



CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN 2021-2037

Examination Statement by Charnwood Borough Council

**EXAMINATION HEARING SESSIONS 2023
MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

January 2023

MATTER 5: EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT AND TOWN CENTRES

Issue 2 - Employment Allocations and Other Employment Policies

Policy E3 – Rural Economic Development

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

1. In the light of the Inspectors' findings (Exam 55) regarding the working assumption of 23 hectares forming Leicester's unmet need for employment land, is there sufficient clarity around the location of the sites that will meet that need, and will they meet the principles in the HENA Employment Distribution Paper (Exam 46) which are:

Good proximity to the City, preferably adjacent to the existing urban area; and

Well connected to the City by road (A road) and ideally connected to the wider strategic network (A road/motorway network).

MATTER 5 - ISSUE 2 – ANSWER 1

The Inspectors' findings (Exam 55) have determined that the 23 hectares identified in the State of Common Ground (Exam 43) represents a reasonable working assumption for the scale of Leicester's unmet need for employment land (B2 General Industrial and B8 Small Warehousing Units less than 9,000sqm) from 2020 – 2036. It was also recognised that the submitted Plan already includes provision to meet Leicester's unmet need for employment land, and the Council's position on meeting that need has not changed. However, it was considered unclear which of the allocated employment sites would contribute towards providing for the 23ha of Leicester's unmet need.

In order to resolve this matter and provide the necessary assurance that the allocated employment sites have at least a reasonable prospect of addressing Leicester's unmet need for employment land, the sites have been assessed in terms of the principles for accommodating Leicester's need set out in the HENA Employment Distribution Paper (Exam 46); that is their proximity to the City, and their connectivity by road. The results are shown below in Table 1, focussing on the allocations for B2/B8 uses to meet the unmet need requirements, with a brief summary on the site's deliverability also provided.

Table 1: Assessment of Employment Allocations contribution towards meeting Leicester’s unmet employment land need

Local Plan Allocation	Size (ha) B2/B8 Uses	Criteria		
		Proximity to the City	Connectivity	Delivery
ES1 – Sileby Rd, Barrow upon Soar	2	Remote	Local Road Network	Neighbourhood Plan Allocation – landowner agreement
ES2 – North of Birstall SUE	12.75	Adjacent	A46/A6	Extant planning consent – SUE delivery commenced
ES3 – The Warren, East Goscote	3.95	Intermediate	A607/A46	Extant planning consent – remainder of site
ES4 – West of Loughborough SUE	12	Remote	Strategic Link Road to A512/M1 J23	Extant planning consent – SUE delivery commenced
ES5 – Dishley Grange, Loughborough	5.4	Remote	A6	Extant planning consent – developer interest
ES6 – Rothley Lodge, Rothley	3.35	Intermediate	A6	Extant planning consent - commenced
ES7 – Loughborough Road, Rothley	2.2	Intermediate	A6	Extant planning consent - commenced
ES8 – Fairway Road, Shepshed	4.25	Remote	A512/M1 J23	Proposed Local Plan allocation – developer agreement
ES9 – Watermead Business Park, Syston	9.5	Adjacent	A46/A607	Extant planning consent – developer interest
ES10 – North East of Leicester SUE	11.3	Adjacent	New Main Road to A607	Extant planning consent – SUE delivery commenced

There are 2 allocations which conform entirely with the suggested criteria from the Distribution Paper, the North of Birstall SUE (ES2) and Watermead Business Park (ES9) which contribute a total supply of 22.25ha of B2 and B8 land.

Alongside these sites, a further 4 allocations are also considered suitable to meet Leicester’s unmet employment need. The North East of Leicester SUE (ES10) will be part of the contiguous Leicester urban area, immediately adjoining the city and being viewed in the context of its built form. It will be well connected to the city by a new main road and though more removed from the wider strategic road network this will still be readily accessible via the new road and A607 to the A46 at the Hobby Horse roundabout.

The two sites at Rothley (ES6 & ES7), whilst further removed from the city, still have good connectivity given their location adjacent to the A6 and are less than 10 minutes from the city boundary at Red Hill Circle; as such they would represent suitable locations for businesses wishing to be in the proximity of Leicester. Similarly, the site at The Warren, East Goscote (ES3) is adjacent to the A607, in close proximity to the A46. It is 10 minutes from the Watermead Way/Troon Way (A563 ring road) junction within the city and represents a suitable location for Leicester businesses.

The addition of these 4 sites would provide a total of 43.05ha which is considered more than sufficient to accommodate Leicester's 23ha of unmet employment land need. The Distribution Paper (para 1.13) draws similar conclusions about the suitability of these allocations to meet the local needs for Leicester and it is considered the Inspectors can be provided comfort that there is a very reasonable prospect of meeting Leicester's unmet need in Charnwood.

Business needs can be 'footloose' in nature and subject to market influences, and given the desire for flexibility in supply, it is not desirable to be overly prescriptive in allocating specific individual sites to meet Leicester's unmet need. It would not be equitable or indeed possible to allocate land as only available to businesses originating in or displaced from Leicester and could unnecessarily restrict economic growth. Furthermore, identifying specific site allocations to accommodate apportioned unmet need for housing is not an approach that is proposed. It would be inappropriate and inconsistent for the Local Plan to address apportioned unmet employment land need using such an approach.

An assessment of the suitability of the Local Plan employment allocations demonstrates that a number of the site allocations will meet the principles for accommodating Leicester's unmet employment land need set out in the HENA Employment Distribution Paper (Exam 46). In conclusion the Inspectors, can be assured that there is a reasonable prospect of meeting Leicester's unmet employment need in Charnwood.