



# RIDGE

**CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN 2021-37  
EXAMINATION: INSPECTORS  
MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

**MATTER 6 STATEMENT**

**ON BEHALF OF PARKER STRATEGIC  
LAND**

MAY 2022

# CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN 2021-37 EXAMINATION: INSPECTORS MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

## MATTER 6 STATEMENT

May 2022

Prepared for

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Prepared by

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
  
[REDACTED]

Contact

Guy Wakefield  
Partner

Jenny Henderson  
Principal Planner

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Statement Background

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared in response to the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions in relation to the examination of the Charnwood Local Plan 2021-2027. This Statement has been prepared on behalf of Parker Strategic Land who are proposing an urban extension to the south of Loughborough, west of the A6004 Terry Yardley Way, south-east of Woodthorpe.
- 1.2 This site is allocated for development in the emerging Local Plan (Site HA15), and this representation focusses on the Inspector's questions in relation to this allocation, in particular, the Parker Strategic Land parcel of the site. Previous representations have been made by LRM Planning on behalf of William Davis Homes and Parker Strategic Land (August 2021), and since the submission of this previous representation, planning committee have resolved to grant planning permission on a parcel of the allocated site, as set out further below. This Statement will not repeat the content of this previous representation but will refer to key points within it when addressing the Inspectors' specific questions.

## 2. RESPONSE TO INSPECTOR'S QUESTIONS: MATTER 6 ISSUE 4

2.1 The following questions are answered in relation to Site Allocation HA15 only.

### Question 6.16

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

- 2.2 Policy DS3 identifies the Site's capacity as 723 new homes. As set out in previous representations, the suggested capacity is based on an average density of 32 dwellings per hectare; however, this is likely to vary across the site, and therefore there is the potential to increase the capacity of the site beyond the 723 dwellings suggested in the policy.
- 2.3 In addition the 'Key HA15 Diagram' at Page 43 of the Pre-Submission Plan does not reflect the latest application on the site, as set out further below, which identifies a greater level of housing development than set out within the 'housing within allocation' parcels on the plan.
- 2.4 In the context of the above, and in order to ensure the plan has been positively prepared, it is suggested that this is defined as a minimum figure.

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

- 2.5 Emerging policy DS1 sets out the pattern of development for the Borough, and shows that 31% of new homes are to be allocated to Loughborough. Emerging policy DS1 states that new development is to be confined to allocated sites or within Limits to Development.
- 2.6 The allocation of the site is consistent with the development strategy as it is located adjacent to Loughborough, which is identified as a sustainable settlement for growth. The site is in close proximity to its services and facilities, and has the opportunities to maximise the use of sustainable modes of travel which is one of the key objectives. It assists in delivering the new homes identified for Loughborough and the Borough as a whole, and will help to deliver the pattern of development which the Council considers to provide the optimum balance between social, environmental and economic considerations.

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.

#### **Settlement Separation and Identity and Landscape Character**

2.7 See Paragraph 2.29 where this is addressed.

#### **Biodiversity, green infrastructure including public rights of way and agricultural land quality;**

2.8 In terms of biodiversity, the allocated site is dominated by agricultural uses and as such existing habitats are of limited ecological value (as acknowledged by the Council's Sustainability Appraisal). With appropriate mitigation measures, ecology is not considered to be a constraint to the development of the site.

2.9 Whilst there will be a loss of some habitats, these are of limited value and can be satisfactorily addressed by the opportunity to increase the biodiversity value of the area through planting and Green Infrastructure connections. In this regard, Policy DS3 (HA15) include specific requirements to secure provision of an appropriate buffer between built development and Mucklin Wood, and the Key HA15 Diagram also demonstrates a considerable separation between Mucklin Wood and new development consistent with its status as an Ancient Woodland. Furthermore, the wording of the policy also requires the submission of the Green Infrastructure strategy to provide a functional ecological network of habitats and corridors to facilitate wildlife movement within and through the site.

2.10 As part of the planning application on the site, the Council acknowledged that the proposed development could meet a net gain in biodiversity and would overall comply with the relevant policies.

2.11 In terms of Green Infrastructure more widely, the policy requires the submission of a Green Infrastructure strategy that sets out how the development will provide, and maintain through a long-term management plan, as well as a functional ecological network of habitats and corridors. The intention would be for the existing Public Rights of Way to be incorporated within these Green Infrastructure corridors.

2.12 In terms of agricultural land, it is noted that there will be the loss of agricultural land. However, as set out in previous representations, all of the proposed allocations adjacent to existing settlements are attributed a major negative score for their effect on soils. The Council's Sustainability Appraisal

acknowledges that the need to release substantial land housing makes it extremely difficult to avoid significant effects and, secondly, significant effects are unlikely to be avoided through alternative spatial strategies.

