

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter ONE: Duty to Cooperate and other legal requirements

Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

June 2022

Representation Number: 340

Issue 1 – Whether the Council has complied with the Duty to Cooperate in the preparation of the Plan

Question 1.1

What are the relevant cross boundary strategic matters that have arisen through the preparation of the Plan (defined as matters having a significant impact on at least two planning areas)?

1. Our response to this question has been informed by the recent release of information in connection with this Inquiry; in particular TP/2, TP/5, TP/6 and SCG/5.
2. One cross-cutting theme of our objection is the distribution of development with negligible regard for travel implications and a perceived need for extensive highway infrastructure, without considering its impact, feasibility or deliverability. This is underpinned by the failure of the CLP (Charnwood Local Plan) to properly assess how it should limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes (NPPF 104 and 105). The sites chosen are unlikely to offer a genuine choice of transport modes and there is a failure to include effective policies to reduce the need to travel and provide attractive alternatives to the car.
3. The construction of major carbon intensive infrastructure would facilitate an increase in vehicle ownership and use which is inconsistent with mitigating climate change.
4. We understand a Strategic Transport Assessment is underway but is not likely to be published before July. We do not know whether the STA will have fully considered sustainable transport or how to achieve modal shift.

5. The CLP relies on extensive traffic modelling but some documents listed in TP/5 suggest the cumulative impact of all the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on the road network. It is noteworthy that all the infrastructure measures proposed for the local highway network are deemed essential. It is, however, not clear how such infrastructure would be funded nor the timescale of the transport items guaranteed in the Infrastructure Schedule.

6. The overall effect is that it has led to the production of a Local Plan which has not been positively prepared.

Question 1.2

What outcomes have resulted from engagement and cooperation on the relevant strategic matters and how have these informed the Plan's policies, including in relation to:

- a. Housing*
- b. Employment*
- c. Highways and Transport*
- d. Flood risk*
- e. Infrastructure including renewable energy*
- f. Green Infrastructure and the natural environment*
- g. Site allocations with cross boundary impacts*

7. We address duty to cooperate in relation to Housing and Logistics under Question 1.4, however, as set out above there are unresolved issues regarding mitigating the impact of additional traffic.

8. This raises a series of concerns in relation to the Strategic Road Network and the knock-on impact on the local road network.

9. We discuss these issues further under Matter 2 Sustainable Development, Matter 3 Climate Change, and Matter 8 Infrastructure and Transport.

Unmet need

Context – The consultation on the City of Leicester's draft Local Plan in December 2020 indicated a potential unmet need of 7742 dwellings and 23 hectares of employment land from 2019 to 2036. The revisions to the standard method for assessing local housing need in December 2020 to incorporate the cities and urban centres uplift of 35% increased the unmet housing need between 2020 and 2036 by an additional 9712 dwellings. The apportionment of unmet need is a key element of the Duty to Cooperate across the eight Leicestershire authorities.

Question 1.4

When will the Statement of Common Ground on Housing and Employment Need (SCG-1) be updated to apportion the unmet need for housing and employment from Leicester to 2036?

Question 1.5

What liaison has taken place between the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to address the unmet need for housing and employment since the announcement of the cities and urban centres uplift in December 2020? Where is this documented?

10. The April 22 Version of the Statement of Common Ground (SCG/1) contains updated figures. However, we are not aware of any supporting technical work which has been made public. As we say in our fuller answer to 1.7 it is important that, not only is a further Statement of Common Ground produced but a technical breakdown of how those figures were arrived at, particularly in relation to Leicester itself, is fully provided so that any future review of local plans can allow for those assumptions to be tested, not simply provided as given fact by the Local Authorities.

Question 1.6

Paragraph 3.25 of SCG-1 states that the Leicester & Leicestershire authorities agree that there is a sufficient supply of employment land in the Charnwood Local Plan to accommodate the unmet need for 23 hectares of employment land to 2036. However, page 96 of the Statement of Consultation (SD/13) indicates that the Plan does not accommodate unmet need for employment. What is the correct position?

Question 1.7

If the outcome of cooperation on the Statement of Common Ground is that none of the unmet housing need will be apportioned to Charnwood, would there be any implications for the Plan or for Policy DS2?

11. In our view Policy DS2 should only commit Charnwood to reviewing its housing requirement in the light of updated evidence and policy guidance when it is reasonable to do so and put the emphasis on ensuring a sustainable, brownfield-led approach.

12. As we set out in our response to the plan, we consider this Policy as set out is not sound because it is not justified and based on proportionate evidence.

13. Firstly, the Government has signalled that it will be withdrawing the Duty to Cooperate.

14. How need that cannot be met in Urban Areas, in this case Leicester, will be met is unclear, but since the unmet need in Leicester is predicted to largely occur after 2031 and since there is good reason to anticipate greater supply in Leicester than currently projected it would seem premature to address this immediately in ways which might lead to unsustainable levels of housing in Charnwood, which would have impacts on the countryside as well as undermining the goal of reducing carbon emissions in the borough which is a key goal of the plan as we set out in our objection to Policy DS1 of the Plan.

14. Secondly, the actual level of unmet need, even if there is unmet need is a matter of contention that will need to be progressed through the Leicester Plan which is currently still

at an early stage. Not only is it at an early stage but the evidence published in relation to the plan is out of date.

15. Our response to the Leicester Plan Options consultation (*Examination Reference*¹) argued that the amount of housing land available was likely to be underestimated and the need exaggerated (since neither the ONS2016 nor 2018 figures would lead to any unmet need). Since then, the addition of 35% to the ONS2014 need figures has further exaggerated housing need leading to an increase in assumed housing need in Leicester which has not yet to be tested through the Plan Process, or how it should be met.

16. Even taking that into account the unmet need up to 2031 in Appendix A (8,452) is less than the 35% addition so it is only in the later part of the plan that any Duty to Cooperate requirement might be considered to exist.

17. A further problem is that the evidence that supports the Leicester Plan remains out of date. For example, the latest SHLAA is from 2017. Figures are provided within the Joint Statement but the calculations that led to these are not public.

18. Indeed, our response to the Leicester Plan Options raised concerns about a number of elements of the supply evidence, for example, there is a lack of up-to-date windfall evidence. At the time the existing evidence suggested to us 200 dwellings a day for small windfalls which is higher than the plan figure of 150 dpa. The Joint Statement ($2400/13 = 185$) is higher but the evidence may have also risen.

19. Moreover, the impact of potentially accelerated changes to retail, leisure and office needs post-COVID are likely to be particularly felt in Leicester, increasing the availability of recycled land. It is clear from the Government's 2020 statement that they anticipate this too and expect that to be the source of the 35% extra housing identified in the statement.

