

# CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION – MATTER 4

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Representor: Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd and Merton College, Oxford

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Representor Reference  
Number: 536

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Date: 6 June 2022

## MATTER 4: ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEED, THE HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND MIX AND CHOICE OF HOUSING

1. This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd and Merton College Oxford (hereafter 'Merton College') the respective promoters and landowners of draft allocation HA1 'Land South East of Syston'.
2. The Inspectors' issues and questions as set out in the 'Matters, Issues & Questions' document of 25<sup>th</sup> April are set out in bold text below. The representations follow in standard text.

### **ISSUE 1 - IS THE ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEED AND THE HOUSING REQUIREMENT POSITIVELY PREPARED, JUSTIFIED BY THE EVIDENCE AND CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL POLICY?**

#### **4.1 Is basing the assessment of housing need on the Local Housing Need figure in the standard method robust and is the housing requirement of 17,776 dwellings in Policy DS1 justified? What evidence supports this approach and should any upward adjustments be made for economic growth or to support the delivery of affordable housing?**

3. The draft Plan as submitted states that the Local Housing Need for Charnwood has been calculated using the standard methodology set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance. This shows there is a need for 1,111 new homes a year for the period 2021-2037. This is a total of 17,776 homes. No additional provision has been made to account for economic circumstances or the delivery of affordable housing. However, an additional 10% allowance has been made to allow flexibility.
4. Following the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State in December 2021 the standard method for calculating housing need has been updated since the publication of new affordability data by the Office for National Statistics in April 2022. However, as a result of the Plan having been submitted, the previous figure can be relied upon.
5. The use of the standard methodology is robust and justified and the inclusion of a flexibility allowance is supported. It is considered that the flexibility allowance is sufficient to respond to the changes in the standard method and other issues such as Leicester's unmet need. It is also considered that the review mechanism contained in draft Policy DS2 ensures that these issues can be fully considered, and appropriate amendments made to the Plan, should this prove necessary, at the appropriate point in time.

## Supply

### **4.3 Will the proposed supply of 19,461 dwellings set out in Policy DS1 against a requirement of 17,776 dwellings incorporate a sufficient 'buffer' to allow for non-delivery as well as providing choice and flexibility in the supply of housing land?**

6. The inclusion of an allowance for flexibility in housing provision is considered particularly important given the reliance on three Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) to deliver 8,355 dwellings over the plan period. These all now have planning permission and infrastructure improvements, such as road improvements at West Loughborough and Birstall, have begun. It is therefore anticipated all three SUEs will start to deliver homes in the first five years.
7. It is therefore considered that the Plan incorporates a sufficient buffer to allow for non-delivery and provide choice and flexibility in the supply of housing land.
8. In addition to the buffer the review mechanism contained in draft Policy DS2 ensures that any uplift in the Council's housing requirement as a result of Leicester's unmet need can be fully considered, and appropriate amendments made to the Plan, should this prove necessary.

## **ISSUE 2 - WILL THE PLAN PROVIDE FOR A CHOICE AND MIX OF HOUSING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY?**

### **Policy H1 - Housing Mix**

#### **4.5 Will the policy provide for a mix and choice of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community and is it consistent with national policy in that regard?**

9. Policy H1 advises that a mix of house types, tenures and sizes will be sought that meet the overall needs of the Borough in line with the Council's most up to date evidence. Regard will also be had to the extent to which those needs have already been met by other development, local housing needs and housing market evidence, economic conditions, viability and site-specific circumstances. The flexible and evidence-based approach to housing mix is supported and is consistent with national policy.

### **Policy H4 - Affordable Housing**

#### **4.12 Is there any evidence to indicate that the First Homes model is the appropriate mechanism to meet affordable housing needs in the Borough? How will First Homes be delivered as part of the mix of affordable housing?**

10. It is not considered that the Council's evidence base has fully considered the need for First Homes within the Borough. The provision of First Homes should therefore be considered on a site-by-site basis in order to ensure that housing needs within the Borough can be fully responded to.