

Charnwood Local Plan Examination

Matter 6: Urban Area Policies, Site Selection, Sustainable Urban Extension and
Housing Site Allocations

Hearing Statement (Revised – January 2023)

William Davis Limited

Representation ID: PSLP/565





This Hearing Statement is submitted on behalf of William Davis Limited (WDL) and supports representations submitted to the Charnwood Local Plan (Draft Submission), July 2021. This revised Hearing Statement supersedes that previously submitted for Matter 6 in June 2022.

Issue 1 – Whether the Urban Area Policies are justified and will be effective in meeting development needs

Policy SUA1 – Shepshed Urban Area

6.6 Is the policy justified and positively prepared and will it be effective in relation to:

- a. Infrastructure, including drainage, health facilities, settlement and landscape character and improving connectivity within the town centre and between Shepshed other destinations*
- b. The need for regeneration*
- c. Settlement and landscape character*

- 1.1 Policy SUA1 is supported. It recognises the importance of Shepshed within the Leicestershire International Gateway, where allocations can play an important role in assisting with the delivery of infrastructure and regeneration of the District centre.
- 1.2 However, to ensure that the policy is positively prepared the third criterion, which requires connectivity to be improved between new development and the District Centre particularly by sustainable modes, should be amended.
- 1.3 Whilst this objective is supported, given the number of different allocations within the town, it is advised that the Council should take a co-ordinated approach to connectivity to provide clarity and certainty to developers and local residents alike. Otherwise, there is a danger that this criterion could result in protracted discussions for each allocation at application stage to deliver improvements that are piecemeal and not co-ordinated.



- 1.4 Previous representations to the plan suggest that the policy or explanative text should commit the Council to preparing a connectivity strategy to inform the detail of how Policy SUA1 criterion 3 shall be applied when faced with development proposals.

Issue 2 – The Site Selection Process

6.10 What approach has been taken to site capacity where specific site constraints or developer intentions are known?

- 1.5 The wording of Policy DS3: Housing Allocations and the table setting out the allocations does not give a clear indication that the number of homes proposed for each allocation is indicative. For instance, masterplanning work to date, taking account of landscape, ecology, drainage, flood risk and infrastructure requirements suggests Site HA32 could potentially achieve up to 325 dwellings. Yet it is not clear from Policy DS3 that such a proposal would be acceptable, which lists 300 units. Equally, if a development proposal comes forward with a lower figure it is unclear whether it would be acceptable in principle too. A main modification to policy DS3 is necessary to remedy this.

Issue 4 - Housing allocations

HA32 – Land off Tickow Lane (south)

Question 6.16

- a. Is the proposed scale of housing development justified, having regard to any constraints and the provision of necessary infrastructure?*

- 1.6 The broad scale of development of around 300 dwellings at Site HA32 is reasonable. However, as noted above, the plan should be amended to provide a degree of flexibility to allow for detailed masterplanning, taking account of constraints and necessary infrastructure.
- 1.7 The Site is approximately 28ha. Masterplanning undertaken by WDL to date has identified a number of constraints which contain the potential developable area, some of which are in addition to those identified in the Council's evidence base.



These include the flood plain associated with the Black Brook to the west, two Severn Trent utilities easements, existing footpaths along the perimeter, landform, ecological areas, trees and hedgerows.

1.8 In addition, development proposals for the Site will have regard to the Black Brook Biodiversity Strategy for the wider area, and will safeguard a number of the constraints and assets identified above.

1.9 The key infrastructure element for HA32 which has a significant bearing on the scale of proposed housing is the provision of land for a primary school. As noted in WDL representations, and the Statement of Common Ground with the Council, there is concern about the precise size of the school being specified in the policy requirements, which is discussed further below.

b. Is the allocation consistent with the development strategy in Policy DS1 and where relevant, does it take account of a made Neighbourhood Plan?

1.10 Yes, HA32 accords with the development strategy. It would deliver a substantial quantum of market and affordable homes to assist in meeting the Plan's housing requirements. The allocation would lead to improved transport connections and the enhancement of the environmental assets as envisaged for the 'Leicestershire International Gateway' area within the Strategic Growth Plan. The allocations would benefit from good connectivity through to neighbouring areas and the town centre and assist the local economy through increased footfall.

1.11 The Site is well contained and does not impact on distant views of the town from the wider countryside. Development would therefore be a seamless extension to the town, tying into existing infrastructure and providing additional infrastructure for the wider community.

1.12 There is no Neighbourhood Plan for the area.

c. What is the likely impact of the proposed development on the following factors:



- *settlement separation and identity and landscape character;*
- *biodiversity, green infrastructure including public rights of way and agricultural land quality;*
- *heritage assets;*
- *the strategic and local highway network and other infrastructure including health facilities, education and open space;*
- *air and water quality, noise pollution, land stability and flood risk*

1.13 As noted in previous representations, extensive technical work has already been undertaken in preparation for the submission of a planning application shortly. Draft technical reports and the emerging masterplan were enclosed with the representations. Since then work has focussed on testing the proposals, including through independent Design Review and further highways, landscape and ecological assessments, amongst other elements.

1.14 The Site relates well to the settlement of Shepshed, and is bounded by the Black Brook which acts as a buffer containing development. WDL's landscape and visual appraisals to date concur with the assessment of EB/ENV/4 (Site PSH404, page 152) that overall the site is of medium sensitivity and suitable for residential development subject to appropriate mitigation. As EB/ENV/4 notes, there are no known significant heritage assets on site and it does not make a significant contribution to any heritage features in the wider landscape.

1.15 The majority of green infrastructure, biodiversity and flood risk constraints are associated with the Black Brook corridor, which development proposals are taking account of. This is primarily through ensuring land remains undeveloped and there are appropriate buffers. In addition, a biodiversity strategy for the Black Brook has been prepared, in conjunction with other promoters and stakeholders, which will provide for biodiversity net gain, mitigate flood risk and potential recreational pressures.