20. The approach of simply adding it to the housing requirement and then exporting it via Duty to Co-operate is not supported. In that regards CPRE Leicestershire is content with the Plan approach not to allocate land to meet Duty to Cooperate Requirements in terms of housing at this stage. However, as we said in our response to the plan, we consider there is a need for updated evidence to support any review. The production of an updated Statement of Common Ground by the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities without any supporting evidence, particular, in relation to Leicester's justification for its unmet need is not something that allows for effective testing by third parties to ensure sound plan making.

¹ CPRE Matter 1 Leicester Local Plan Consultation Response 2020

Question 1.8

If the Statement of Common Ground concludes that more housing is needed in Charnwood to meet Leicester's unmet need, does the development strategy set out in Policy DS1 represent a robust and appropriate approach for the distribution of further housing, employment and other development in the longer term?

21. CPRE Leicestershire is not in a position to specifically answer this. Subject to further work to establish if additional housing is needed and how much, it would depend on the extent of that additional need. The risk if significant housing were added would be of creating longer commuter patterns if it was distant from Leicester. Without prejudice the merits of spatial options would need to be considered in any review.

Question 1.9

Are there any other issues that could trigger the need for a Plan review apart from Leicester's unmet need?

22. Not that we are aware of.

Question 1.10

Will Policy DS2 be effective in its submitted form and are any main modifications necessary to improve its clarity in relation to timescales and its effectiveness? Should the policy include a reference to strategic warehousing and distribution needs?

23. As set out above the timescale would depend on further evidence being provided, particularly in relation to the extent of Leicester's Unmet Need.

24. We also do not consider Strategic Warehousing and Distribution need to be included. Other local authorities in Leicestershire (such as North West Leicestershire and Hinckley and Bosworth) have already identified significant land to meet this need. Moreover, the currently identified shortfall in road-based Logistics Provision is significantly reduced when one considers the over-provision at the proposed SRFI at Hinckley (albeit previous Studies into this in the County have been heavily demand led studies and also risk double-counting between future rail and road provision).

25. The current (updated) position is set out in Para 6.26 (March 2022) of the North West Leicestershire Regulation 18 Draft Plan, (*Examination Reference*²) based on the updated Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and Change Report by MDS Transmodel (amended March 2022). (*Examination Reference*³). They say there that the amount of additional floorspace needed to 2041 is 718,875 sqm (288Ha) at rail served sites and 334,986 sqm (96Ha) at non-rail served. A quick calculation shows that

² CPRE Matter 1 North West Leicestershire plan logistics extract

³ CPRE Matter 1 Warehousing Report Leics FINAL 21 02 22 V4

this assumes 2,500 sqm per hectare for rail served sites and 3,500 sqm for non-rail served sites.

26. The North West Leicestershire Plan goes on to say that in Para 6.27 that *'The rail-served requirement would be largely fulfilled through the proposed Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (NRFI) at Junction 2 of the M69 if it were to be permitted.'* The NRFI actually provide 850,000 sqm, which is an additional 131,125 sqm above the rail-served need and since the majority of the NRFI site is actually B8 units which are not directly linked to the rail terminal, with only some 25% of freight movements at the site related to the terminal, the NRFI site would also, in fact, meet some of Leicestershire's need for road-based logistics provision (even if one does not allow for some double-counting).

27. That would reduce the floor space required to 203,861 sqm. Taking account of the 89,200 sqm approved on Hinckley (See para 6.28 of the North West Leicestershire Plan) the residual provision would 114,661 sqm (approximately 33 hectares at 2,500 sqm per hectare) which would equate to all the provision proposed in the North West Leicestershire Consultation Plan at Para 6.31 (106,000-150,000 sqm). In other words, there is currently no additional need to be met.

Question 1.11

What is the role and status of the Strategic Growth Plan (EB/DS/6)? What consultation has been undertaken and is it subject to external scrutiny? How much weight does the Strategic Growth Plan have for plan making purposes?

28. As we said in our response to the plan, we consider a blanket support for the Strategic Growth Plan (EB/DS/6) not to be sound (Para 2.5). The SGP was agreed prior to the development of local plans, such as the Leicester Plan and it did not consider climate change.

29. The reference to the Strategic Growth Plan as 'new' in the Introduction is potentially misleading (Para 1.1) and should be removed. It was adopted in 2018 and preceded many of the current pieces of technical evidence under discussion. We have called for it to be reviewed several times.

30. There was external consultation on the plan's production but little was changed as a result and there was no opportunity to test it at Examination although we called for that.

31. The SGP also extends significantly beyond the current plan period to 2050. This exacerbates the uncertainty within the plan especially since housing trajectories in particular were simply extended forward, (even though the ONS housing projections trail off) giving less credibility to later figures.

32. We believe as set out under Matter 1.7 that there are likely to be greater opportunities to provide additional housing within the urban area and such a strategy would better deliver sustainable development.

33. Moreover, the approach set out in the paragraph is clearly at odds with the aspiration set out in the preceding paragraph (Para 2.4), specifically: *'Our development strategy aims to direct development to locations that provide access to jobs, services, infrastructure and where there are alternatives to the private car.'*

34. The SGP approach would lock in longer distance car journeys by directing significant levels of development to areas poorly served by alternatives to travel by car and increasing car use through large scale road development.

35. CPRE also considers reference to the A46 Priority Growth Corridor to be unsound especially as it has been put in doubt by the decision by Midlands Connect that the A46 Expressway is not justified. Moreover, the harm the landscape and rural character of sensitive part of the High Leicestershire Landscape Character Area outside of Charnwood is not in line with the Plan's aspirations to protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

36. In short CPRE Leicestershire the Charnwood Plan should instead identify that the SGP is out of date and needs to be reviewed which so it supports sustainable development, in particular Climate Change mitigation, and directs more development, particularly housing, to brownfield sites.

Cross Boundary Infrastructure

Question 1.12

Have the Plan's transport impacts been considered on a cross boundary basis, including the role of active and sustainable travel modes? What is the role of the Strategic Transport Assessment which is currently underway? Is this separate from the assessment of the specific impacts of the Plan's proposed growth on the strategic and local highway network as outlined in EB/TR/11, 12 & 13?

37. We have a number of concerns about Cross-Boundary Transport Issues.

38. There doesn't appear to have been any consideration of active and sustainable travel modes in terms of access to development connected with the Leicestershire International Gateway, which is centred on the Airport in North West Leicestershire. The transport impacts could be reduced if the LIG was planned from the outset to maximise sustainable travel. This would reduce the need for people to travel from Charnwood.

39. Also, the highest bus use in Charnwood is around routes close to the boundary of Leicester. Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council have decided to opt for a

Bus Improvement Plan for their respective areas but it is not clear how this will pan out for cross border services.

40. We consider it highly likely that the main focus of the Strategic Transport Assessment will be highway infrastructure rather than the role of sustainable transport. That would make it even more difficult to achieve the aims of Policy CC5 and a more sustainable plan. Its lateness is obviously not helpful. The other assessment of impacts of traffic growth confirms the scope and deliverability of the proposed transport schemes is far from certain.

