



Charnwood Local Plan Examination Statement

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

Wednesday 29 June 2022

On behalf of **Barwood Development Securities Ltd**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Our Objections to the Draft Submission Plan

- 1.1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Stantec on behalf of Barwood Development Securities Limited ('Barwood Land'). Barwood Land has an interest in the site known as Phase 2 land at Peashill Farm, Ratcliffe Road, Sileby. The site is the subject of an outline planning application for residential development of the site for up to 175 dwellings, as an extension to the Peashill Farm Phase 1 development, construction of which is already well advanced.
- 1.1.2 Our Regulation 19 response to the Plan, submitted in August 2021, found the Plan to be unsound, for reasons which can be summarised briefly as follows:
- Policies DS1 and DS2 do not provide sufficiently for the housing needs of the borough and the Leicester urban area; and
 - The above site should be allocated under Policy DS3 of the Plan in place of or in addition to some of the sites in Sileby/Cossington which are presently proposed as allocations.

2 Response to the Inspector's Questions: Matter 2

2.1 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?

Question 2.1: Do the Plan's vision and objectives cover the full range of opportunities, challenges and priorities that need to be addressed in the Borough over the Plan period? Is it clear how the policies will help to deliver the vision and objectives over the Plan period?

- 2.1.1 As stated in our responses to Matter 1, we contend that examination of the Plan should pause until the April 2022 SoCG, HENA and SA have been formally reviewed by all parties. Only then can the implications for the quantum of development required to meet housing and employment needs and its most sustainable spatial distribution be confirmed and the Plan's vision and objectives agreed.

Question 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?

- 2.1.2 The contribution made by the Plan to achieving sustainable development can only properly be assessed once the April 2022 SoCG, HENA and SA have been formally reviewed.
- 2.1.3 As presently set out in the Plan, the distribution of new homes in Policy DS1 does not represent the most sustainable or deliverable pattern of development or means of accommodating housing needs, as is required by paragraph 11a of the NPPF. In particular:
- the Plan should make provision for more housing than currently proposed, for the reasons we listed in our response to Matter 1, summarised as:
 - the Plan period should be extended to 2039;
 - the Plan should make provision for meeting a proportion of Leicester's unmet housing needs; and
 - the Plan has unrealistic expectations around the delivery of the SUEs such that more smaller sites, for up to 200 or so dwellings, should be allocated;
 - the Service Centres, including Sileby, have a scale, population and range of services and facilities such that more than 14% of all new homes should be located there; and
 - by definition, the 'other settlements' and 'small villages and hamlets' are less sustainable, being much smaller and having fewer facilities and services, therefore the proposal that they should accommodate over 5% of all new homes (some 952 dwellings) is flawed and this proportion should be significantly reduced or removed.

2.2 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?

Question 2.3: Is the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (EB/DS/3) based on a robust methodology and relevant criteria in relation to the availability of and access to services and facilities?

- 2.2.1 The settlement hierarchy can only properly be assessed once the SoCG and the evidence base documents listed in 2.1.1 above are formally reviewed.
- 2.2.2 Our comments in 2.1.3 above also apply to this question.

Question 2.4: How has the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment informed the development strategy in Policy DS1?

2.2.3 See our response to question 2.3 above.

Question 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?

2.2.4 See our response to question 2.2 above.

Question 2.6: How does the 'Leicester Urban Area' relate to the settlement hierarchy in Table 4?

Question 2.7: The Plan also refers to 'Urban Areas', for example in paragraph 3.206. What areas are being referred to and is this clear?

Question 2.8: Should the Sustainable Urban Extensions be identified as urban settlements in the hierarchy?

Question 2.9: Why have small villages or hamlets been identified as a separate category in the settlement hierarchy if they are subject to the same policy approach as the countryside in Policy C1?

2.2.5 We have no specific further comments on these questions.

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

2.2.6 No. The limits to development can only properly be drawn once the April 2022 SoCG, HENA and SA have been formally reviewed.

