

Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan 2021-37; Public Examination;

Councillor Deborah Taylor;

Anstey Ward;

Responses to Matters, Issues And Questions.

*Policy CC5; Sustainable Transport*

*3.12 Will the policy facilitate a reduction in the need to travel and support alternatives to the use of private motorised transport including walking, cycling and public transport?*

Policy CC5 states 'We will support sustainable patterns of development which will minimise the need to travel and seek to support a shift from travel by private car to walking, cycling and public transport.

We will support major development that is informed by a robust transport assessment and travel plan which considers sustainable travel options at the outset so that they form an integral part of the development; and secures, where possible, new and enhanced bus services, including new bus stops, where development, is more than a 400m walk from an existing bus stop'.

Here is a summary of the largest site, HA43, within Anstey in regard to public transport: –

*Public Transport*

HA43 – Bradgate Road area

A 400m walking distance to the nearest bus stop is recommended by the Institute of Highways and Transportation's Guidelines for Planning for Public Transport in Developments (IHT 1999) and Charnwood Local Plan states '100% of new houses to be within 400 metres of a local bus service'. The Local Plan also states that the amount of new development at Sustainable Urban Extensions and service centres with access to a half-hour frequency public transport service. All of site HA43 does not have access with 400m to a half-hour frequency public transport service.

The nearest bus stops to site HA43 (Bradgate Road area) are situated along Bradgate Road, within 150m to the east of the proposed roundabout access location, and within a 150m walking distance to the west of the proposed priority junction access. The two sets of bus stops will provide accessibility to properties that will be situated at both ends of the proposed scheme, with the centre of the site situated within a walking distance of approximately 500m from both sets of stops. Houses from the centre and rear of this site will be much further from a bus stop than the statement in the local plan. The nearest bus service from these bus stops is the Roberts 125 service that runs between Leicester and Castle Donnington. This bus service route only has four services a day for six days a week and no service on Sundays. This is not enough to facilitate residents going to work, school, college and

for essential food and medicines. Therefore, most journeys will be by private car for access to essential services and to the village centre.

Two other bus service routes travel through Anstey, First Service 74 (Anstey to Leicester City Centre) and CentreBus Midlands Service 154 (Loughborough to Leicester City Centre). Bus service 74 calls at a bus stop situated along Link Road, a walking distance of 225m from the proposed priority-controlled access and 600m from the centre of the site, much further from the rear of the site. Bus service 154 calls at bus stops situated along Leicester Road and Cropston Road, walking distances of 1.1km from the proposed priority-controlled access and 1.4km from the centre of the site, again much further from the rear of the site.

All the above evidence concludes that this site will be reliant on the private car. Also, a point to note, Bradgate Road is a steep hill which doesn't lend itself for walking and cycling.

