

Charnwood Local Plan Examination

Matters and Issues Statement

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

1.0 Issue 1 - Are the Vision for Charnwood 2037 and the Plan's objectives soundly based and will they contribute to the achievement of sustainable development?

Q 2.2 - Will the Plan contribute to achieving sustainable development, including a sustainable pattern of development, as set out at NPPF paragraph 11a and if so, how?

- 1.1 Yes. The planned areas of growth at the SUEs, including the North East of Leicester SUE (NEoL SUE, also known as Thorpebury), play a key role in the Plan's contribution to achieving sustainable development, including a sustainable pattern of development. The delivery of larger allocations is more sustainable as the scale of development and their location close to established settlements, facilities and services enables provision of a wider range of supporting infrastructure and services to support the new community and benefit existing communities nearby.
- 1.2 Alongside approximately 4,500 new homes, the new NEoL SUE will deliver new employment land to meet local needs, primary and secondary schools, associated infrastructure and high-quality green space as part of an established landscape-led approach. As detailed in the material which relates to the planning permission, the scale of the supporting infrastructure to be delivered on the edge of Leicester will enable sustainable growth, facilitate interaction between the existing and new communities and encourage sustainable travel patterns.

2.0 **Issue 2 – Is the proposed settlement hierarchy positively prepared and justified by the evidence and are the proposed limits to development justified and soundly based?**

Q 2.5 Are the settlements included within the settlement hierarchy categories of Urban Centre (Loughborough), Urban Settlement, Other Settlements and Small Villages or Hamlets in the Countryside justified? (Table 4 of the Plan). Does the settlement hierarchy appropriately reflect the role and function of these settlements?

2.1 As expanded on below, CEG consider Table 4 of the Plan should be modified to include the SUEs, including Thorpebury, as an ‘Urban Settlement’.

2.2 **Q 2.6 How does the ‘Leicester Urban Area’ relate to the settlement hierarchy in Table 4?**

2.3 As drafted, it is not entirely clear how Leicester Urban Area relates to the settlement hierarchy in Table 4.

2.4 We regard the ‘Leicester Urban Area’ (LUA) as a general location, with the element within Charnwood identified on the map on page 23 of the draft plan, whereas the settlement hierarchy is structured around specific and identifiable settlements. The settlement hierarchy identifies the principal settlements within the LUA as Urban Settlements, but does not acknowledge the emerging role and status of Thorpebury.

2.5 If the plan is to be effective over the plan period, and the settlement hierarchy is to be an effective policy tool, the emerging settlement at Thorpebury which is now under construction within the LUA should be classified as an Urban Settlement in Table 4.

Q 2.8 - Should the Sustainable Urban Extensions be identified as urban settlements in the hierarchy?

2.6 Yes in relation to the NEoL SUE (Thorpebury), which will provide ‘*a range and choice of services and facilities that meet the day to day needs of residents and [will] physically and functionally form part of [the] wider Leicester Urban Centre*’.

2.7 The development strategy should do more to recognise and support the emerging role and function of the SUEs in meeting needs and the contribution they will make to place making and provision of sustainable new neighbourhoods in the borough. By the end of the plan period, c. 3,000 dwellings are expected to have been delivered at Thorpebury.

2.8 To be effective, Table 4: Charnwood Proposed Settlement Hierarchy should recognise Thorpebury as an ‘Urban Settlement’, as the NEoL SUE will be within the Leicester Urban Area but have a distinct character and function.

2.9 As currently drafted, CEG has concerns regarding the soundness of the approach to the settlement hierarchy. This modification is required to the policy to ensure its effectiveness.

Q 2.10 - Are the limits to development based on a robust and credible evidence base and are they appropriately drawn on the Policies Map?

