

1. Background

- 1.1. This hearing statement has been prepared on behalf of Redrow Homes East Midlands (“Redrow Homes”).
- 1.2. Redrow Homes are working in partnership with owners of the land off Ratcliffe Road, Sileby, which is not identified for development in the submitted version of in the Charnwood Local Plan.

2. Issue 1 - Is the assessment of housing need and the housing requirement positively prepared, justified by the evidence and consistent with national policy?

- 2.1. Please refer to answers to earlier MIQs from April 2022 which are still relevant to this issue.
- 2.2. Supplementary questions (answered together)

Q. In the light of the Inspectors’ findings (Exam 55) that the minimum local housing need for Charnwood is 1,189 dwellings per year, should the housing requirement in Policy DS1 of 1,111 dwellings per year be increased to 1,189 to ensure that the Plan has been positively prepared? Is there any justification for a lower or a higher figure?

- 2.3. We agree that given the timing of the agreement on the unmet need for Leicester between the Leicestershire authorities and the opportunity this has presented to Charnwood to take their apportionment up now, a strategy that the Inspectors have found to be initially sound, that the figure should indeed increase to 1,189 per annum.
- 2.4. The Inspectors have also found that the agreed manual adjustment, by using a 1.4% stock growth figure to adjust the proportional take-up of unmet need, to be a realistic approach to achieving an equitable balance of apportionment across authorities. In light of this finding it is not considered that a higher figure for the unmet need is justified. Equally though a lower figure would be no less appropriate, given the high level of suitability of Charnwood to take up the unmet need of Leicester, as detailed in the evidence supporting the distribution of unmet need (Exam 43 - Exam 47b).

Q. Pending any changes to the housing requirement in Policy DS1 to accommodate Charnwood’s apportionment of Leicester’s unmet housing need, is there a sufficient buffer between the minimum housing requirement in Policy DS1 and the overall supply during the Plan period to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect of the housing requirement being met? In the event that the supply needs to be increased to secure an appropriate buffer, what sources of supply would help to deliver this? Are any new site allocations likely to be required? If so, what would be the process and likely timescale for identifying sites?

- 2.5. As previously detailed in our Matter 1 statement a figure of 20,213 before any buffer is applied should be considered the minimum figure, being 17 years at 1,189 pa if the plan period is extended by one year. With a 15% buffer a total of 23,245 homes would be required. This is demonstrably higher than the figure set out in DS1. With an adoption date

in 2024 these figures would be even higher and even more of a departure from that set out in DS1.

- 2.6. New sites should be included in a review of the site allocations to meet these higher housing figures as this would provide the most robust and equitable assessment of the housing strategy. It is not considered appropriate for the additional need to be met by simply increasing capacity on existing allocations. As referred to in our Matter 1 Statement Leicestershire County Council also advocate that the Council consider new sites in order to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is provided alongside housing growth. The service centres have been underrepresented in the proposed strategy, despite findings that some (Sileby and Barrow) have a higher level of sustainability due to their proximity to larger centres with good existing onward connections. The land off Ratcliffe Road, Sileby is suitable and deliverable with good public transport links to Leicester and is an opportunity to deliver a sustainable development,
- 2.7. We consider that an update to the existing evidence using the present sites could be achieved and consulted upon in the first half of 2023, leaving sufficient time for further hearing dates in Q3 and adoption of the plan later in 2023 still feasible. However it would not take many unexpected delays for adoption to slide into 2024 and therefore this scenario should be seriously considered by the Inspectors with all available evidence. In any case we reserve the right to comment on the strategy proposed once it has been published by the Council.