#### HA43 – Groby Road Area

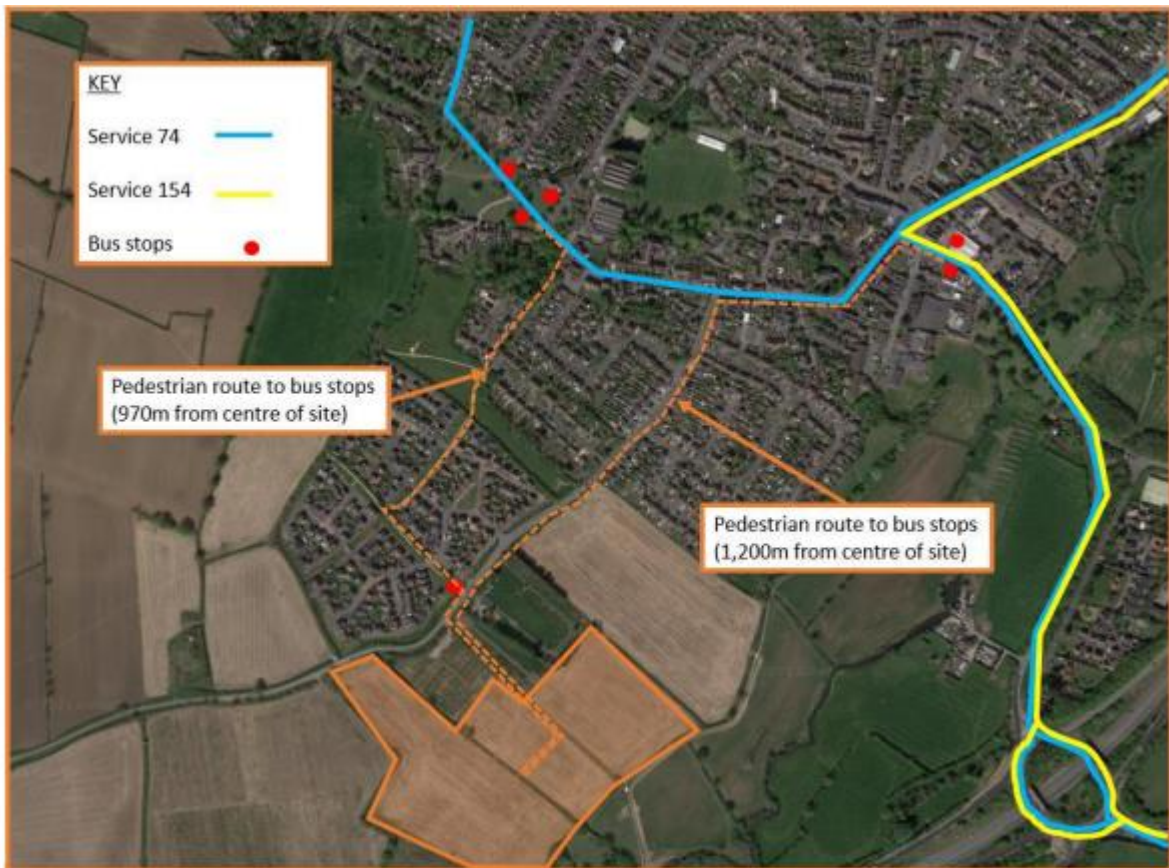
CentreBus Midlands service 154 running between Loughborough and Leicester City Centre runs an hourly frequency from Monday to Saturday, and there are no services on Sundays. The nearest bus stop is on Leicester Road, approximately 1.2km from the centre of the site via the public footpath, Groby Road and Bradgate Road, and are therefore beyond the 400 metres identified in the local plan.

The First Group bus service 74 runs every 15 minutes from Monday to Saturday, and every 30 minutes on Sundays. The nearest stops are on Bradgate Road, approximately 970 metres from the site, via the footpath and through the St James Gate development. These are also beyond the 400 metres identified in the local plan.

As with previous developments on Groby Road, a bus service was put in place from Freer Way but was only paid for by the developers for 5 years. The service was then withdrawn by the bus operator. Charnwood Borough Council have no control over where commercial bus services run and therefore without an established service already in place, I believe that these sites will become unsustainable again when any new bus service is withdrawn, as the new current development on Groby Road has. The statement that all '100% of new houses to be within 400 metres of a local bus service' is therefore undeliverable and new housing should be placed in areas with a strong existing public transport network.

Table 1 demonstrates the long walking routes to an established bus service from the Groby Road area of the HA43 site.

Table 1



*3.13 How will 'excellent accessibility' to key facilities by walking, cycling and public transport referred to in the policy be defined?*

Information provided above indicates that Bradgate Road is a very steep hill and doesn't lend itself to walking and cycling and would be extremely difficult for residents with mobility issues, wheelchair users and families using pushchairs. With the distance to The Nook local centre where all the main services are located site HA43 does not have 'excellent accessibility' to 'key facilities' by any means apart from the private car. This will leave residents isolated and unable to access food and medicine without a private car or taxi service. Not only will this hugely impact the already severely congested local centre, with a shortage of public parking spaces, but it will have a detrimental effect on climate change and air quality.