- 2.10 No. As drafted, the limit of development identified for the NEoL SUE (Thorpebury) on Policies Map 1 is not based on credible evidence as it does not appropriately reflect the parameter plans approved by CBC under application P/13/2498/2. The approved Parameter Plan 1: Development Extent (attached at Annex 1 CEGs August 2021 Regulation 19 representations) provides the robust and credible evidence base to define the limit of development at Thorpebury on the Policies Map (and relevant diagrams).
- 2.11 The extent of the built development and landscape/green infrastructure framework at Thorpebury is clearly defined by the approved parameter plans, and consequently the limit of development and general extent of Thorpebury as an emerging 'Urban Settlement' can be identified.
- 2.12 CEG comments on detail of the Policies Map and diagrams further in its Matter 6 statement, but in summary CEG objects to the overly prescriptive approach to the map as currently drafted, on the basis that it is in conflict with NPPF policy (para 82 d). This expects local planning authorities to afford appropriate flexibility to allow for the sustainable delivery of the large scale SUEs over a number of years in response to potential changes in circumstances.
- 2.13 At the time of writing this statement, CEG is in discussions with the Council to seek to agree an alternative approach to the identification of the NEoL SUE. We hope the Council will be in a position to offer the Examination an update and agreed approach to the identification of the NEoL SUE on Policies Map 1 at the Matter 6 session.

3.0 Issue 3 – The Development Strategy**Q 2.12 - Does Policy DS1 set out a clear approach to the distribution of future housing and employment development across the different settlements in the hierarchy?**

- 3.1 CEG agrees with the objectives for the local plan (on page 15 and following), which form the basis for Policy DS1. These include focusing housing and employment growth at the edge of Leicester, to support development in a sustainable location and extend Leicestershire's central city.
- 3.2 In our view this policy should however do more, by addressing not only the location and distribution of development but also the timing and sequencing of delivery. All of these considerations are part of the 'pattern of development'. Having recognised that the development of SUEs is one of the most sustainable forms of development, Policy DS1 should support the delivery of the NEoL SUE in the LUA ahead of smaller scale developments in that area. As presently drafted, the new homes table in Policy DS1 does not address all aspects of the development strategy in this regard.

Q 2.13 - Should the figures in the table in Policy DS1 be expressed as minimum numbers?

- 3.3 Yes. The figures should be expressed as minimum numbers given the proposed housing requirement (calculated using the Standard Methodology) is a minimum rather than a maximum figure. This will encourage the efficient use of land when development comes forward in the sustainable locations identified by the Council and help to boost the supply of housing.

Q 2.14 - Will the distribution of housing development set out in the table within Policy DS1 achieve the overall stated aim of Policy DS1 for urban concentration and intensification, as well as minimising the need to travel, particularly by private car, and to prioritise sustainable modes of transport?

- 3.4 To ensure effectiveness, the plan should do more to secure urban concentration and intensification, minimise the need to travel and prioritise sustainable travel modes. This can be achieved by addressing not only the distribution of development but also the timing and sequencing of delivery, including to support the implementation of the SUEs.
- 3.5 SUEs enable the delivery of a wide range of supporting infrastructure, including education, employment, community uses and open space in close proximity to new residential areas, as well as existing residential areas. This allows and encourages the internalisation of vehicle trips and is a sustainable way to enable the delivery of housing at scale, to meet the Council's development needs, without causing significant pressure on the existing transport network or wider infrastructure.
- 3.6 The new communities are planned from the outset to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, over the use of the private car. The NEoL SUE will provide well connected and walkable neighbourhoods with high quality, safe and direct walking, cycling and public transport routes that provide direct and convenient links to the main facilities including shops, schools and open space. The majority of new residents will be within 400m of the new local facilities.
- 3.7 Policy DS1 should recognise, at the strategic level, that optimising development density in appropriate and sustainable locations, such as the NEoL SUE, will make an important contribution to promoting sustainable development and tackling climate change by delivering more efficient development, reducing land take, supporting local facilities, reducing the need to travel and internalising trips. This would be consistent with the overall strategy for urban concentration and intensification.

Q 2.25 - Overall, will the Plan's vision and objectives contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and is the development strategy justified by the evidence and positively prepared? Are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

- 3.8 Overall, the Plan's vision and objectives will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The SUEs play an important role in supporting this overall approach.

- 3.9 However, main modifications are needed to ensure the effectiveness of the Plan. The NEoL SUE, Thorpebury, should be identified as Urban Settlements in the hierarchy and the Policies Map (and related diagrams) should be amended to show the general area and extent of the SUE only, as evidenced by the approved Parameter Plans (see answer to Q2.10 above). A main modification will also be needed to express the housing figures in Policy DS1 as minimum numbers, in line with the NPPF
- 3.10 CEG is in discussions with the Council in relation to other matters which may also require modifications to ensure the development strategy is effective.