Issue 3 – Whether the Plan has been prepared in compliance with other legal requirements

Question 1.24

Does the Plan include policies designed to ensure that the development and use of land in the Borough contributes to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change in accordance with the legislation?

41. As set out throughout our objections, we consider the policies are too weak to ensure the mitigation of climate change.

42. Similar policies in this and adjacent Local Plans since 2004 have failed to direct development to sustainable locations, make the best use of land or achieve a shift towards more sustainable transport.

43. In our response to the consultation, we criticised the lack of any mention of climate change in Policy DS1. The mitigation of climate change will not be achieved unless it is made an overarching objective backed up with clear targets and monitoring. Our response to questions on other matters provides further information as to why we consider this to be the case.

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 2: Vision, Objectives, Sustainable Development and the Development Strategy

Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

June 2022

Representation Number: 340

Issue 1 - Are the Vision for Charnwood 2037 and the Plan's objectives soundly based and will they contribute to the achievement of sustainable development?

Question 2.1

Do the Plan's vision and objectives cover the full range of opportunities, challenges and priorities that need to be addressed in the Borough over the Plan period? Is it clear how the policies will help to deliver the vision and objectives over the Plan period?

Expressed at their very general level, the Vision and Objectives cover a broad range of opportunities, challenges and priorities. But what is much less clear, in CPRE Leicestershire's view, is how much the policies in the plan will deliver the aspirations set out in the Vision. This submission will focus on climate change, travel and development strategy.

There is some recognition of climate change in the challenges, Vision and Objectives. Para 1.23 recognises the challenge of "climate change impacting on the wider environment with localised issues..." and the Vision in para 1.24, among other references, suggests that in 2037 that "Our communities will enjoy a cleaner and greener environment" and that "Charnwood will be safe and resilient to the impacts of climate change and will be playing its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions...."

This theme is carried through in para. 1.25 where one of the objectives is “to reduce the need to travel by car, and the distance travelled, and increase the use of walking, cycling and public transport to access jobs, key services and facilities.” (Development Strategy 2 – on page 15) and another is to ‘reduce net greenhouse gas emissions, in support of achieving a carbon neutral Borough, and reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change’ (Environment 2 on page 16).

We support these objectives. Despite these references in paras 1.23 to 1.25 we were surprised that in the list of criteria for supporting sustainable development in Policy DS1: Development Strategy, there is no specific mention of addressing climate change. In our Regulation 19 consultation response we argued this requires alteration to this policy to make it consistent with National Policy, most notably Para 152 of the NPPF.

This omission from DS1 raises wider issues which we see as an answer to the supplementary question, and in our view the more important one, under Question 2.1. There is no overall strategic goal in the Plan to cut carbon emissions and reduce the impact of climate change. The plan currently lacks any clear target to reduce carbon emissions in line with the Government’s National Policy of reaching Net Zero by 2050 or in line with Charnwood Council’s own goal to achieve carbon neutrality.

Through the Plan, a focus is very much on inputs in terms of the words set out in the different policies. But despite all this, it is unclear to what extent that these policies will actually contribute to the delivery of Development Strategy objective 2 and Environment objective 2 referred to above.

In particular, it is unclear what measurable difference requirements such as the criteria listed to support sustainable development in Policy DS1 will have with regard to these two objectives. It is also unclear how they will achieve the NPPF para.152 requirement that ‘planning should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to **radical reductions** in greenhouse gas emissions.’

Indeed, many of the proposed developments on the face of it are likely to increase emissions as the result of the car dependent character and location of many developments. Local Plans for decades, including Charnwood’s, have contained objectives and policies to reduce the need to travel by car, but traffic levels have continued to rise.

Instead of just repeating the past approach, there needs now to be greater emphasis on demonstrating how these policies will achieve measurable reductions in carbon emissions. Developments should be required demonstrate measurable reductions in net carbon emissions and while travel interventions should begin to demonstrate a measurable reduction in private car mileage. Without this, it will be difficult to establish how the Plan’s policies are helping to deliver the Vision and Objectives or make a real difference to what happens in Charnwood.

In support of this, DS1 should also include text that requires developments to contribute directly to a reduction of emissions through the way they are designed and delivered so they are at least net zero, and better still, carbon zero in the longer term. Achieving such developments should be a key element of the overall development strategy. An additional criterion should be added to the list of bullet points in DS1 to the effect that there will be support for sustainable development that:

“is carbon costed and can demonstrate that it will contribute directly by way of its design, delivery and access to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and to the achievement of carbon neutral Borough”.

This provision would provide a stronger and more positive emphasis on the way in which individual developments include elements that contribute to reducing emissions and more efficient use of energy.

In conclusion, in CPRE Leicestershire’s view, there needs to be a greater emphasis on assessing, and where appropriate, measuring to what extent the policies are having an impact in terms of delivering the outcomes that the Vision seeks. There is all too often a presumption that policies will deliver the objectives and too often that is not the case. Without a requirement, such as the one proposed above in place, it will be difficult to begin to assess any gap between policies and their delivery and impact. This submission has focused on a particular point with regard to climate change issues, but the general point here could apply in other areas of the Plan.



The countryside charity
Leicestershire

Charity Number: 1164985

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 3: Climate Change and the Natural and Built Environment

Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

June 2022

Representation Number: 340

Issue 1 - Whether the policies relating to climate change and the natural and built environment, are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy

Policy CC5 – Sustainable Transport

Question 3.12

Will the policy facilitate a reduction in the need to travel and support alternatives to the use of private motorised transport including walking, cycling and public transport?

For reasons set out in this submission, we do not see this policy facilitating the changes referred to in the question to any significant extent.

CPRE Leicestershire is supportive of the aim of Policy CC5 to minimise the need to travel and support a shift of travel by private car to walking, cycling and public transport. However we cannot see it delivering, except possibly in most marginal ways, changes in travel patterns sufficient to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change.

Experience with very similar policies in the past have in practice carried little weight and have been ineffective. Our concern is that CC5 as drafted does not demonstrate the commitment needed to achieve a reduction in the need to travel, especially by car. We want to see the policy strengthened and conclude the submission by putting forward an amendment to this policy.

The Policy Approach

Policy CC5 sets out various requirements. These include excellent accessibility to key facilities by walking, cycling and public transport; safe and attractive walking and cycling routes; where possible, new and enhanced bus routes; well-designed sustainable transport infrastructure and contributions to the infrastructure to improve public transport, especially for buses.

A key element of the policy is to support development which is informed by a robust transport assessment and travel plan which considers sustainable travel options at the outset so that they form an integral part of the development.