*3.15 Is the policy sufficiently robust to protect and enhance the Borough's distinctive landscape character and if so, how will that be achieved?*

*3.16 Has the policy been informed by up-to-date evidence and if so, what?*

Policy EV1 sets out Charnwood's approach to protecting landscape character which highlights the role of the Countryside in providing the setting and contributing to the distinct separate identities of our towns and villages.

Anstey is in Charnwood Forest and the gateway to the National Forest. Charnwood Forest is an [upland](#) tract in north-western [Leicestershire, England](#), bounded by [Leicester](#), [Loughborough](#) and [Coalville](#). The area is undulating, rocky and picturesque, with barren areas. It also has some extensive tracts of [woodland](#); its elevation is 180m and upwards, the area exceeding this height being about 6,100 acres (25 km<sup>2</sup>) the highest point, [Bardon Hill](#), is 278m. The hard stone of Charnwood Forest has been quarried for centuries, and was a source of [whetstones](#) and [quern-stones](#). The [granite](#) quarries at [Bardon Hill](#), Buddon Hill and [Whitwick](#) supply crushed aggregate to a wide area of southern Britain.

The forest is an important recreational area with woodland walks, noted for their displays of [bluebells](#) in the early spring, [rock climbing](#) and [hillwalking](#). Popular recreational areas with public access include [Bardon Hill](#), [Beacon Hill](#), [Bradgate Park](#), [Swithland Wood](#) and the [Outwoods](#) and Stoneywell Cottage (National Trust).

All the information above provides evidence that the landscape of Anstey is important in many different ways and would not benefit at all from a huge influx of concrete and housing. Friends of Charnwood Forest (<http://www.focf.org.uk/>) do a huge amount of work of protecting and enhancing the area of natural beauty. This huge plan for over 950 houses for Anstey will have a detrimental effect on this landscape, which we have a duty to protect for future generations.

In fact Charnwood Borough Council has recently promoted Charnwood Forest as part of their new 'Discover Charnwood' website ([Heritage | Discover Charnwood](#)), and highlight how important this area is. This paragraph is taken from their heritage webpage of the 'Discover Charnwood' website:

'Charnwood's rich heritage stretches back nearly 600 million years when the distinctive rocky formations, which can be seen around the borough, were formed. The area is the resting place of the oldest fossils in England and the intricate Charnia fossil, discovered in Charnwood Forest in 1957, proved to the world that animals had existed on earth far earlier than previously thought. Charnwood Forest is so significant it is bidding to become a UNESCO Global Geopark.'

This seems to highlight the conflict between Charnwood's aim to protect important landscapes but also add a large block of housing into the same area. This leads me to conclude that this area of Anstey is not the right place for a huge extension of housing and other areas within Charnwood, that are not of such a high landscape amenity, should be considered.

*Policy EV2 Green Wedges*

*3.17 Is the policy sufficiently clear with regard to what constitutes small-scale development and how will it be applied to avoid unacceptable cumulative effects from such schemes?*

*3.18 Will the policy enable Green Wedges to fulfil their function in conjunction with the Housing Allocations?*

The plan identifies it has been necessary to identify some housing sites in Green Wedges, with the strategic need for development, on balance, outweighing the loss of Green Wedge. Following consultation with local authority partners, there is a recognition that in allocating development in Green Wedges, significant and coordinated mitigation will be required, but this is only stated within Leicester Urban Area.

Anstey has already suffered from numerous small-scale developments carried out over the last 10 years. Over 660 houses have been built, many already on green wedges. These have been done piecemeal and has been allowed to erode our green wedges. To allow even more building on the green wedges (that is the only land we have left to build on) will in fact join Anstey up with the City; Groby; Cropston; Thurgaston; and Newtown Linford. We have the A46 and the A50 now as the only thing between Anstey and the City of Leicester. We must retain the green wedge and stop building over them and look for other areas within Charnwood for the council's housing needs. We need to safeguard the identities of communities around urban areas and these plans for Anstey erodes the green wedge. This area around Anstey is already identified as part of Charnwood's green infrastructure network called GW1, but the plan does not allow for this infrastructure to take place but identifies it as an area for large housing estates.

