

Charnwood Local Plan Examination. Matters, Issues and Questions.

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

Matter 3 – Climate Change and the Natural and Built
Environment

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Contents.

Matter 3 – Climate Change and the Natural and Built Environment	3
Issue 1 – Whether the policies relating to climate change and the natural and built environment, are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.	3
Policy CC5 – Sustainable Transport	3
Policy EV4 – Charnwood Forest and National Forest	3
Policy EV6 – Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity	4

Matter 3 – Climate Change and the Natural and Built Environment

Issue 1 – Whether the policies relating to climate change and the natural and built environment, are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Policy CC5 – Sustainable Transport

- 1.1. Policy CC5 sets out the Council's support for sustainable patterns of development which will minimise the need to travel and support the shift from travel by private car to walking, cycling and public transport, supporting development which, amongst other things, provides excellent accessibility to key facilities and services by sustainable modes.
- 1.2. The Charnwood Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (EB/DS/3) defines excellent access to higher order services as the services being available within the settlement or within 30 minutes travel time using a frequent (every 15 minutes) service during peak times along with an evening service (page 20 EB/DS/3).
- 1.3. The effectiveness of Policy CC5 is dependent on the spatial strategy for the distribution of development as set out in Policy DS1 and the extent to which it directs development to the most sustainable locations that enjoy excellent access to sustainable modes.
- 1.4. We have set out in our response Matter 2 our fundamental concerns over the spatial strategy's focus of significant amounts of additional development to Shepshed at a scale similar to the additional provision directed towards Loughborough. This component of the spatial strategy patently does not make best use of opportunities for sustainable growth on the edge of Loughborough where new residents can benefit from easy access to the wider range of available facilities in the town by sustainable modes.

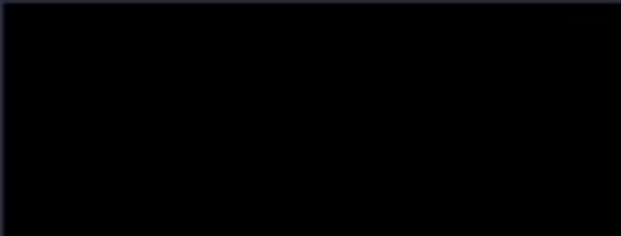
Policy EV4 – Charnwood Forest and National Forest

- 1.5. Policy EV4 sets out the Council's intention to work with partners to protect and enhance the Charnwood Forest Regional Park, supporting development that;
 - Supports the woodland economy and rural diversification including small scale tourism and recreation opportunities;
 - Protects and enhances the biodiversity of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park;
 - Provides tree planting;
 - Provides an improved network of public rights of way;
 - Improves accessibility for people with mobility issues.

- 1.6. As part of our representations on the Submission Draft Plan we outlined our proposals for development to the south of Watermead Way, on the southern edge of Loughborough. The comprehensive masterplan proposals presented as part of the submission demonstrate that the development would deliver a number of associated benefits, wholly consistent with the objectives of Policy EV4, including;
- Extensive tree planting over 32 hectares of land as an extension to The Outwoods and transferred into public ownership;
 - New wildflower meadow planting providing significant biodiversity net gain by returning some 42 hectares of land from arable use;
 - A new Forest Gateway off Nanpantan Road offering new recreational facilities, parking for recreational access to the Forest, improving access for people with mobility issues, along with information facilities, cycle hire and shop/café.
- 1.7. These clear benefits associated with the proposal do not appear to have been properly considered in the assessment of this development opportunity through the Sustainability Appraisal (SD/5).

Policy EV6 – Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 1.8. Policy EV6 aims to ensure that biodiversity, ecological networks and geodiversity interests are protected, restored and enhanced by seeking 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 1.9. The provisions for 10% net gain through the Environment Act 2021 are not yet in force and transitional provisions mean that these requirements will not be in place until November 2023. The policy should be clear about its relationship with the requirements to be introduced by the Environment Act.
- 1.10. For many proposed allocations, achieving a 10% biodiversity net gain onsite will be challenging and it is likely that offsite improvements will need to form part of a biodiversity net gain strategy. The proposals for development to the south of Watermead Way offer significant opportunities for biodiversity net gain in excess of 50%. This offers a significant and deliverable (and almost unique) opportunity in Leicestershire to provide a biodiversity bank to help offset the biodiversity net gain requirements of other sites proposed for allocation to the south/south west of Loughborough if required or in wider districts.. Again, this opportunity has not been properly considered in the assessment of the development opportunity through the Sustainability Appraisal.



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