



# Charnwood Local Plan Examination. Matters, Issues and Questions.

Statement on Behalf of Davidsons Developments (ref PSLP/619 and 622).

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

- 1.1. These comments are made in relation to Davidsons Development's representations on the Regulation 19 Plan in relation to its interests in land at Markfield Lane, Field Head.
- 1.2. As part of our representations on the Submission Draft Plan we commented that as drafted the Vision for the Plan does not properly reflect the opportunities for development in sustainable locations within Charnwood adjoining sustainable settlements in neighbouring districts – other than for Leicester City. Reference to the opportunities for sustainable growth on sites in Charnwood adjoining sustainable settlements in other districts should be referenced in the Vision. It is not clear from the evidence that these opportunities have been properly considered in the preparation of the Plan. Whilst the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate (SD-15) refers to a meeting with Hinckley and Bosworth on the 27th April 2020 to discuss cross boundary implications of potential sites, including adjoining Markfield in Hinckley and Bosworth, the outcome of this meeting and how it influenced the preparation of the plan is not clear.

### **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?**

- 1.3. The proposed settlement hierarchy is set out at Table 4 to the Submission Draft Plan. Paragraph 2.30 is helpful in noting that Markfield is considered to have a range of services and facilities consistent with a Service Centre and that the Plan Strategy considered potential growth at Markfield within Charnwood's boundaries within this context. We are concerned that this has not been translated into a sufficiently robust assessment of opportunities for sustainable growth within the Borough close to Markfield.
- 1.4. It is notable that the Council's Planning Committee recently resolved to grant planning permission for 93 dwellings on land at Ashby Road, Markfield (ref P/21/O260/2). In terms of the sustainability of the location for housing development, the Officer report commented as follows;

*'Markfield is considered to have a range of services and facilities that is consistent with a Service Centre. The extremely close proximity of the site to Markfield is a material consideration and it should be recognised that residents are likely to access services and facilities, including public transport from this village.'*

*Planning Committee Report, 23/11/21*

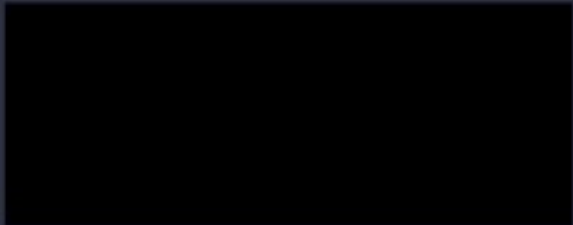
15. This recent recognition of the sustainability credentials of sites in proximity to Markfield is at odds with the Sustainability Assessment (SD-5) summary of housing site options assessments in Newtown Linford Parish, where the conclusion is at paragraph 6.3.32 is that no sites are proposed for allocation in Newtown Linford as all sites have very poor accessibility. This ignores the accessibility credentials of sites adjoining Markfield, including land off Markfield Lane under the control of Davidsons Developments (PSH41).

### **Issue 3 – The Development Strategy**

16. As the overall housing requirement outlined in Policy DS1 is for the provision of at least 19,461 homes over the plan period, for consistency the distribution of homes to the settlement hierarchy set out in the Table to the Policy should also be expressed as minima.
17. The reference in the policy to circumstances where sites adjoining the limits to development may be approved in circumstances where there is a five-year supply shortfall is positive. Again, it is noted that the Council has taken the opportunity to approve development within Charnwood on the edge of Markfield to help address the current five-year supply shortfall.
18. As framed, this part of the policy does not provide sufficient clarity as to how sites adjoining Service Centres on adjoining local authority areas, such as Markfield, would be dealt with, merely referring to accordance with the pattern of development identified in the policy that does not include Markfield. Clarification on this important point would be helpful to avoid any uncertainty when sites in such locations are considered in the context of five-year land supply shortfalls.

#### **Policy SC1 – Service Centres**

19. As part of the Sustainability Appraisal, the Council commissioned AECOM to undertake an assessment of the scope for additional growth in particular locations, and this is set out at Appendix G to the Sustainability Assessment (ref SD-5). For Service Centres, the assessment of the potential for additional growth only considered the named Service Centres falling within Charnwood Borough. As a result, the potential for some additional growth on land within Charnwood adjoining the Service Centre of Markfield was ignored in this assessment. For these reasons we consider that the opportunities for growth in Charnwood adjoining Markfield have not been robustly assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal.



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