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*Policy EV3 Areas of Local Separation*

*3.19 Will the policy be effective in maintaining Areas of Local Separation and the separate identity of settlements?*

Site HA43 on the is within the Area of Local Separation (ALS). Charnwood is planning to build right behind the ALS and the site will be right up to the boundary of Newtown Linford. Newtown Linford is home to Bradgate Park, which brings huge visitor numbers to the area. To have large scale buildings over the ALS and right up to the boundary is totally unacceptable. Visitors to the area should be able to enjoy the natural beauty of the countryside on their approach to Bradgate Park and not be met with a scrawling housing estate abutting Newtown Linford.

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*Policy EV4 Charnwood Forest and the National Forest; Policy EV6 – Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity; Policy EV7 – Tree Planting*

### *3.20 Will these policies be effective in meeting the National Forest vision?*

I have included further information below to the work that is currently ongoing to protect the Charnwood Forest and application for UNESCO Global Geopark Status.

#### Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership and Heritage Lottery Fund Grant

In 2017 the National Forest Company applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a £3M grant to enhance Charnwood Forest.

The Application stated "The Chronicles of Charnia" will celebrate the area's internationally important volcanic legacy. It will enable and encourage people to explore its rich landscape and diverse heritage. It will provide deeper engagement for residents and visitors, while contributing to the local economy. It will coordinate management at a landscape-scale to make Charnwood's heritage more resilient to growing pressures. Most importantly, it will create a greater sense of local pride, inspiring communities to restore the character of this special place".

It has a strapline "Made by volcanoes, shaped by people".

In May 2020 the application, for £2.767M, was granted, and the ["Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership"](#) was set up. The Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership is:

‘To bring about a major change in how we protect, manage, and celebrate the heritage of Charnwood Forest, the partners in the Charnwood Forest Regional Park submitted a successful bid to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a Landscape Partnership Scheme, which will celebrate the area’s internationally important volcanic legacy. It will enable and encourage people to explore its rich landscape and diverse heritage. It will provide deeper engagement for residents and visitors, while contributing to the local economy. It will coordinate management at a landscape-scale to make Charnwood’s heritage more resilient to growing pressures. Most importantly, it will create a greater sense of local pride, inspiring communities to restore the character of this special place: ‘Made by volcanoes, shaped by people’.

Bidding for a Landscape Partnership Scheme is a two-stage process. We submitted our Round 1 application in May 2017 and were delighted to receive a first round pass from HLF the following October.

We are now in a two-year Development Phase, during which we will undertake studies to provide key information and to work up the detail of how our projects will be delivered. We are currently recruiting a new Development Team to drive forward this work and, when they are in place, they will be working with people in and around Charnwood Forest to fulfil the exciting vision that has been developed for the area.’

#### UNESCO Global Geoparks

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education, and sustainable development. Their bottom-up approach of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular. At present, there are 177 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 46 countries.

UNESCO's work with geoparks began in 2001. In 2004, 17 European and 8 Chinese geoparks came together at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to form the [Global Geoparks Network \(GGN\)](#) where national geological heritage initiatives contribute to and benefit from their membership of a global network of exchange and cooperation.

On 17 November 2015, the 195 Member States of UNESCO ratified the creation of a new label, the UNESCO Global Geoparks, during the 38th General Conference of the Organisation. This expresses governmental recognition of the importance of managing outstanding geological sites and landscapes in a holistic manner.

The Organization supports Member States' efforts to establish UNESCO Global Geoparks all around the world, in close collaboration with the Global Geoparks Network.

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