CC5 is the latest version of policy on Sustainable Transport within Charnwood Local Plans. Previous and similar policies can be found in the 2004 Charnwood Local Plan (Policy TR/5) and in the 2011- 2028 Core Strategy (Policy CS17). In essence, the same basic requirements are encompassed in these policies. (*Examination References*¹)

Unlike CC5, the 2011—2028 Core Strategy Policy CS17 set a target to “achieve a 6% shift from travel by private car to walking, cycling and public transport” relating to requirements similar to those now included in CC5. The Adopted Local Plan does not mention how the 6% shift across the Borough from private car would be monitored or how a greater, unspecified, shift would be achieved or monitored from the major developments.

All Annual Monitoring Reports including the current one (SD/17) provide no information on the extent of any shift as a result of Policy CS17 and the indicators couldn't do that anyway.

We suspect that the dropping of a target in CC5 indicates that the predecessor policies have not delivered developments in line with the requirements set out in them. Unless there is a change in the way development is planned and implemented in practice, this will continue with CC5. A plan that cannot be monitored and has no meaningful targets is not at all constructive.

Despite the incorporation of these policies into recent Charnwood Local Plans, traffic has continued to grow significantly and alternatives have not been prioritised. Frequent mentions of public transport, walking and cycling throughout the Plan will not compensate for allocating sites in locations where most people will choose to travel by car.

Past and Current Experience

In response to the question, we would argue that past and current experience suggests that prioritising measures that will deliver a significant reduction in the need to travel, support

¹ CPRE Matter 3 Charnwood 2004 Local Plan Policy TR5 and CPRE Matter 3 Charnwood Local Plan 2011 2028 Policy CS17

for sustainable transport or mitigation climate change through Policy CC5 will not be successful.

Paragraph 104 of the NPPF states that transport issues “should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals” so that, among other considerations, the environmental impacts of traffic and infrastructure are taken into account to avoid and mitigate adverse effects and seek environmental gains. Paragraph 105 of the NPPF refers to managing patterns of growth to support these objectives which help to reduce congestion and emissions. In paragraph 106 it refers to protecting routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and to the provision of attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks.

Policy CC5 states that it will support development which is informed by a robust transport assessment and travel plan which considers sustainable travel options at the outset so that they form an integral part of the development.

However, there is little sign that this is happening. This is evident in the selection of sites where the ability to deliver sustainable transport options has in many cases been given very little weight. Consequently sites have been selected where effective sustainable transport options are unlikely to be deliverable and other sites where sustainable transport could be achieved have not been taken up.

The experience in relation to the Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE) point to the difficulties in incorporating the type of measures set out in CC5 into new developments. Over 10 years ago the size and location of the three SUEs in Charnwood was touted as a way of reducing the need to travel. However, it is evident that all the S106 agreements have prioritised highway capacity and access over public transport, walking and cycling. Very few changes were made to the original developers' masterplans. The Transport Appraisals and Assessments are voluminous and appear to have raised few concerns other than in relation to dealing with the traffic generated in their vicinity, but not elsewhere.

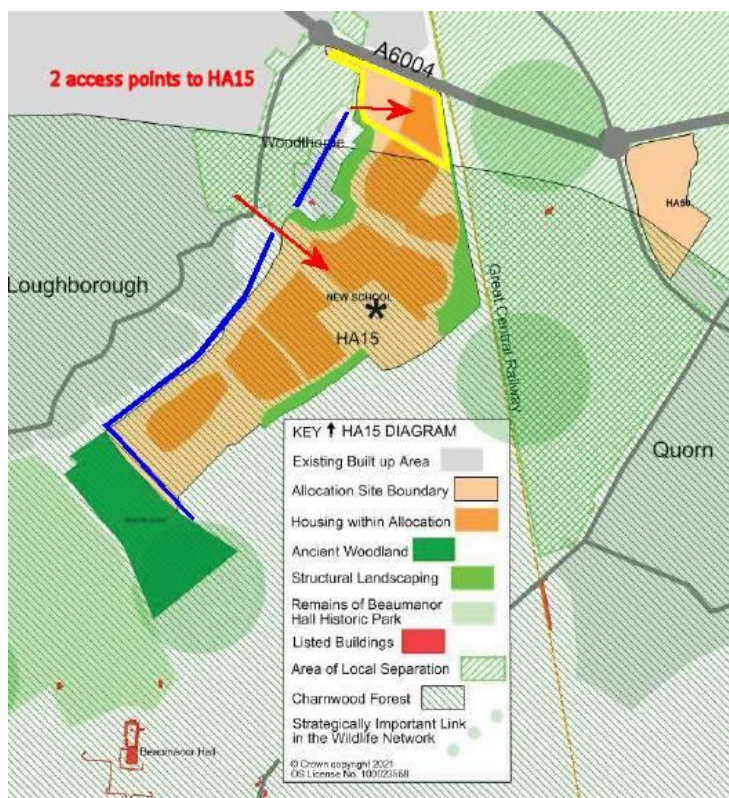
The sites are far from ideal in terms of providing good bus penetration or services and it is difficult to serve the whole development without compromising their routing and operation. Some parts of the sites do not meet the requirement to be within 400m of a bus stop. It is not clear whether proposed bus services will be viable. If they are not, there is no guarantee they will continue. At a time, when bus services generally are being reduced or cut, the introduction of new services to new developments is likely to be problematic regardless of what CC5 seeks to achieve.

Issues surrounding the current planning application P/21/0550/2, which is now the subject of an appeal to PINS, for a development of up to 120 new dwellings with access from Main Street, Woodthorpe, Loughborough highlights some of the potential difficulties in implementing CC5. It is a proposal for development of part of site HA15 in the Plan which is

located on the southern edge of Loughborough. Its relationship to wider HA15 site illustrates the difficulties of implementing the requirements of CC5 and the ineffectiveness of current policy to deliver sustainable transport.

This is a site, like HA16 and HA17, next to Loughborough where it ought to be much easier to promote and achieve sustainable transport than most of the sites in the Plan. It is relevant that a large part of the recent Grange Park development to the northwest of HA15 is not served by buses.

Discussions between the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Local Housing Authority (LHA) and the applicant show no commitment to reduce car dependency and promote genuine choice of transport modes as required by NPPF 105. The focus of discussions between the LHA and the LPA has concentrated on highway works in the immediate vicinity of the site. There has been no consideration of how cycling or walking could be made attractive. Approval of the Woodthorpe site as proposed would also compromise the provision of public transport to the rest of site HA15.



Concept Plan for HA15 showing the Woodthorpe site

Yellow - Woodthorpe site
Red - Site access points
Blue - Barrier to access

Barriers along the boundary and the shape of HA15 already makes it a difficult site to serve by public transport but this is not mentioned in Policy DS3(HA15). This is a common problem and there is no masterplan for HA15 or the adjoining areas. Access should have been considered at the outset. If it is difficult to achieve the aims of CC5 in areas close to existing urban areas such as Loughborough or settlements on the edge of Leicester, it will be much

more difficult to achieve them for developments which are located away from main public transport routes and away from full range of services and facilities.

