1).

Progress of the Examination

The Council notes the contents of your letter, and we will continue to liaise with you via Mr Kemp to finalise the arrangements for the hearing sessions, including the venue. We also note the Inspectors' expressed preference for facilitating virtual participation where necessary but running such sessions separately rather than in a hybrid set up. The Council confirms that it is prepared to proceed on this basis.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Bennett', written in a cursive style.

Richard Bennett  
Head of Planning and Regeneration

Inspectors Housden and Baugh-Jones  
c/o Ian Kemp

Telephone: 07966 991 950  
[Robert.Thornhill@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.Thornhill@nwleicestershire.gov.uk)

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Dear Inspector Housden and Inspector Baugh-Jones,

**Exam 1 Inspectors Preliminary Matters Letter to Council 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022**

I write to you regarding the above letter that was addressed to Charnwood Borough Council, specifically in relation to the matter relating to the Statement of Common Ground on Housing and Employment Needs (SCG1).

In my role as Joint Strategic Planning Manager, I manage strategic planning projects on behalf of the Leicester & Leicestershire authorities. I can confirm the response below sent by Charnwood Borough Council in their response to you is the latest position on timing, scope and working arrangements for the Statement of Common Ground on Housing and Employment Needs (SCG1).

**Statement of Common Ground Evidence**

Overview

Regarding work streams listed below, contracts have been awarded and work commenced in the Spring of 2021. The commissioning authorities are Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and the 7 Leicestershire District and Borough authorities.

- Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA)
- Strategic Growth Options and Constraints Mapping
- Strategic Transport Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal

The HENA and the Sustainability Appraisal are the key pieces of evidence that will inform the Statement of Common Ground apportioning Leicester's unmet need to 2036. The Strategic Transport Assessment, Strategic Growth Options and Constraints Mapping take a longer-term perspective that will inform the next steps for our Strategic Growth Plan to 2050.

Timescales

The HENA and Sustainability Appraisal will be completed by May 2022 and will be used to inform a Statement of Common Ground apportioning Leicester's unmet need to 2036.

This work has been prioritised so we can complete the Statement of Common Ground as soon as possible.

The Strategic Transport Assessment and Strategic Growth Options and Constraints Mapping are at a slightly earlier stage of preparation and the intention is to complete this work in the summer. At this stage, it is estimated that it will be available during June/July 2022. As Joint Strategic Growth Manger I will, through Charnwood Borough Council endeavour to keep you up-dated as the work continues to progress and the timescales become clearer.

### Scope of Work

The scope of the work for each piece of evidence is set out below:

The contract for the **Housing and Economic Needs Assessment** (HENA) was awarded to ICENI Projects Limited. The scope of the HENA is:

- to assess whether the Housing Market Area (HMA) and Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) are still fit for purpose.
- to provide an evidence based, policy compliant assessment of the future economic needs of Leicester & Leicestershire and the requirement for employment land and premises to 2050
- To provide up to date housing mix, type and affordability evidence that updates the 2017 Leicester & Leicestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment HEDNA that will identify optimum mix and affordable housing requirements as well as the headline need for specialist accommodation set in the context of overall housing requirements.
- To assess the short, medium and long term impacts of COVID19 and BREXIT on the Leicester & Leicestershire economy generally and specifically the need or employment land and premises and to consider the implications for housing growth and distribution.
- To identify whether there are robust reasons to depart from the Standard Method of calculating future housing needs – including any economic and employment led reasons.
- To inform an understanding of the links and interrelationships between future housing need and future employment needs (including mix and type). A key objective is to understand whether employment forecasts justify an uplift and / or redistribution of housing and / or whether the housing requirements necessitate a redistribution of employment land.
- To take into account other evidence and strategies in arriving at conclusions including the 'Strategic Warehousing & Logistics Study 2020' and Local industrial Strategy and what contribution these make to future employment requirements in the FEMA and individual Local Authorities and any effects for employment and housing distribution.
- To identify future amount of jobs in non B-class7 employment sectors. This could include all jobs not in office, research & development, light and general industry and storage and distribution that are not normally based on employment sites.