2.3 Issue 3: The Development Strategy

Question 2.11: Is the distribution of development in Policy DS1 justified by the evidence and were all options for the level and distribution of growth tested through the Sustainability Appraisal? What is the justification for a greater proportion of new dwellings being delivered in the Service Centres compared with the 'hybrid' option tested?

Question 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?

2.3.1 See our response to question 2.2 above.

Question 2.13: Should the figures in the table in Policy DS1 be expressed as minimum numbers?

2.3.2 Yes, in accordance with paragraphs 60 and 61 of the NPPF.

Question 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?

2.3.3 No. The Service Centres, including Sileby, have a scale, population and range of services and facilities, including sustainable modes of transport, such that more than 14% of all new homes

should be located there. The 'other settlements' and 'small villages and hamlets' are less sustainable, being much smaller and having fewer facilities and services and poor access to sustainable modes of transport. Therefore, the proposal that they should accommodate over 5% of all new homes (some 952 dwellings) is flawed and this proportion should be significantly reduced or removed.

Question 2.15: 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?

- 2.3.4 Yes, noting also that in these circumstances paragraph 11d of the NPPF applies, ensuring that proposals are not permitted where their adverse impacts "would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits".
- 2.3.5 That said, it is preferable that more housing allocation sites are provided in the Plan now, to reduce the possibility of the above circumstances arising.

Policy SC1: Service Centres

Question 2.16: What is the justification for the level of growth being directed to Service Centres given the Sustainability Appraisal's finding (paragraph 5.1.2) that there is potential for negative effects above 1600 dwellings?

Question 2.17: Are the site allocations in the Service Centres of Anstey, Barrow upon Soar and Sileby (served by Cossington primary school) as proposed in Policies DS1 and DS3 justified when there is a lack of capacity in their respective primary schools? How would this be addressed?

- 2.3.6 The Service Centre of Sileby has a scale, population and range of services and facilities, including sustainable modes of transport, to justify a higher number of new dwellings than is currently proposed. The capacity of the primary schools in Sileby and the adjoining village of Cossington can be increased through expansion of existing schools, funded where justified through S106 obligations when planning permission is granted for new housing development.

Question 2.18: What is the relationship between the Service Centre category in the settlement hierarchy and the District Centre/Local Centre designation? Is there any potential for confusion about the role of the Service Centres?

Question 2.19: How would a 'proven local need' for off street parking in the last bullet of Policy SC1 be identified and is the part of the policy justified?

- 2.3.7 We have no specific comments on these questions.

Policy OS1 Other Settlements

Question 2.20: How would 'small scale' development in bullet two of the policy be defined and is the policy clear and effective in this regard?

Question 2.21: Why are proposals for new services and facilities required to meet a proven local need' (bullet four)? What would be the harm in approving new services and facilities without a demonstration of proven local need?

Question 2.22: Should the policy give more support to development outside the Development Limits on brownfield or underused land?

Policy C1: Countryside

Question 2.23: How would 'small scale new built development' in bullet two of the policy be defined and is the policy clear and effective in this regard?

Question 2.24: What is the justification for requiring new services and facilities to meet a 'proven local need' (bullet three)? What harms would arise if new services and facilities are approved without a demonstration of proven local need?

- 2.3.8 We have no specific comments on these questions, other than to repeat that the 'other settlements' and 'small villages and hamlets' are less sustainable as locations for new housing than the service centres, being much smaller and having fewer facilities and services and poor access to sustainable modes of transport. Therefore, the proposal in Policy DS1 that they should accommodate over 5% of all new homes is flawed and this proportion should be reduced or removed.

Question 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?

- 2.3.9 For the reasons we have explained above, the Plan does not contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the development strategy is not justified by the evidence and positively prepared.
- 2.3.10 For soundness, examination of the Plan should pause until the April 2022 SoCG, HENA and SA have been reviewed and the Plan modified such that the quantum of development required to meet housing and employment needs and its most sustainable spatial distribution can be confirmed and the Plan can be properly assessed for soundness.