The backdrop to all this is likely to be a continuation of significant levels of car ownership across much of Charnwood, high levels of car journey to work and low levels of bus usage. The 2021 Census will almost certainly confirm an increase in car ownership and the use of cars since the 2011 Census. Bus use has showed a steady decline and the final package of government pandemic support is due to end in October.

Given the journeys most people want to make public transport is never going to be useful or attractive for most journeys in Charnwood. This also has to be considered in the context of viability and current bus legislation which is not conducive to the optimisation of services or fares. As such bus use is likely to remain very low or decline. If there is an increase it will be modest.

It is also evident from the Infrastructure Schedule that most of the funding being sought for transport infrastructure is seeking to increase the capacity of the highway network and facilitate an increase in car use. It shows around 85% of the £85 million total for local transport measures is allocated for roads with only 12% for walking and cycling. The Government has indicated it wants to see a greater commitment to walking and cycling and this could be effective for many journeys with the right approach; 58% of car journeys are under 5 miles.

Amending CC5

All this makes delivering the elements set out in CC5 challenging. A change of attitude is required to ensuring that developments meet the requirements set out in CC5 and that monitoring is effective.

In its *Sustainability Appraisal (SD/5)* (p. 148) AECOM recommended that Charnwood should be more ambitious regarding climate change mitigation. In particular, it recommended: “*Set more ambitious standards and ‘require’ improvements in sustainability credentials of new development, rather than ‘encouraging’*”. Charnwood rejected this approach but in CPRE’s view, if change is to be delivered, then improvements must be ‘required’ rather than just ‘encouraged’.

CC5 is in a chapter of the Plan related to Climate Change. In our view, Policy CC5 needs strengthening. It is too permissive to deliver any mitigation of climate change.

The danger with the policy as drafted is that in effect, all it requires developers to do is to provide some access by public transport, walking and cycling to some key services and to put in place a Transport Plan which very weakly ‘considers’ sustainable transport options. This still allows developments which are highly car dependent to go ahead provided they include some modest ameliorations at least in the short term. For example, this has

included provision subsidised bus services initially subsidised which then prove unviable and are cancelled or cycling and walking facilities that are not designed to make them attractive.

In line with our objection to DS1 in relation to climate change CC5 needs to put more onus on developers to actually demonstrate that their proposals will lead to a reduction in car dependency and assist in a reduction in carbon emissions with an effective review process.

We have provided amendments to the text of CC5 to address those issues as well as the wider climate issue. Our proposal is to add a new bullet point as the first one in the Policy and additional amendments highlighted in bold typeface.

“We will support sustainable patterns of development which will minimise the need to travel and seek to support a shift from travel by private car to walking, cycling and public transport.

*We will **only** support major development which can demonstrate it:*

- ***is carbon costed and can demonstrate that its transport needs will contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions in line with a target to reduce emissions across Charnwood by XX in line with policy DS1;***
- *is **accompanied** by a robust transport assessment and travel plan which **genuinely prioritises** sustainable travel options at the outset so that they form an integral part of the development;*
- ***minimises the need to travel, in particular reducing the reliance on the private car, while providing excellent accessibility to key facilities and services by walking, cycling and public transport, including for people with restricted mobility;***
- *provides well-lit, safe and attractive walking and cycling routes and secure cycle shelters;*
- *secures ~~where possible~~, new and enhanced bus services, **with evidence that they will be viable in the long term or provides a guaranteed commitment to their continuation**, including new bus stops, where development, is more than a 400m walk from an existing bus stop;*
- *ensures sustainable transport infrastructure is well designed, integrated with the Green Infrastructure and contributes towards making high quality places;*
- *contributes to the infrastructure required to improve the speed, reliability and attractiveness of public transport including, where appropriate, bus gates, bus priority measures and bus links; and*
- *reduces, as far as possible, the negative impacts on air quality in accordance with policy EV11.”*

Question 3.13

How will ‘excellent accessibility’ to key facilities by walking, cycling and public transport referred to in the policy be defined?

At present, the policy is totally aspirational. For the reasons set out throughout our response there is no prospect whatsoever of achieving excellent accessibility by these

modes on the scale needed with the Plan as drafted. We await the Council's response to this question.

Policy DS5 – Design

Question 3.36

Overall, does the Plan set out a positively prepared strategy to address the causes of and mitigate the impact of climate change and to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment? Are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

While different policies across the Plan refer to or set out policies related to directly or indirectly to the impact of climate change and the natural and built environment, the Plan lacks a clear overall statement of how these knit together into a coherent strategy.

We face both a climate crisis and a nature and biodiversity crisis. The design and construction of developments and Policy DS5 should ensure effective action is taken to tackle these crises.

Focusing specifically on Policy DS5, we note that new developments will be required to “reduce their impacts upon, and be resilient to, the effects of climate change in accordance with Policy CC4.” However, while climate change impacts are mentioned in DS5, biodiversity impact is not.

If developments are to be of high quality and to achieve biodiversity gain as required by Policy EV6, then they need to be designed with nature in mind and demonstrate how their design benefits nature as well as people.

A reference to biodiversity and nature is absent from the list of design requirements for developments set out in DS5 and should be added to the list. Policy EV6 indicates that development proposals should be accompanied by an ecological survey....and demonstrate how they have been designed to minimise ecological impact and provide 10% net gain on site... This requires a positive approach to benefiting nature where possible as well as people.

Therefore in DS5, an additional bullet point should be added to the list requiring new developments to “reduce adverse impact on nature and biodiversity and achieve biodiversity gain in accordance with Policy EV6”.



The countryside charity
Leicestershire

Charity Number: 1164985

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 4: Assessment of Housing Need, the Housing Requirement and Mix and Choice of Housing

Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

June 2022

Representation Number: 340

Issue 1 - Is the assessment of housing need and the housing requirement positively prepared, justified by the evidence and consistent with national policy?

Need

Question 4.1

Is basing the assessment of housing need on the Local Housing Need figure in the standard method robust and is the housing requirement of 17,776 dwellings in Policy DS1 justified? What evidence supports this approach and should any upward adjustments be made for economic growth or to support the delivery of affordable housing?

1. Leicestershire CPRE does not support the housing figures as identified. We consider that the Council should have considered adopting the ONS2016 figures and considered whether the lower figure could be justified based on proportionate evidence.
2. The table below sets out the housing need for Charnwood during the Plan Period using the Standard Methodology based on the 2021-2031 base period and the latest 2020 Affordability Figures. We have added a 10% contingency in line with the plan approach and created a final excess in line with the Plan.

