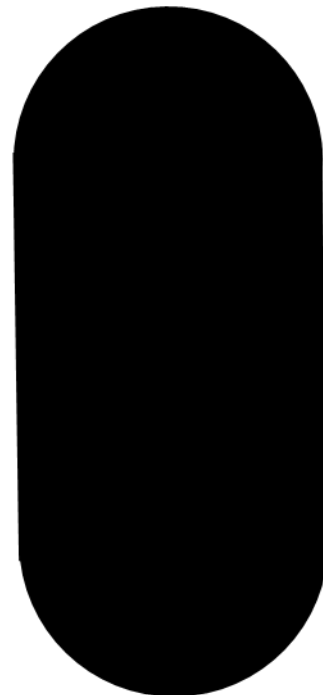
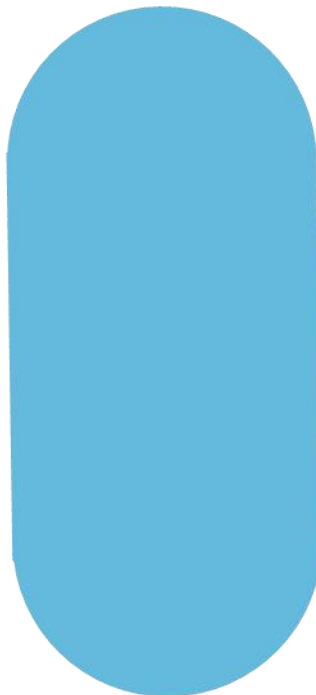


**WRITTEN STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF THE
CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN 2021-37
EXAMINATION**

**MATTER 6- URBAN AREA POLICIES, SITE
SELECTION, SUSTAINABLE URBAN
EXTENSIONS AND HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS**

On Behalf of Bellway Homes



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Written Statement is made on behalf of our client, Bellway Homes Ltd, in response to the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions for the examination hearings for the Charnwood Local Plan 2037.
- 1.2 Bellway Homes Ltd are promoting the land off Barkby Thorpe Lane, Thurmaston. The land is specifically covered under Policy DS3, site reference HA7.
- 1.3 Bellway Homes Ltd has engaged in all stages of the plan making process and previously made representations to the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation (Marrons Planning Representation dated August 2021).
- 1.4 Bellway Homes Ltd and the Council have agreed a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) and we anticipate that the signed SoCG will form part of the Council's pack submitted to the examination (and so provision is not duplicated here).
- 1.5 The Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) confirms agreement between Charnwood Borough Council and Bellway Homes with respect to the following matters:
- i. The allocation of the Site is appropriate and justified.
 - ii. The extent of the Site is as shown on the plan in section 1 [of the SoCG].
 - iii. Access can be achieved to both the northern and southern edges of the site.
 - iv. Notwithstanding the disagreement regarding the overall capacity of the site, the site can accommodate at least 105 homes and the amended table set out in section 2 [of the SoCG see 2.7 below] provides a realistic timetable for the beginning of development of the Site.
 - v. It is necessary for the allocation of the Site to safeguard the route of

one of the roads that will serve the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension. This can be achieved by an appropriate layout for the Site that enables its delivery.

- vi. The Development Strategy set out in the Pre-submission Draft Local Plan recognises the need to maintain the separate character and identity of different settlements and this will require landscaping for the Site.
- vii. Policy DS3 should provide clarity regarding how to interpret the quantum of development identified for each allocation.
- viii. The final two bullet points of Policy DS3(HA7) apply only to decisions to be taken on planning applications relating to the Site rather than to the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension.

1.6 The SoCG also notes that the most appropriate quantum of development for the site and the precise form of the landscaping required to maintain the separate character and identity of Syston and Thurmaston requires further discussion but does not affect the appropriateness of the allocation.

1.7 Both Charnwood Borough Council and Bellway Homes are willing to undertake further discussion on these matters, including in relation to any available landscape evidence, some of which may take place through the planning application process.

- 1.8 The matters that have been identified for further discussion are:
- i. How a constraints-led masterplanning approach could inform the most appropriate quantum of development on the Site and the most appropriate location of development parcels within the site.
 - ii. How more detailed landscape and visual impact assessment could inform the most appropriate extent and type of landscape mitigation to ensure that the issues of landscape separation and identity are addressed.

2. MATTER 6 – URBAN AREA POLICIES, SITE SELECTION, SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSIONS AND HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS

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

- 2.1 The City of Leicester provides the economic and social focus of the wider Housing and Economic Market Area of Leicester and Leicestershire. Thurmaston is identified as one of four urban settlements by the Charnwood Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (DS/3) benefitting from the full range of services and facilities including a secondary school, a range of employment opportunities and a choice of services within the settlement. Thurmaston is attached to the city's urban area and benefits from a strong functional relationship. 44% of the economically active residents in Thurmaston work in Leicester and there are very good transport connections with a 10 minute daytime and hourly evening bus service that gets residents into the city centre within 30 minutes.
- 2.2 Development at the edge of the city reinforces the Borough's relationship with the city and the economic and social opportunities it presents.
- 2.3 Policy LUA1: Leicester Urban Area draws together policy objectives from across the plan in what appears to be a signposting exercise to provide a spatial framework to support the urban area's role as the central economic, social and cultural focus of the County. The Policy recognises the development strategy proposed through Policies DS1 and DS3 and is both justified and forms an effective mechanism to inform proposals for suitable development at this location.