### **Heritage assets**

2.13 Development in this location would not impact on any Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Historic Battlefields. There are a number of listed buildings and the Loughborough Conservation Area in proximity to the site; however, in almost all cases there is no inter-visibility between these designated heritage assets and the site.

2.14 Within the settlement of Woodthorpe is the Grade II listed building Reynalls. The core of its significance is provided by its form and fabric; neither of which will be affected by development. Its setting comprises its curtilage which is heavily landscaped, rather than the open land to the south.

2.15 The Council's Sustainability Statement highlights the following:

*'The Reynalls building sits within a small residential area (Woodthorpe) and is surrounded by newer buildings that are not in keeping with its character. New development on a large site would not be immediately visible, and so in this respect no effects are predicted. Though the approach to Woodthorpe is somewhat open in nature and adds to the 'rural' feel of this settlement, it is not considered to be integral to the Reynalls building, and so neutral effects are predicted.'*

2.16 As such, there will be no harm to heritage assets. This was acknowledged as part of the application on the site where Officers concluded within the committee report that *'the proposal will cause no harm to the setting of the listed buildings in the vicinity of the site and will therefore protect heritage assets and their setting.'*

### **The strategic and local highway network and other infrastructure including health facilities, education and open space**

2.17 The likely effects of development related traffic on the local and strategic networks have been considered at various points during the preparation of the Local Plan. For Loughborough, the AECOM Charnwood Borough Local Plan Mitigation Report (May 2021) identifies LO-PK3 as the preferred mitigation package which comprises a combination of highway capacity interventions at key junctions and sustainable travel interventions across the town. These measures are then reflected in the infrastructure list identified in Appendix 3 of the Local Plan. The sustainable transport measures would improve the opportunities for walking and cycling and public transport.

2.18 As part of the application/appeal of the northernmost parcel of the allocated site, a Statement of Common Ground was prepared on highways grounds. This agreed with the Local Highways Authority that measures can be provided at the Woodthorpe roundabout junction in the form of

partial signalisation of the roundabout, to ensure that the development traffic from the whole emerging allocation can be accommodated.

- 2.19 In terms of community infrastructure/education, the policy requires a new 2 form entry primary school located on land within the allocated site boundaries and of a size and specification which meets Leicestershire County Council's requirements.
- 2.20 The Grange Park development to the north of Woodthorpe has provided a range of community infrastructure and commercial uses including a local foodstore. New housing would be in close proximity to these existing uses.
- 2.21 The Green Infrastructure network and public open space can provide further recreation opportunities and extend public access across the site and its surroundings.

### **Air and water quality, noise pollution, land stability and flood risk**

- 2.22 The Level One Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (December 2018) identifies that the South Loughborough Site is wholly within Flood Zone 1. In accordance with the NPPF's sequential test, this is a suitable site for residential development. As part of a scheme, Sustainable Urban Drainage measures will be employed to control surface water run-off.
- 2.23 In terms of noise, development would be appropriate in this location subject to the installation of acoustically enhanced glazing along the eastern and northern boundaries of the site. This matter was considered as part of the committee report for application reference P/21/0550/2 which states:

*The Environmental Health officer advises that the Noise Assessment Report submitted confirms that the development site is exposed to a noise climate generally suitable to support residential end use. However certain parts of the site were likely to be impacted by rail noise. Further consideration of the potential impact of train noise should be considered at reserved matters stage when matters of layout, construction and orientation are considered. A condition is therefore recommended to secure an appropriate glazing and ventilation scheme to be submitted at reserved matters stage, for all properties proposed in the blue and gold area of Figure 18/0051/F5 in the noise Impact Assessment (26/3/18). Therefore, subject to a condition to secure an appropriate noise mitigation scheme is considered at reserved matters, and a Dust Management Plan to mitigate dust impact from construction activities, the proposal is considered to meet policies CS2 and CS16 and emerging policies DS5 and EV11.*

- 2.24 In terms of air quality, the allocated site is not within an Air Quality Management Area. An Air Quality Assessment was carried out as part of planning application P/21/0550/2 which considers the potential air quality impacts during the construction and operational phases of the development. The assessment concludes that future residents would not be exposed to poor air quality. The conclusions of this report were accepted by the Council's Environmental Health Officer.

2.25 The site subject to the above application is the northernmost part of the allocated site and therefore in closest proximity to the road. Given the conclusions made as part of that application, it is not considered that the site is constrained in respect of flood risk, noise or air quality.

