

Charnwood Local Plan Examination – Additional Hearing Statements

Matter 2: Vision, Objectives, Sustainable Development and the Development Strategy

Define Planning and Design Ltd on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd

Issue 3: The Development Strategy

Supplementary Question 1: Does the development strategy set out in Policy DS1 represent a robust and appropriate approach for the distribution of housing, employment and other development in the longer term, having regard to the Inspectors' initial findings (Exam 55) in relation to Charnwood's apportionment of Leicester's unmet need for housing and employment land?

Bloor Homes Limited's (BHL) initial hearing statements in relation to Matter 2 highlighted the manner in which the CLP has arrived at a sound spatial strategy that will meet the Borough's housing needs, and is justified based on up-to-date and proportionate evidence base that considers all reasonable alternatives.

It is recognised that the Inspectors have since concluded that Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) should contribute 78 dwellings per annum towards the unmet housing needs arising from Leicester City Council (LCC), and that CBC have taken the approach of meeting that unmet need through this plan rather than a future review of the plan. The housing supply set out in the submission CLP (19,461 dwellings) is marginally above the 'uplifted' requirement (19,024 dwellings), and it is understood that CBC are comfortable that a suitable buffer can be provided through appropriate uplifts to the capacity of some proposed allocation sites. Therefore, BHL's comments (as per their initial Matter 2 hearing statements) that the CLP is based on a sound overall spatial strategy that fully meets its housing requirement still apply.

BHL's Matter 2 statement also specifically set out how the strategy for Service Centre settlements such as Barrow upon Soar is positively prepared in that it will deliver the infrastructure required to facilitate residential growth, particularly regarding the delivery of primary schools. Indeed, the hearing statement also made reference to how the strategy relating to the delivery of the primary school has evolved, with the school now to be delivered at BHL's site at 'Land off Willow Road' (Site HA48).

The approach to delivering the school within BHL's site is now agreed between the landowners / promoters of the Barrow upon Soar sites, CBC and Leicestershire County Council as the education authority, and a strategy for the funding and delivery of the school has now been agreed. A planning application seeking the delivery of *"a residential development of up to 220 dwellings, the demolition of the existing farmstead and erection of a replacement farmstead, and a 1 Form Entry Primary School (plus an area to be reserved for its potential future expansion), provision of access via a new roundabout from Cotes Road, associated landscaping, open space, infrastructure and enabling earthworks"* within BHL's site is also now well-advanced, and will facilitate the early delivery of the primary school; in turn supporting residential growth in the settlement.

BHL's additional comments in response to Matter 6 regarding Site HA48 set out that BHL and CBC have agreed that a modification to the allocation boundary is required to reflect its full and logical extents and ensure that the site can reach its full capacity whilst also accommodating the new primary school, that CBC and BHL are in agreement that the site's residential capacity should be amended to 220 dwellings (rather than 215), and that a modification to support the relocation of the farmstead in the site is also appropriate. Indeed, ensuring that each of the allocation sites in the plan can deliver the optimal quantum of housing, whilst also delivering the required non-residential uses, is also key in the context that CBC must increase its supply of housing in the plan period to deliver a suitable buffer above its housing requirement.

Supplementary Question 2: Is there any further SA testing of the options for the level and distribution of growth necessary having regard to the Inspectors' initial findings (Ref. Exam 55) in relation to Charnwood's apportionment of Leicester's unmet need for housing and employment land?

As set out in BHL's comments in relation to Supplementary Question 1, it is understood that CBC are confident that they can meet their revised housing requirement with an appropriate buffer by accommodating uplifts to some of the allocation sites identified in the submission plan. As such, CBC will not be seeking to fundamentally alter the proposed scale or distribution of growth in order to respond to the Inspectors' findings regarding the apportionment of LCC's unmet need. Therefore, BHL's comments in the initial Matter 2 hearing statement that highlight that the approach taken to the level and distribution of growth is fundamentally sound remain relevant.

Therefore, given the approach that CBC is proposing, it is not necessary to carry out any further SA testing. That is particularly the case given that the plan should be adopted as soon as possible to allow for allocation sites to begin delivering much-needed housing to meet CBC's housing needs and the unmet needs arising from LCC.