

HEARING STATEMENT - CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
MATTER 1 – DUTY TO CO-OPERATE AND OTHER LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

This Hearing Statement is submitted on behalf of Bowbridge Homes (Nanpantan) Ltd. and should be read in the context of the Hearing Statements previously submitted to the Programme Officer on 6th June 2022 and in conjunction with earlier representations dated 23rd August 2021 [REF: PSLP/630] submitted pursuant to the consultation by Charnwood Borough Council on its Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan 2021-37 [REF: SD/2] of July/August 2021. This Hearing Statement answers specific questions as set out in the Inspectors' Updated Matters, Issues & Questions document issued on 5th December 2022. The Inspectors' Issues and Questions are included in **bold** type.

Issue 3 – Whether the Plan has been prepared in compliance with other legal requirements.

Supplementary Question 1

Are any adjustments to the Plan period (2021 – 2037) necessary to accord with NPPF paragraph 22 which states that strategic policies should look ahead for a minimum 15-year period from adoption, having regard to delays in the Examination process?

The Plan period should be extended to account for the delays in the Examination process during 2022 which followed the adjournment of the Hearing Sessions originally scheduled from 12th July 2022 by the Examination Inspectors until consultation on various documents, including the Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (Exam 44a,) had been undertaken between 15th August and 26th September 2022. Following this consultation, a focused Hearing Session to cover a new Matter 10 was then held on 25th and 26th October 2022 to specifically address the Leicester & Leicestershire unmet housing and employment needs. The Examination Inspectors subsequently published their initial findings in relation to Charnwood's apportionment of Leicester's unmet need for housing and employment land on 18th November 2022 (Exam 55), followed by updated Matters, Issues and Questions on 5th December 2022. Following a further ensuing consultation period which extended to 16th January 2023, the adjourned Hearing Sessions have been rescheduled for the second, third and fourth weeks of February 2023. The impact of the delays is such that the Plan's 16-year period (2021-37) is therefore diminished to little more than the 15-year period required as a minimum as set out in NPPF paragraph 22 - the implications of which are addressed in our accompanying Hearing Statement for Matter 4.

Therefore, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 22, which requires that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption so as to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, the Plan period should be extended by at least an additional year in this respect.

Supplementary Question 2

Is an update the latest Local Development Scheme (Exam 34) necessary to provide an updated timescale for Plan adoption?

The Local Development Scheme (Exam 34) does not presently account for the aforementioned delays in the Examination process during 2022 and instead anticipates the publication of the Inspectors' Final Report in September/October 2022 and the adoption of the Local Plan in December 2022/January 2023, which is clearly no longer feasible and should therefore be updated accordingly.