

Charnwood Local Plan Post Examination Consultation Representations.

Land at Old Gate Road, Thrussington.

On behalf of Bellway Homes Limited (East Midlands)
Development Limited.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group are submitting these representations on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited (East Midlands) in response to further documents submitted for consultation by Charnwood Borough Council.
- 1.2. These representations are made in relation to our clients' interest in land at Old Gate Road, Thruslington, which is a proposed residential site allocation HA68.
- 1.3. Our clients have engaged fully in the preparation of the plan and have submitted a Full Planning Application, demonstrating a well-designed development within Thruslington with no technical issues preventing development.
- 1.4. The following sections set out our comments on relevant sections and policies in the plan.

2. Charnwood Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Addendum, December 2022

- 2.1. A Sustainable Appraisal Addendum (December 2022) was commissioned by the Council to explore further options for development because of the need to deliver a further 78 homes per year arising from Leicester's unmet need as well as further retail options.
- 2.2. The Council established the following 3 options to meeting Charnwood's contribution towards Leicester's unmet housing needs:
- Option 1 - Site intensification
 - Option 2 - Additional sites
 - Option 3 - Cotes standalone settlement
- 2.3. Option 1 was identified as the most preferable as minor negative effects were found across all 14 sustainability appraisal objectives.
- 2.4. Bellway Homes Limited are in support of this approach. However, and with specific reference to Land at Old Gate Road, Thrussington it is requested that the number of homes that can be accommodated on site to be increase from 60 to "up to 70". Bellway Homes Limited have demonstrated through detailed layout designed and through the submission of a Full planning application that the site is able to accommodate more than the 60 dwellings proposed to be allocated without impacting on services or infrastructure. Alternatively, the proposed numbers on allocations should be considered as "at least" figures to allow for flexibility. This would further support the housing delivery of the Borough.

3. Charnwood Additional Housing Supply Update September 2023

- 3.1. The Council has published an “Additional Housing Supply Technical Note” which confirms the Council approach to increasing the housing land supply to take account of Leicester’s unmet needs for housing and employment land. The Borough has agreed that 78 homes per year and 23ha of employment would be Charnwood’s apportionment of Leicester’s unmet needs.
- 3.2. As previously stated, the Council proposes to meet this additional need by focusing on maximising the number of homes in the existing allocations rather than identifying new sites.
- 3.3. The technical note does not consider increasing the capacity of HA68 despite a live planning application having been submitted for more housing than proposed in the allocation. It is therefore requested that HA68 is considered for an increase in capacity to reflect the capacity proposed in the live planning application. Alternatively, the proposed numbers in the allocation should be considered as “at least” figures to allow for flexibility.
- 3.4. Bellway Homes Limited have submitted a Full Planning application which demonstrates that there are not technical constraints to development on site and that there would be no detrimental impact to developing a larger number of homes. There is therefore no justification as to why the proposed capacity is less than proposed in the planning applications.
- 3.5. Appendix B of the document sets out the proposed housing trajectory of the allocation sites. Site HA68 is proposed to deliver 25 dwellings in 2025/26 and 35 dwellings in 2026/29. This assumption is supported.

4. Updated Housing Trajectory (completions information and update note) and Update to Five Year Supply on Adoption and Site List

- 4.1. The Council has provided an expected 5-year housing land supply position on adoption of the Local Plan, taking account of the site intensification work undertaken by the Council to accommodate its apportionment of Leicester's unmet need for housing. This has resulted in the housing requirement being amended from 1,111 dwellings per annum to 1,189 dwellings per annum. The housing supply trajectory has been updated to look at the period 2023 – 2028, updating completions information and the effects of the site intensification work undertaken.
- 4.2. The 5-year period on adoption of the Local Plan is 2023 – 2028, and on 1st April 2023 the document confirms that there is a 5.16-year supply (224 dwellings surplus over requirement). The detailed trajectory confirms a 5.74-year supply at 2024/25- and 6-year supply at 2025/26.
- 4.3. The five-year supply figure of 5.16 years is marginal and does not provide the needed confidence that the Local Plan will deliver homes quickly following the adoption of the Local Plan. This suggests that a further increase in supply is needed.