Charnwood Housing Need (2021-2037)	Annual Demographic Need	Standard Methodology Output	Plan Period (16 Years)	10% contingency	Excess based on 10,603
SM ONS 2018	920	1131	18,096	19,906	9303
SM ONS 2016	769	946	15,136	16,650	6047
SM ONS 2014	904	1111	17,776	19,554	8951

3. The two more recent ONS projections rely on lower (and perhaps more realistic) national housing based on differences in assumptions on things such as mortality and migration, but also significantly an assumption that household size will not decline as rapidly as previously expected. However, the ONS2018 redistributes housing need largely based on recent changes to NHS reporting which may mean it is less reliable.

4. The Local Plan the housing requirement also includes a 10% contingency on all sites.

5. However, it would seem that the likelihood of failure to implement is lower on sites with planning permission. The SHELAA does not include any data on unimplemented planning permissions to justify this position although some sites are moved to a later date for implementation (Para 7.14).

6. The Black Country, as one example, is assuming a failure rate of 5% for commitments (*Examination Reference*¹). Using the 2014 ONS figures this would create an overall requirement of 19,023². The table below applies that approach to all the ONS projections.

Charnwood Housing Need (2021-2037)	Annual Demographic Need	Standard Methodology Output	Plan Period (16 Years)	Contingency (10% and 5% on Commitments)	Excess based on 10,603
SM ONS 2018	920	1131	18,096	19,375	8772
SM ONS 2016	769	946	15,136	16,119	5516
SM ONS 2014	904	1111	17,776	19,023	8420

7. CPRE consider that the excess housing should further be reduced because of additional supply from windfalls (1120 dwellings plus), from including all permitted homes on the North Leicester Urban Extension (1295 dwellings) and from some modest additions to yield (e.g., from a density policy) but we will address those under Matter 7.

8. Overall, taking account of this additional supply, we consider the excess housing needing to be allocated would then amount to 3,101 (ONS2016) or 6,005 (ONS2104). This would be robust and would allow for significant greenfield sites to be removed from the Plan while still meeting genuine need.

¹ CPRE Matter 4 black country urban capacity study extract from Black Country Urban Capacity Study (May 2021) Para 2.1.14 [Housing \(dudley.gov.uk\)](https://www.dudley.gov.uk)

² (10,603 x 1.05) + (7,173 x 1.1) - 11,133 + 7,890 = 19,023

Supply

Question 4.3

Will the proposed supply of 19,461 dwellings set out in Policy DS1 against a requirement of 17,776 dwellings incorporate a sufficient 'buffer' to allow for non-delivery as well as providing choice and flexibility in the supply of housing land?

9. See answer to 4.1. We accept the need for some buffer, but consider it should be reduced of 5% for sites with Planning Permission where there is a stronger commitment to development.

(Note paragraph 2.14 refers to a buffer of 1778 dwellings in Table 2. A main modification will be necessary to correct this.)

Question 4.4

Would at least 10% of the housing requirement be accommodated on sites no larger than one hectare as set out in NPPF paragraph 69?

10. To reach this target would require 1946 homes to be provided on sites under 1 hectare. There are 455 homes included on sites of less than 35 dwellings in the table in DS3. There may be some additional sites under 1 hectare, (including some of the 2248 currently with planning permission not on the three large sites), but it seems unlikely to us that this target would be met subject to further evidence from the Council. However, were an allowance included for small scale windfalls many of these would inevitably be on smaller sites.

Issue 2 - Will the Plan provide for a choice and mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community?

Policy H1 - Housing Mix

Question 4.5

Will the policy provide for a mix and choice of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community and is it consistent with national policy in that regard?

Question 4.6

Is the scope of the policy appropriate and is greater clarity needed in paragraph 4.5 in relation to the size of affordable properties that are most needed?

Question 4.7

Is the policy sufficiently flexible to take account of changing conditions to the private rented sector over time?

11. As drafted, we do not consider Policy H1 gives an accurate reflection of the Housing Mix identified in paragraph 4.5 Table 6, limiting its use by a decision maker to determine if a planning application meets with the aims and is in accordance with the Local Plan Policy. It is only subject to interpretation.

12. Amended Policy Suggestion:

We will ~~seek~~ **REQUIRE** a mix of house types, tenures and sizes that meet the overall needs of the Borough in line with our most up to date evidence as Table 6. Preferred Mix of New Housing by Size and Tenure

<i>Table 6: Preferred Overall Mix of New Housing by Size and Tenure Preferred Overall Mix of New Housing by Size and Tenure Table</i>				
	<i>1 bedroom</i>	<i>2 bedroom</i>	<i>3 bedroom</i>	<i>4+ bedroom</i>
<i>Market</i>	<i>Up to 10%</i>	<i>20-30%</i>	<i>45-55%</i>	<i>15-25%</i>
<i>Affordable home ownership</i>	<i>10-20%</i>	<i>35-45%</i>	<i>30-40%</i>	<i>5-15%</i>
<i>Affordable Housing (rented)</i>	<i>60-75%</i>		<i>20-30%</i>	<i>Up to 10%</i>

We will do this whilst having regard to the extent to which those needs have already been met by other development, local housing needs and housing market evidence, economic conditions, viability and site-specific circumstances.

Policy H2 – Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

Question 4.8

Are the requirements in Policy H2 for M4(2) and M4(3) standard homes justified having regard to the factors listed in the Planning Practice Guidance and the evidence in the Housing Needs Assessment (EB/HSG/1)? Is it clear what is meant by an ‘appropriate proportion’ in relation to the requirement for M4(3) homes? Has the impact on development viability been assessed and what was the outcome?

13. The Policy is weak in its interpretation of the supporting text. Stating that: ‘we will also support the provision of bungalows, instead of promote, or actively support the provision of bungalows, etc...’

14. There is a need to strengthen the Policy so as not to rely on Developers controlling the provision of bungalows and other accommodation in order that proper provision is made for the groups covered by the Policy, giving positivity to the Policy.

15. We suggest amending the final part of Policy H2 Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities to read:

We will also:

~~support~~ **PROMOTE** the provision of bungalows or other single level properties;
and

~~support~~ **PROMOTE** the provision of specialist accommodation where it addresses the needs of older people in accordance with identified housing needs and care requirements, or of younger people with special accommodation needs.

16. We are asking for the word 'support' to be replaced by 'promote' and a more positive action-oriented policy approach.

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 4: Assessment of Housing Need, the Housing Requirement and Mix and Choice of Housing

Additional Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

January 2023

Representation Number: 340

Issue 1 - Is the assessment of housing need and the housing requirement positively prepared, justified by the evidence and consistent with national policy?

Supplementary Questions

Question 1.

In the light of the Inspectors' findings (Exam 55) that the minimum local housing need for Charnwood is 1,189 dwellings per year, should the housing requirement in Policy DS1 of 1,111 dwellings per year be increased to 1,189 to ensure that the Plan has been positively prepared? Is there any justification for a lower or a higher figure?

CPRE's view is that the overall figure should be lower.

In our June 2020 submission on Matter 4 in answer to Question 4.1, we argued that the 1,111 dwellings per year figure should be lower and excess housing reduced. The addition of 78 dwellings per year does not alter our view with regard to the 1,111 figure.

