

HEARING STATEMENT - CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
MATTER 2: VISION, OBJECTIVES, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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 – The Development Strategy

Q2.13 Should the figures in the table in Policy DS1 be expressed as minimum numbers?

Notwithstanding the amount of new housing referred to (which is also the subject of our Hearing Statements submitted in respect of Matter 4 and Matter 7, the housing figures as set out in Policy DS1 of the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan [REF: SD/2] should be expressed as a minimum number and should not be used as a cap to prevent sustainable development from coming forward.

Q2.15 Is Policy DS1 justified in allowing for development adjacent to settlement limits in circumstances where a five-year supply of deliverable housing land cannot be demonstrated? How would proposals be expected to accord with the pattern of development set out in the table in Policy DS1?

Policy DS1 is considered to be justified in allowing for development adjacent to settlement limits in such circumstances. The four requirements of the policy in this respect will help to ensure that such development is focused tightly around the most sustainable settlements, whilst not prejudicing the delivery of important infrastructure.

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?

The approach of Policy DS1, which focuses on key settlements and infrastructure potential in respect of the distribution of new housing, employment and other development is considered to be robust. It would remain a robust approach in respect of accommodating Charnwood's increased minimum housing requirement having regard to its apportionment of Leicester's unmet need for housing and employment land, as reported in the Inspectors' initial findings (Exam 55), namely an increase of at least 78 dwellings per year to 1,189 dwellings per year during the Plan period.

Comments on the additional housing requirement and buffers are addressed in our accompanying Hearing Statement for Matter 4.

Supplementary Question 2

Is any further SA testing of the options for the level and distribution of growth necessary 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?

Whilst the Examination Inspectors report the increased housing requirement for Charnwood as 1,189 dwellings per year in their initial findings (Exam 55), they acknowledge that this should be subject to further testing as part of the forthcoming Hearing Sessions for Matter 4, taking into account local circumstances particular to Charnwood as are evidenced in the Housing Needs Assessment (EB/HSG/1). An increase in supply will therefore be needed but the precise extent of that increase is still uncertain at this stage, pending further testing of the housing requirement and the soundness of the proposed allocations.

Our comments on the housing requirement and buffers are addressed in our accompanying Hearing Statement for Matter 4.