5. The Draft Transport Strategy

- 5.1. Leicestershire County Council has prepared “The Transport Strategies to Enable Growth in the Borough of Charnwood”. This is a series of reports that assesses the cumulative transport impact of growth within Charnwood. It concludes that three strategies are required, focused on the three distinctive geographies in the Soar Valley Area, Loughborough/Shepshed Area and the North of Leicester Area. This has been submitted as part of the Examination evidence base.
- 5.2. The draft strategy set out a comprehensive package of highway, cycling, walking, and wheeling infrastructure and passenger transport improvements. The strategy also confirms that these improvements would cost approximately £183 million to deliver with funding sought from public (government) and private (developer) contributions.
- 5.3. Paragraph 57 of the NPPF sets out the following 3 policy tests in relation to planning obligations:
- That obligations are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
 - That obligations are directly related to the development; and
 - That obligations are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 5.4. As development is only required to mitigate its own impact, it is important that until a correctly evidenced document is adopted, infrastructure requirements for planning applications are considered based on their own direct and cumulative impact on the highway network, in line with the requirement of the NPPF.
- 5.5. The draft transport strategy does not demonstrate that the infrastructure deemed to be required is because of the impact of *new* development. The strategy must be able to provide evidence that the infrastructure being requested is not to fix existing issues with the highway network as this is not the intention of the NPPF.
- 5.6. The Draft Transport Strategy does demonstrate that there is currently no mechanism to support the cost of the proposed allocations in the local plan.
- 5.7. Bellway Homes Limited are keen to work with the County Council to ensure that the transport strategy is developed further, at an appropriate stage of the plan making process and that an appropriate mechanism for its adoption is put in place via an appropriately evidenced development plan document.

6. The Charnwood Local Plan Viability Full Addendum Report

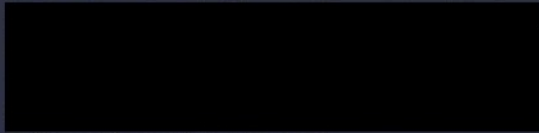
- 6.1. A further viability addendum report has been released for consultation. This update reflects changes in offsite transport costs and other significant changes in national policy and development costs.
- 6.2. The report confirms that S106 contributions are right to the margins of viability based upon the appraisal assumptions but that it is not recommended setting S106 obligations up to the margins of viability because of the risk of other unexpected onsite cost that have not yet been considered on individual sites.
- 6.3. The report also calculates that, based on the number of new houses proposed across the Local Plan, the total amount of S106 funding that could be collected from residential development would be £200,885,700. This is only marginally higher than the overall highways requirement of £183,000.00 as discussed in chapter 5. There is clearly a funding gap between the amounts which are required to deliver the plan and the amounts that can be sought from developers through S106 contributions.
- 6.4. The report recommends that further work is required to manage school and highways infrastructure requirements and that detailed infrastructure will need to be further considered as part of each planning application. The report confirms that developers cannot pay for the full infrastructure costs through developer contributions, and that additional public sector funding is necessary. Table 9.1 sets out the maximum total S106 obligations per dwelling across the three Housing Market Areas (Leicester Fringe, Loughborough/Shepshed and Wider Charnwood), for both greenfield and brownfield sites.
- 6.5. A report to Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) Cabinet meeting on 24th October 2023 sets out the £140m current estimate for education requirements and the £183m current estimate for highways and transport requirements, totaling £323m. The LCC Cabinet report sets out that of the £200m maximum developer funding from the Aspinall Verdi report; this is based on all allocated housing sites contributing the maximum level of S106 funding, noting that it does not discount those sites that have already secured planning permission (which it notes is approximately 1,500 dwellings to date, out of approximately 9,300 dwellings). The report notes that it is not recommended to set contributions right up to the margins of viability and confirms that £200m is the maximum for all contributions, not just highways and/or education contributions. The LCC report confirms that LCC will continue to support the Charnwood Local Plan.
- 6.6. All the above demonstrates there is a funding gap for the delivery of essential infrastructure to support the delivery of the Local Plan. A mechanism needs to be put in place to implement the S106 costs through a future SPD which would need to be subject to extensive consultation and viability testing.
- 6.7. It is important to note that some Local Plan allocations already have planning permission and therefore will not be contributing to the Local Plan infrastructure costs required. The remaining Local Plan allocation should not be expected to fund the additional gap in infrastructure funding.



- 6.8. Bellway Homes Limited look forward to collaborating with the Council to ensure that developer contributions sought are viable and deliverable.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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