

**LOCAL PLAN
REPRESENTATION**

**HEARING STATEMENT
– MATTER 6**

Land East of Thurcaston

May 2022

Carter Jonas

Date: May 2022

Client: Mr C Green

Job Number: J0048347

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Carter Jonas LLP on behalf of Mr C Green in respect of the Matters, Issues and Questions produced by the Inspector in relation to the Charnwood Local Plan 2021-37 Examination.
- 1.2 The separate Hearing Statements provide a response to the following matters;
- Matter 1: Duty to cooperate and other legal requirements
 - Matter 4: Assessment of housing need, the housing requirement and mix and choice of housing
 - Matter 6: Urban area policies, site selection, sustainable urban extensions and housing site allocations
 - Matter 9 – Viability and Monitoring
- 1.3 Carter Jonas will be representing their client at the Hearing Sessions held in respect of matters 1 and 4, on Tuesday 28th June 2022 and Tuesday 12 July 2022 respectively.
- 1.4 This Statement follows the submission of representations in respect of the Charnwood Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft (July 2021) (Regulation 19) in August 2021 (reference: 615). The representation primarily focused on the housing requirement and the unmet need arising from Leicester City, which at that time was not apportioned across the neighbouring authorities. However, since the submission of the Charnwood Local Plan 2021-37 to examination, a further Statement of Common Ground (April 2022) has been published by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities which identifies the scale of the unmet need and apportions it across the seven authorities.
- 1.5 This representation has been prepared in the context of the following planning policies.
- 1.6 Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), hereinafter referred to as the NPPF, sets out three sustainability objectives which are as follows;
- 'a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy'*
- 1.7 In accordance with paragraph 35 of the NPPF (2021), Local Plans must be assessed as to whether they accord with legal and procedural requirements and meet the test of soundness as set out below;
- a) Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need*

from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

b) Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;

c) Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

d) Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

- 1.8 Paragraph 24 of the NPPF (2021) states that local planning authorities are under a duty to cooperate with each other and with other prescribed bodies on strategic matter that cross administrative boundaries which includes addressing unmet housing need. Furthermore, paragraph 27 details the requirement to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working through the preparation of Statements of Common Ground.

2.0 MATTER 6

- 2.1 The proceeding section provides a response to the following questions;
- 6.1 How does the Leicester Urban Area relate to the settlement hierarchy, is the policy justified and will it be effective in informing proposals for new development?
- 6.14 Is Policy LUA3 justified and soundly based, including in relation to:
- The boundary of the site and the overall scale and mix of the uses shown on the key diagram and the Policies Map
 - Key infrastructure items, including drainage and transport improvements and accessibility to Thurcaston
 - The timescale and the rate of delivery in the housing trajectory

Leicester Urban Area

- 2.2 Directing development towards the Leicester Urban Area is an appropriate planning strategy as it contributes to supporting the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Charnwood Borough Council and Leicester City. As identified in paragraph 2.42 of the Charnwood Local Plan (2021-37) (Pre-Submission Draft 2021-37), such development strategy is '*central to the success of the wider Housing and Economic Market Area of Leicester and Leicestershire.*' In the context of the 18,700 unmet arising from Leicester City, it is paramount that a large proportion of this need is met on the edge of the city where the demand is.
- 2.3 However, the extent of the defined Leicester Urban Area is too limited and fails to take into account all areas which are well connected to Leicester City. For example, it is noted that Thucaston is identified on page 79 of the Charnwood Local Plan (2021-37) (Pre-Submission Draft 2021-37) as an adjoining settlement but falls outside the Leicester Urban Area. The settlement is physically very well connected to Leicester City via Leicester Road leading to Ashton Green Road. Indeed, the settlement is connected to Leicester City Centre by the 145 bus running approximately once an hour between 8am and 7pm on weekdays and 7am and 7pm on Saturdays. Furthermore, the settlement provides a number of facilities and services to meet the day to day needs of local residents.
- 2.4 In order to accommodate the 1,248 dwellings over the period of 2020-36 arising from Leicester City, Charnwood should expand the Leicester Urban Area. As set out in our response to Matter 1, it is paramount that a large proportion of the unmet need is delivered in those areas which relate most closely to Leicester City. This approach will contribute to achieving all three sustainability objectives in accordance with paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2021).

Policy LUA3 (North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension)

- 2.5 We strongly support the provision of larger scale strategic sites including Land North of Birstall. It will deliver approximately 1950 homes, up to 15 hectares of employment, a primary school, a local centre, along with associated transport infrastructure.
- 2.6 The Key Diagram shown on page 88 of the Charnwood Local Plan 2021-37 shows an improved connectivity and accessibility between the site and Thurcaston. This will significantly boost the sustainability of Thurcaston and the SUE which we agree is appropriate to be incorporated into a forthcoming scheme. The improved connectivity is omitted from the policy wording (and supporting

text). It is therefore recommended that this is amended to reflect the key diagram to ensure connectivity and accessibility is improved and any ambiguity unintentionally created.