- To understand the optimum locations for meeting unmet housing needs arising from Leicester City.
- In the context of employment, the objectives are to understand the optimum locations for different types of employment sectors (based on supply and demand for employment land & premises and preferences of the market). The study should also seek to understand the quantitative / qualitative gaps, market failures and opportunities (including in identified growth corridors and nodes) and should seek to identify what proportion of the future requirements could be delivered in these priority growth areas.
- To provide an overview of Leicester & Leicestershire's future employment role in different sectors in light of existing and predicted market strengths and changing economic landscape; and
- To provide a basis for future evidence gathering including an assessment of transportation impacts and more detailed environmental impacts.

The contract for the **Strategic Growth Options and Constraints Mapping** was awarded to AECOM Limited. The study provides an assessment of the merits of each of the 'reasonable' Strategic Growth Options in order to understand which of the options individually and collectively offer a suitable approach to delivering the housing, employment and associated infrastructure needs of the Leicester & Leicestershire HMA/FEMA and help to meet the aspirations of the Strategic Growth Plan.

The site size threshold for 'Strategic Growth Options' is set at:

- Housing – 1,000 homes
- Employment – 25 hectares
- Mixed use – Exceeding either of the above thresholds (although others considered on their merits)

The Study assesses:

- the potential interrelationships between Strategic Growth Options in delivering wider benefits (including infrastructure provision) and meeting the objectives of the Strategic Growth Plan.
- the development potential of Growth Options in terms of:
  - Their potential capacity (employment and housing)
  - Their attractiveness to the market and likely viability.
  - Any constraints to developability and deliverability.
- environmental constraints (Built, Historic & Natural Environment) and to assess the implications for delivering Strategic Growth Options
- the potential to deliver necessary infrastructure (social, utilities, transport and green infrastructure) and the capacity of existing infrastructure to accommodate growth

The contract for the **Strategic Transport Assessment (STA)** was awarded to Leicestershire Network Data and Intelligence Team. The STA considers alternative ways to distribute growth across Leicester & Leicestershire to 2051, including unmet need from Leicester. The purpose is to provide objective evidence that considers alternative ways to distribute growth from a transport perspective. These alternatives

are theoretical to large degree, designed to test alternatives that are meaningfully different over the period to 2051.

Each local planning authority will determine an appropriate locational strategy as part of their Local Plan preparation taking account of the scale of growth, national, sub regional and local policy documents and evidence.

The contract for the **Sustainability Appraisal** was awarded to Aecom Limited. The Sustainability Appraisal provides evidence to inform the distribution of Leicester's unmet need between 2020 and 2036, demonstrating that reasonable options/alternatives have been considered for this period, and that the approach is sustainable over this timeframe.

### **Working Arrangements to Pursue Apportionment of Unmet Need**

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 the following groups have held meetings to pursue the apportionment of unmet need across Leicester and Leicestershire.

- Members' Advisory Group (MAG)
- Strategic Planning Group (SPG)
- Planning Officers' Forum (POF)
- Statement of Common Ground Task & Finish Group

Joint strategic planning work is overseen by the MAG. It meets on a regular basis, currently every two months. MAG is advisory and not a decision making body. Any decisions on strategic matters are made by individual authorities through their own governance processes. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 there have been the following meetings of MAG:

- 11 February 2021
- 20 May 2021
- 29 July 2021
- 30 September 2021
- 16 December 2021

MAG is supported by a SPG made up of senior officer representatives. SPG has met on a monthly basis since the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020, and will continue to do so.

Chief Planning Officers meet formally as the POF and provides professional advice to the SPG. POF is a monthly meeting.

Statement of Common Ground Task & Finish Group - This is an informal officer group that meets most weeks (since 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020) to progress the programme of evidence that will inform the Statement of Common Ground to 2036 and the next steps for the Strategic Growth Plan.

I hope that this addressed the relevant preliminary matters.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Thornhill  
Joint Strategic Planning Manager for Leicester and Leicestershire