#### 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?

2.26 As identified above and within previous representations, where the evidence base and Sustainability Appraisal has identified potential negative effects, mitigation measures have been identified either in the policy itself or other Local Plan policies. As such, no further safeguards are considered necessary.

#### e) Has any planning permission been granted for residential development and if so, what are the details?

2.27 Application reference P/21/0550/2 for the development of up to 120 new dwellings with access from Main Street, Woodthorpe, Loughborough, is currently being determined at appeal. This comprises the northernmost parcel of the allocated site. An appeal against non-determination has been submitted but the Council took the application to planning committee on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022 in order to assess how the application would have been determined. The application was recommended for approval and the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation; it is understood that the resolution will be used within the Council's Statement of Case for the appeal.

2.28 The application is supported by a number of technical documents, which have been referred to above. These documents demonstrate that there are no overriding constraints that would prevent or delay development of the site. This is reflected in the officer's recommendation for approval.

2.29 The Key HA15 Diagram at Page 43 of the Pre-Submission Plan suggests a smaller parcel of development within the northern part of the site than proposed as part of the outline application. The outline application demonstrates that 120 dwellings in this area is acceptable across the entirety of that area; as such, it is recommended that the Key HA15 Diagram is updated to reflect the current application.

### HA15 – Land south of Loughborough

#### Would the proposed development lead to the loss of separation between Loughborough and Quorn and how would settlement identity be maintained?

2.30 Whilst the allocation of the site would extend the built-up area of Loughborough further south and towards Quorn, these settlements will not coalesce and will remain separated by the existing railway line and further agricultural land to the east. As a result of the evidence base work undertaken for

the Local Plan, the Policies Map proposes an Area of Separation east of the railway line to provide long term protection to this area of land between the settlements. Furthermore, the Key HA15 Diagram includes structural landscaping at points along the Site's eastern boundary which correspond with viewpoints from the east; this planting will limit the extent to which new development is visible.

2.31 This is confirmed within the Committee Report for P/21/0550/2 which states:

*'Concerns have been raised that the development would reduce the perceptible gap between Loughborough and Quorn. Whilst the development may be seen from a limited number of locations on the approach to Loughborough from Quorn, this development would be seen in the context of the wider urban settlement of Loughborough and partially contained by existing manmade urban features. The distance from the development site to Loughborough Road in Quorn would be 500m. It is not considered that this distance and reduced degree of separation would cause significant or demonstrable harm having regard for the settlement identity of Quorn. Furthermore, regard would be had within any reserved matters application for the layout and landscaping of the site. Any application would be expected to accord with the aspirations of emerging local policy HA15 which seeks structural landscaping to break up views of the site and around Woodthorpe and to the sites eastern boundary.'*

2.32 As above, emerging Policy DS3 (HA15) states that development on the site will be supported that protects settlement identity and the landscape, including retention of existing trees and hedgerows to contribute to landscape setting and retain landscape character, retention and enhancement of the character and identity of the linear hamlet of Woodthorpe and its wooded setting.

2.33 The landscape buffers around the site (secured by the wording to the policy as well as the Key HA15 Diagram) would assist in protecting landscape character by responding to the relevant landscape character assessments, and would ensure that the identity of the village of Woodthorpe can be maintained. Where new development approaches Woodthorpe, careful use of design will ensure the distinctive character of the hamlet is retained, which will also serve to protect the setting of the Grade II Listed Building. This is reflected in the design approach taken for application reference P/21/0550/2 on the northern part of the site, but the same approach will be taken with applications across the site which will need to meet the requirement of the policy to retain and enhance the character and identity of Woodthorpe and its wooded setting.

## What effect would the proposed development have on Woodthorpe?

2.34 See above response.

## Is the requirement for a masterplan justified?

2.35 The final criterion of the policy HA15 requires firstly an agreed masterplan for the whole allocated site covering delivery and phasing to achieve comprehensive development before the grant of

outline planning permission. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Council will wish for each phase of development to be mindful of the overarching allocation, this does not necessitate the agreement of a single masterplan for the whole development prior to the first grant of outline consent, and the inevitable phased delivery of the site should be actively supported by the policy. Indeed, any such requirement could delay the delivery of the allocation and prevent a flexible approach.

2.36 It is noted that the Committee Report for application P/21/0550/2 accepts that the development of the application site could take place without prejudice to the remainder of the allocation provided safeguards are in place to prevent the 'sterilisation' of the remainder, including the use of planning conditions. As such, it has been accepted by the Council that the use of planning conditions can ensure the same control over the delivery of the allocation as a whole.

2.37 In the context of the above, it is not considered that the requirement for a masterplan is justified and it is requested that this requirement is removed, reflecting the inevitable phased delivery of the site.