

Charnwood Local Plan Examination in Public

William Davis Homes Ltd & Chapman Estates (Leicester) Ltd

Hearing Statement - Matter 8: Infrastructure and Transport

June 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement sets out submissions made by Planning and Design Group (UK) Ltd on behalf of William Davis Homes Ltd. It relates to Matter 8: Infrastructure and Transport.
- 1.2 This Statement is submitted in response to the 'Matter, Issues and Questions' (MIQs) identified by the Inspector in May 2022 that will guide the relevant Examination in Public. They should be read in conjunction with our previous representations, including extensive supporting evidence, made throughout the Charnwood Local Plan drafting and consultation process.
- 1.3 Not every question has been answered – only those which are relevant to William Davis' case and previous representations.

2.0 Matter 8: Infrastructure and Transport

Issue 2 – Transport

Context - The Transport Topic Paper (TP/5) indicates that further work is required to build on the existing transport evidence and provide a more detailed understanding of the Plan’s impact on the highway network. Further details of work underway are provided in the Council’s letter (EXAM 1A).

8.4 What is the role of sustainable transport modes in supporting planned growth and has the effect of modal shift supported by Policy CC5 been taken into account in the transport modelling and studies (EB/TR/11, 12 & 13)? If so, how?

- 2.1 The location and scale of the allocations at HA12 and HA43 are specifically identified to have attributes of sustainability that will considerably reduce reliance on the private car and will facilitate a realistic choice of alternative modes of transport. Further, it is recognised that during the Covid pandemic, car use and commuting fell dramatically and this is not yet accounted for in modelling data which assumes pre-covid traffic levels. Cycling increased in popularity during the pandemic and innovations such as electric scooters are providing further alternatives to the car. Accessibility to existing services, and the potential to enhance and create an extensive network of connected cycleways and footpaths through the Green Infrastructure strategy are key features, alongside the potential to access and enhance existing public transport infrastructure routes. The allocations provide the realistic choice, location and connectivity necessary to deliver the conditions for continued modal shift.
- 2.2 Appendix B of EB/TR-11 acknowledges that the benefits of improved footpath and cycle connections cannot be realistically modelled in the strategic model. While this might be seen as a failing of the modelling, it is therefore important to recognise that the modelled impacts are very much a worst case scenario, which will be significantly reduced through the allocation of sites in accessible locations with high quality sustainable links and good opportunities to utilise and enhance public transport routes.

- 2.3 It is stated in rather binary fashion within the EB/TR-11 report that ‘it is inevitable that the development traffic will continue to result in some additional congestion.’ This statement takes no realistic account of the modal shift that has already occurred during the covid pandemic; takes no account of the accessibility of sites to provide realistic choice; and, takes no account of the fact that more hybrid patterns of working have significantly reduced the number of peak hour journeys.

8.5 Does Policy INF2 (Local and Strategic Road Network) set out a co-ordinated and strategy led approach to all types of transport in the Borough?

- 2.4 In the context of the evidence base undertaken to develop the plan, it is considered that Policy INF2 does set out a co-ordinated and strategy led approach to all types of transport in the Borough. It recognises the roles of the Highway Authorities and Highways England as key consultees in development proposals. While it is not unduly prescriptive, it emphasises the need to understand cumulative impacts; promotes cycling, walking and public transport over improvements to the highway network; and, requires the mitigation of cumulative impacts.

8.6 What is the likely effect of the proposed scale and distribution of development on the strategic and local highway network and key junctions? Have the necessary improvements and/or mitigation measures to the strategic and local highway network been identified in the Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, including costs and timing/phasing where necessary?

- 2.5 The Local Plan is supported by a plan wide transport assessment which identifies the growth locations; potential problems on the networks arising from modelled outputs; and, suggest packages of improvement measure along with broad costs in order to effect suitable mitigation. In the case of Anstey, the report identifies the potential for modest PM peak delays on a couple of local junctions and increased flows on the local network. The report proposes a package of interventions which ‘will deliver increased highway capacity on key roads and junctions surrounding Anstey, in addition to complementary cycle route improvements which will improve connectivity between Anstey and north-west Leicester.’

- 2.6 Where some re-routing potential is identified it is acknowledged that this may not be representative of overall congestion levels. As noted above, the modelling does not account for post-covid patterns of working or modal shift.

8.7 Does the transport modelling undertaken so far (EB/TR/11, 12 & 13) enable specific impacts on the highway network to be identified, for mitigation measures to be developed in response to that modelling and then required as part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and site allocation policies? Is any further work required to establish this?

- 2.7 The transport modelling undertaken provides a solid basis from which to understand the strategic impacts of growth, taking into account a worst case scenario. It goes on to identify a number of specific junctions where increased flows may result in localised delays and identifies within EB-TR-8 a detailed series of potential interventions and improvements. Notably, those interventions identified for Anstey ID AN1-AN8 are relatively modest.
- 2.8 Recognising the scale of growth proposed and the need to fully understand localised impacts, detailed transport modelling work is being undertaken by William Davis Homes Ltd and Chapman Estates (Leicester) Ltd in conjunction with LCC, National Highways and AECOM, who maintain the model on behalf of LCC. This will build upon the initial modelling work undertaken as part of developing and agreeing the submission local plan. A base line model has been agreed from which the impact on specific junctions will be identified and any specific mitigation necessary agreed.

Planning and Design Group

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