1.16 In terms of transport, primary access to the Site would be via a new roundabout on Tickow Lane/Buttercup Lane and the development of the Site would maximise the potential to access sustainable forms of transport, services and facilities through onsite provision and connections and improvements to existing facilities.



The Council's transport evidence base notes that cumulatively proposed allocations at Shepshed can be accommodated on the existing highway network subject to mitigation at key junctions, such as the A512/Tickow Lane.

- 1.17 WDL along with promoters of HA34 have jointly completed transport modelling work to assess the impact of development in detail, and identify particular mitigation measures, to be submitted with the forthcoming planning applications for the Sites. Joint work has been undertaken partly on the basis that it was identified early that Tickow Lane has limited scope to be widened and therefore traffic will be routed through HA32 and HA34; ultimately allowing for the partial closure and pedestrianisation of Tickow Lane.
- 1.18 Detailed development proposals will ensure that an appropriate amount of open space is provided and other infrastructure requirements (e.g. health and secondary education provision) are met through planning obligations that meet the necessary tests. The IDP (SD/10) identifies that all infrastructure requirements for Shepshed can be met subject to contributions where appropriate.
- 1.19 Detailed development proposals will be accompanied by assessments of potential impacts in relation to noise, air and flood risk and any necessary mitigation. It is noted that no potential significant impacts have been identified in relation to air quality in EB/ENV/3, but the report does advise detailed assessment at the planning application stage.

d. Are the development requirements clear and deliverable and are any further safeguards or mitigation measures necessary to achieve an acceptable form of development? Are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

- 1.20 No, as noted above, previous representations and in the SOCG, the principal of provision of land for a primary school at Site HA32 is not disputed. However, WDL remain unconvinced at this stage that it is clearly justified that land sufficient for a 3 form entry school is necessary.



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- 1.21 The IDP (SD/10) anticipates a pupil yield of 562 pupils across Shepshed, which is 2 classrooms less than a 3FE school. Whilst it is acknowledged that delivering a potentially greater number of units at HA32 (than 300) will have a relatively small increase in pupil yields, it has not clearly been demonstrated that there is no spare capacity within Shepshed primary schools such that some of the pupil yield could be accommodated elsewhere and land provided for a 2FE school on HA32.
- 1.22 Given this current uncertainty, and the number of years before education land will be needed reference to a specific size of school should be removed from the requirements of HA32. The precise quantum and site area could be determined through the planning application process, having regard to site specific constraints and opportunities, with a review mechanism if necessary. For instance, Department for Education Building Bulletin 103 – Area guidelines for mainstream schools - suggests a gross site area range for a 3 form entry school (with nursery provision) of approximately 2.5 to 3ha. This is before any potential discounting for the provision of facilities such as all-weather pitches which can twice towards minimum areas required and thus lessen the area necessary for soft outdoor PE.
- 1.23 WDL are content with the specific development requirements for HA32 in relation to the production of a biodiversity strategy, and as noted above this work completed in autumn 2022.



- e. *Has any planning permission been granted for residential development and if so, what are the details?*

1.24 No, albeit an outline planning application is anticipated to be submitted in the first quarter of 2023. The previous Matter 6 hearing statement suggested an application would be submitted last summer, however a detailed assessment of the site was necessary to be comfortable that the proposed additional capacity is achievable.

Shepshed Urban Area

General Questions

Which sites are expected to contribute to the costs of a new primary school on Site HA32? Will this be expected to cover land and build costs and should this be made clear in the site requirements? What mechanism will be used to share the cost of a new primary school amongst the developers of other sites?

Is there an identified shortfall in sports facilities in the town and if so, will developer contributions be sought towards improved and new facilities?

1.25 The Local Plan identifies the following sites which are expected to contribute towards the costs of a new primary school on Site HA32:

- HA30/PSH024 Land off Fairway Road, Shepshed
- HA31/PSH062 Land north of Ashby Road, Shepshed
- HA32/PSH404 Land off Tickow Lane (south), Shepshed
- HA33/PSH174 Land at Oakley Road, Shepshed
- HA34/PSH291 Land off Tickow Lane (north), Shepshed
- HA35/PSH293 Land North of Hallamford Road and West of Shepshed
- HA36) 20 Moscow Lane, Shepshed
- HA37 Land rear of 62 Iveshead Road, Shepshed
- HA39 Land fronting Ashby Road and Ingleberry Road, Shepshed
- HA40/PSH405 Land to the west of the B591/Ingleberry Rd and north of Iveshead Lane, Shepshed
- HA41/PSH483 Land south of Ashby Road Central, Shepshed
- HA42 32 Charnwood Road, Shepshed



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- 1.26 It is clear from the above that the approach to planning for growth in primary school provision within Shepshed is taking a town wide approach, which is considered reasonable and not disputed.
- 1.27 For all allocations that are required to contribute towards the new primary school this should ensure that costs in relation to the construction of the school and land costs are apportioned fairly. This is a point that is agreed between WDL and the Council in the SOCG and should be clearly reflected in Local Plan policy for each allocation.
- 1.28 The Council had previously indicated it would prepare an Education Delivery Strategy (EDS) for the Shepshed allocations, in order to describe the mechanism used to share the cost of the school amongst developers. It is now anticipated that any EDS will be developed during the development management process for allocations in Shepshed and based upon the precedent set in Barrow and emerging in Anstey, which share similar education provision challenges. Notwithstanding, the principal mechanism used to share costs should be through securing Section 106 contributions, covering land and build costs. This should be proportionate to the level of pupils an allocation is likely to generate and applied on a consistent basis.

Word Count: 2,184