To summarise, our concerns about this figure arose from:

1. The use of a 10% contingency (flexibility addition) on all sites. While accepting a small buffer was appropriate, we cited the example of the Black Country where a 5% failure rate was employed.
2. The Plan made no allowance for windfalls (1,120 dwellings plus).

3. Not including all the permitted allocation all of the North Leicester Urban Extension (1,295 dwellings).

Since the Inspectors reported their conclusions regarding the Matter 10 hearings, the Government, through the Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, has announced a range of proposed changes to the planning system based on his 5 December 2022 letter to MPs.

In particular:

- i) he made clear that the calculation of housing numbers should no longer be considered mandatory, but that it should be an advisory starting point. Also, it will be up to local authorities, working with their communities, to determine how many homes can actually be built, taking into account what should be protected in each area.
- ii) he would promote a brownfield first approach and in relation to cities said: *“As the Prime Minister committed to in the summer, we will also continue to get cities building more new houses, and stop them offloading their responsibilities to provide new housing onto neighbouring green fields by ending the so-called ‘duty to co-operate’ which has made it easier for urban authorities to impose their housing on suburban and rural communities.”*¹
- iii) he would consult on a new approach to accelerating the speed at which permissions are built out, specifically on a new financial penalty.

This would mean that the 35% increase to housing in Leicester should not be included in any unmet need calculation, as we said at the previous hearings, reducing Leicester’s SM need by 627 dpa (2021 Affordability Figures) which from 2020-2036 amounts to 10,032. This would mean that the additional 78 dpa in Charnwood should, in effect, be considered as excess contingency provision reducing the need for further contingency housing to be added.

Question 2.

Pending any changes to the housing requirement in Policy DS1 to accommodate Charnwood’s apportionment of Leicester’s unmet housing need, is there a sufficient buffer between the minimum housing requirement in Policy DS1 and the overall supply during the Plan period to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect of the housing requirement being met? In the event that the supply needs to be increased to secure an appropriate buffer, what sources of supply would help to deliver this? 8 Are any new site allocations likely to be required? If so, what would be the process and likely timescale for identifying sites?

¹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Letter from Secretary of State to MPs, 5 December 2022, p. 4.

In CPRE's view, even with the increase in the annual need figure to 1189, there will still be sufficient buffer (flexibility) between minimum housing requirement and the overall supply during the Plan period. In addition, we do not see a need to make any new site allocations.

This is based upon taking account of two factors. The Plan currently gives no weight in calculating the requirements to windfalls and does not anticipate a full build out of the North East Leicester Urban Extension (Thorpebury development) within the Plan period. Not including these contributions to the overall numbers could result in excess requirements and in an oversupply of housing through the unnecessary allocation of additional greenfield sites for development.

The Leicester/ Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground June 2022 (Exam 43)² assumes 640 windfalls in Charnwood by 2031 or 1040 by 2036 averaging at 80 dpa. However the Plan goes to 2037, so a figure of 1120 would be appropriate.

In our view, the long timescale for delivering the NE Leicester – Thorpebury development is over-conservative and unacceptable. Given the Government's commitment to strengthen its powers to ensure developers to deliver houses at a quicker build out rate, there should be greater weight given in the Plan to the completion of this development within the Plan period even while all the details are not yet published. The wider site has an allocation of 4,500 homes but only 3,205 homes are included in Table 1 (p. 20)³ Housing Need and Supply 2021-37. This leaves 1,295 which in our view should be included in the Plan.

Taking the extra Leicester Housing need and these two factors into account, we think that there would still be an oversupply of 1,000+ houses.

Our Calculations:

Need/Requirement: 20,926

(with extra Leicester Housing $1189 \times 16 = 19024$ plus 10%, contingency = 20,926)

Supply: 19,461

(Supply Total from Table 1: 10,603, plus 8,858, total from Policy DS3 in Plan p. 35⁴) = 19,461

Additional supply as per our suggestions above: 2,415+

(Windfalls 1,120 and 1295 from NE Leicester Urban extension)

Total Supply: 21,876+

² Exam 43 Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing and Employment Land Needs (June 2022) Appendix A and Appendix B

³ Charnwood Plan, Table 1, on page 20.

⁴ Charnwood Plan Policy DS3 table p 35

Overall position:

Need (including 10% contingency): 20,926

Supply: 21, 876+

This represents a 15% or 950 above the 10% contingency

All this suggests to us that there is an oversupply of 1000+, even with the extra for Leicester. Therefore, by including windfalls and full build out of the NE Leicester site, there will be a more than sufficient buffer and no need to allocate further sites.

It may even be that some of the currently allocated sites, which have high impacts on the environment, landscape or other issues of sustainability, can be safely removed from the plan should the evidence on those sites merit it without jeopardising the delivery of sufficient housing. This is especially so as some sites not previously allocated have now received planning permission.



The countryside charity
Leicestershire

Charity Number: 1164985

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 7: Housing Land Supply

Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

June 2022

Representation Number: 340

Issue 1 Whether the Plan will provide for a sufficient housing land supply to deliver the planned housing growth over the Plan period and whether a deliverable five-year supply of housing will be available on adoption

Note – the Council's responses to these questions should include an updated housing trajectory, updated completions information for 2021/22, site proformas and the Statements of Common Ground with site promoters (referred to in EXAM2).

Supply over the Plan Period

Question 7.1

What assumptions have been made to inform the trajectory for the delivery of housing sites in terms of:

- a. Lead in times for planning permission being approved*
- b. Outline and reserved matters applications*
- c. Site preparation and ground works*
- d. Average build out rates and numbers of sales outlets*

1. CPRE has not considered all sites in detail. We do believe that the timescale for delivering the North East Leicestershire Urban Extension may be over-conservative. The current build-out rate of 200 dpa (from 2026-2033) would only need to be raised to approximately 300 dpa to achieve the full site development within the plan period.

2. We are also not clear why the build out rate for those years is deflated compared to 2024-2026 and 2034-2037.

3. The SHELAA proforma for the site (*Thurmaston PSH210/Examination Reference*) suggests a build-out rate of 200 dpa for 4 builders. It then goes on to say that:

'There is considered to be a reasonable prospect that development will be delivered within the timeframe shown (i.e., within the plan period) based on a judgement of the potential economic viability of the site and developer capacity to complete and let/sell the development over that period.'

4. That would suggest that the site could well be built-out within the plan period.

5. On that basis CPRE consider that the Council should be working with the developer to ensure development occurs within the plan period. This would increase supply and reduce the need for other greenfield sites, which would, of itself, one would expect allow development to progress more quickly. On that basis and with no prejudice to our views on specific development proposals we consider the plan should include the full 4,500 homes.

Question 7.2

Will the Plan identify a sufficient supply of specific, deliverable sites for years 1 – 5 of the Plan period and specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6 – 10 and where possible for years 11 – 15? What is the estimated total supply of deliverable and developable new housing from the following sources?

