

# Charnwood Local Plan Examination Hearing Sessions 2023.

## Matters, Issues and Questions.

Statement on Behalf of Redrow Homes, Davidsons  
Developments and the Helen Jean Cope Charity.

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

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

## Issue 3 – The Development Strategy

### Supplementary Questions

**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?**

**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?)**

- 1.1. As part of our original submissions on Matter 2, we raised concerns that the focus of some 21% of new homes proposed on Shepshed does not correspond to the settlement hierarchy that clearly identifies Loughborough as the main urban centre with the available evidence demonstrating that it is the most sustainable location for further housing growth. These concerns remain.
- 1.2. In its response on Matter 6, Leicestershire County Council as Highway Authority has identified clusters of sites that will pose significant localised cumulative transport issues and risks. These clusters include sites at Shepshed West and Shepshed South. Main modifications are requested by the Highway Authority to the relevant allocation policies to seek coordination of site access points and other on and off-site transport requirements. This points to likely highway issues which could give rise to severe impacts upon the local highway network associated with the concentration of development at Shepshed at the scale currently proposed in the plan.
- 1.3. In their response to the Submission Draft Local Plan, National Highways noted that the majority of Shepshed residents work outside the village with 27% working in Loughborough. They note that with Shepshed and Loughborough on opposite sides of the M1, increasing traffic between them would add pressure on M1 junction 23 which is expected to be seriously congested in 2037. It was also noted that assignments show trips from Shepshed to Leicester avoid the M1 and the A6 preferring to use cross country routes. This again points to serious potential highway issues that would not arise if there was a greater focus of development on south-west Loughborough.
- 1.4. There are also issues over the ability of the market to deliver the proposed scale of housing growth envisaged for Shepshed, which has a very different localised housing market to Loughborough. For proposed allocation site HA33, Land off Oakley Road, following an outline consent in December 2014 (ref P/11/2724/2) a subsequent reserved matters application was withdrawn March 2018 (ref P/15/2529/2) and no progress on the site has been made.

15. As we highlighted previously, directing some 1,878 new dwellings to Shepshed means that the plan has ignored far more sustainable opportunities available for a strategic development solution on the south/ south-western edge of Loughborough including the land off Watermead Way. In our supplementary submission on Matter 6, we have included an updated Promotional Document that has recently been submitted to the Council as part of a Pre-Application request. This shows how, with the addition of land at Watermead Way, a comprehensive development solution for south/south-west Loughborough can be secured bring a range of sustainability benefits including provision for biodiversity net gain and the creation of a biodiversity bank for use by other Loughborough development proposals.
16. The Sustainability Appraisal accompanying the Submission Draft Plan (SD/5) tested alternative scales of growth from 8,100 dwellings to 15,700 dwellings with a subsequent mid- point of 11,700 dwellings also assessed. Increasing the housing requirement to 1,189 dwellings a year to include the apportionment of Leicester's unmet needs would increase the requirement over a period 2021-2037 to 19,024 dwellings, a balance of some 10,199 dwellings to be found. A plan period extended to 2039 would require allocations in the region of 12,200 dwellings.
17. It is understood that the Council is looking at increasing the capacity on proposed allocations in order to address any increased housing requirement resulting from the apportionment of unmet needs. Whilst this approach may be appropriate in certain circumstances where detailed masterplanning as part of planning applications has identified additional capacity, we would question whether increasing the capacity on allocations would represent the most appropriate approach for certain sites. As the Council's proposed approach to dealing with any additional requirement was not available at the time of writing this response, we reserve our position to review the Council's approach and comment further on this issue at the examination sessions.
18. To ensure that any required modifications to the plan resulting from these increased requirements are robust, it will be necessary to refresh the Sustainability Appraisal testing of the options for the level and distribution of growth necessary. There are a range of alternative ways to deal with the increased provision required and it is important that these reasonable alternatives are properly considered through the sustainability process. It is also important that key partners, including Leicestershire County Council as Highway authority are properly engaged as part of any further sustainability appraisal testing of options.

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