Issue 2 – The site selection process

- 2.4 The site selection process for the proposed housing allocations is soundly based. The Sustainability Assessment (SA) Report (May 2021) notes that the Council used the outcome of the different stages in the

sustainability appraisal process alongside other factors to identify the strategy for new homes in the Local Plan. This included consultation with the Local Education Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Groups to understand the capacity of local schools and doctors' surgeries.

2.5 The SA Report considered on-site constraints, pressure on existing facilities and wider implications of development in respect of landscape as part of the process. These factors have been appropriately recognised through suitable housing allocations within the Local Plan and a significant number of reasonable alternative sites have been assessed (see SA Appendix H).

2.6 A detailed assessment in respect of land off Barkby Thorpe Lane, Thurmaston (HA7) was undertaken within Bellway Homes' previously made representations to the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation (see Marrons Planning Representation dated August 2021 - paragraphs 4.14 – 4.20).

2.7 In respect of site capacity, and not seeking to repeat statements made in our Matter 2 Statement, it is considered that modifications are required to provide clarity that the yield prescribed to housing allocations is a minimum and that the quantum of development on allocated sites should be informed by a constraints-led master-planning exercise at the planning application stage.

Issue 3 – Sustainable Urban Extensions

2.8 Policy LUA2: North East of Leicester SUE relates to the delivery of approximately 4,500 dwellings of which 3,205 dwellings are expected within the plan period to 2037 alongside the required infrastructure provision.

2.9 The North East Leicester SUE was granted hybrid permission on the 4th August 2016 (application reference P/13/2498/2) and the Local Plan trajectory expects delivery from the 2021/22 period onwards.

2.10 The North East of Leicester SUE boundary appears to include land within

allocation HA7 (see SD/2 key diagram on page 83). Bellway Homes recognise that access to the SUE should be safeguarded but that there should be flexibility rather than restrictions which could cause additional and unnecessary complications of timing and delivery.

- 2.11 The Statement of Common Ground clarifies that the final two bullet points within Policy DS3(HA7) apply only to decisions to be taken on planning applications relating to the Site (HA7) rather than to the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension.

Issue 4 - Housing allocations

- 2.12 Allocation HA7 is consistent with the development strategy set out in Policy DS1 and will facilitate the delivery of the North East of Leicester SUE northern access road.

- 2.13 The land off Barkby Thorpe Lane, Thurmaston (HA7) is identified within Policy DS3 for accommodating 105 homes. Bellway Homes has previously submitted a planning application for 224 homes for the southern part of the site (reference P/14/1670/2). Significant progress has now been made towards the submission of a revised planning application and together these processes have provided a detailed understanding of site constraints and opportunities and together indicate that a higher number of dwellings can be accommodated on the allocation.

- 2.14 In respect of settlement separation, and not seeking to repeat commentary covered within Matter 3, the HA7 indicative diagram is not considered to be the appropriate approach to maintaining settlement separation. In our view a constraints-led masterplanning exercise provides for better understanding of both yield and development area. Assessments to date indicate that the housing allocation can be accommodated without causing significant harm to the landscape.

- 2.15 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of flooding. Similarly, it is considered that the development would result in no harm to the

significance to the nearest designated heritage asset or their setting.

2.16 There are no statutory wildlife sites, within or close to the site that are likely to be affected by the development. In addition, it is considered that a biodiversity net gain can be delivered as part of proposals.

2.17 A suitably designed access strategy can be delivered in respect of both the northern and southern parcels and proposals would not lead to severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway. Furthermore, Bellway Homes agree that land within the scheme should be safeguarded to facilitate the new access route planned to serve the north east Leicester SUE as required by Policy DS3(HA7).

2.18 However, Bellway Homes consider Policy DS3(HA7) to be overly prescriptive and to lack sufficient flexibility to allow for the safeguarding of the SUE access road. Therefore we would suggest that the first three bullet points be deleted and replaced with the following modified text:

We will support development proposals at site HA7 that:

- ***are accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, or similar document, that sets seeks to minimise the impact of the development on the settlement identities of Thurmaston and Syston, safeguards the route of the road that will serve the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension and incorporates appropriate landscaping to support the visual separation between the settlements.***

2.19 We note the Inspectors' specific questions raised in respect of HA7. Firstly, the key diagram is not considered to be justified or effective in demonstrating 'acceptable' development at the site (see Matter 3 statement). The requirements for tree planting and visual separation are not considered to be clear or flexible, and the modification proposed above is therefore proposed.

2.20 The masterplan and phasing for the whole allocation (bullet point 4) relates solely to the HA7 allocation and not the wider SUE. The HA7

allocation should be capable of being brought forward independently of the wider SUE and this point is also between Bellway Homes and Charnwood Borough Council within the Statement of Common Ground.

- 2.21 Furthermore, the proposals map appears to show HA7 sitting within the allocation boundary for LUA2. Whilst the SOCG between Bellway Homes and Charnwood Borough Council confirms that Policy HA7 does not require a masterplan to be agreed which includes delivery and phasing arrangements for the whole allocation [i.e. including LUA2] the primacy of Policy HA7 to determine development proposals could be established and confirmed by clarification of the area/boundary for Policy LUA2.