- a. Sites with detailed planning permission for 10 or more dwellings*
- b. Sites with outline or detailed planning permission for 9 or less dwellings*
- c. Windfall allowance*

6. A contribution to housing supply will inevitably also be found from windfall sites but we have not seen data from the Council which allows us to examine the historic small and large windfall sites performance.

7. The Leicester/Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground 2021 (SCG/1)¹ assumes 640 small windfalls (I assume under 10 dwellings although it is not defined in the tables) by 2031 or 1040 by 2036, In other words, 80 dpa. However, the Plan goes to 2037 so a figure of 1120 dpa would be correct by this calculation.

8. The current situation is also inconsistent with other Leicestershire Authorities such as Hinckley and Bosworth who are allowing for a windfall allowance in their local plan.

9. It is hard to tell without seeing the historic annual figures but this may be an underestimate depending whether it is based on 5 or 10 years of data because the recession post 2010 tended to dampen windfalls in those years. Further monitoring data from the Council may allow an upward shift in reliable Windfalls but it is hard to tell.

¹ [The Statement of Common Ground.pdf \(leics.gov.uk\)](#), Appendix A and Appendix B.

10. The 2021 Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground would therefore suggest that small scale windfalls should amount to 1,120 dwellings over the plan period, without any consideration of larger windfalls.

11. It is, of course, harder to predict future windfalls on larger sites. However, the Council could examine the likelihood of such sites coming forwards. The 16 Dec 2020 Government Statement (*Examination Reference*²) anticipates this in regards to the largest 20 cities, such as Leicester, but it may well be that Loughborough and other towns also see changes in retail, leisure and office needs.

12. CPRE, therefore, considers that the figure of 1,120 for windfalls would not only be robust, it would be likely to be an under-estimate.

Question 7.2 (continued)

d. Sites with outline planning permission for 10 or more dwellings

e. Site allocations

f. Sites on the brownfield register

13. CPRE has not considered each of these in detail. We may wish to comment on new evidence on this produced by the council, but we note that both our comments on the Urban Extension North and East of Leicester and on windfalls would increase delivery in all timeframes if included in the plan.

(In responding to this question, the Council should provide updated figures from the most recent monitoring information)

Question 7.3

What evidence is there to support the estimated supply from the above sources and is it robust?

14. As set out on Matter 4.3 we consider the supply side figures should be increased but assuming a failure rate of 5% for commitments. Using the 2014 ONS figures this would create an overall requirement of 19,023.

15. As well as adopting a 5% commitments approach, CPRE Leicestershire also argue that all the houses with planning permission on the North East of Leicester Urban Extension should be included in the plan adding an additional 1,295 to the supply (4,500 in total on both sites).

16. A further contribution as set out above of at least 1,120 homes from windfalls should be included.

² CPRE Matter 7 Government response to planning consultation 16 Dec 2020

17. Additional homes might further be added with a review of the yield of sites based on a modest increase in densities in line with the density policy CPRE is suggesting and in line with the Leicestershire Joint SHELAA Methodology (*Examination Reference*³) approach which assumes a density of 30 dph but 40 dph on 'sites within and adjacent to the Principal Urban Area and in selected Centres'. something the Charnwood SHELAA (EB/DS/1) does not assume despite the large number of sites on the edge of centres, including Loughborough itself.

18. We suggest the following Density Policy Wording (Similar to Hinckley and Bosworth Plan proposal (*Examination Reference*⁴))

The Density of development will be guided by good design principles and the prevailing character of the area rather than specific density targets. However, unless justified through principles of good design, to ensure the efficient use of land the following minimum densities apply to residential development:

- *At least 40 dwellings per hectare within and adjoining...*
- *At least 30 dwellings per hectare within and adjoining... and in Rural Villages and Rural Hamlets*

All developers will be expected to demonstrate that they have sought to use land efficiently.

19. Such a policy would not in our view be over restrictive as it would firmly put the emphasis on good design, although it would, at the same time, ensure developers needed to justify the approach taken in relation to density of development.

20. This would also be consistent with the approach suggested in the 16 Dec 2020 Government Statement which seeks to increase housing in Urban Areas.

21. Overall, taking account of this additional supply, we consider the excess housing needing to be allocated would then amount to 3,101 (ONS2016) or 6,005 (ONS2014). This would be robust, especially as it does not take account of any large-scale windfalls or increases in yield (for example from modest density improvements) which might be achieved.

22. This would reduce the need for housing to be accommodated on new Green Field sites across the Borough.

Question 7.4

How does the proposed annual requirement of 1111 dwellings in Policy DS1 compare with recent housing delivery?

³ CPRE Matter 7 SHELAA Joint Methodology Paper - 2019

⁴ CPRE Matter 7 Hinckley plan density extract from Hinckley and Bosworth, Consultation Draft Plan June 2021 https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/7356/draft_local_plan_2020_-_2039

23. CPRE may wish to comment on this matter based on the new evidence put forwards by the Council.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

Question 7.5

What is the relevant five-year period on adoption and what is the requirement?

(The Council's response to this question should include a worked table of the five-year requirement and the deliverable five-year supply position against the requirement).

Question 7.6

Does past delivery and/or the Housing Delivery Test results have any implications for the appropriate buffer to be added to the five-year land supply?

Question 7.7

Is there clear evidence to support the delivery of sites in the relevant five-year period on adoption?

Question 7.8

Based on a requirement of 1111 dwellings per year, would the Plan help to ensure a five-year supply of deliverable sites on adoption and over the Plan period?

24. CPRE may wish to comment on these matters based on the new evidence put forwards by the Council.



The countryside charity
Leicestershire

Charity Number: 1164985

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 8: Infrastructure and Transport

Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

June 2022

Representation Number: 340

Issue 1 - The Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Question 8.1

Does the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (SD/10) contain the full range of infrastructure to support the development proposed in the Plan?

The Introduction makes it clear that the achievement of high standards of sustainable development places greater expectations on developers and providers of infrastructure. The IDP shows the emphasis is to seek infrastructure that facilitates the growth of traffic with very little commitment to improving walking, cycling and public transport.

How will it be reviewed and kept up to date?

Statements in TP/5 and SCG/5 suggest that there could be problems with delivering the infrastructure considered necessary. It is relying on funding streams which are not identified or certain. It is also evident that the IDP has not paid sufficient regard to reducing the need to travel or mitigating climate change. It is inevitable that it will need to be reviewed very soon.

Question 8.2

Does the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (Appendix 3 of the Plan) enable a coordinated and strategy led approach to the delivery of new and improved infrastructure to support planned growth?

There is no evidence of any co-ordination of delivery with planned growth.

Policy DS1 (Implementation of Spatial Strategy) refers to development that could prejudice the delivery of infrastructure set out at Appendix 3. Many of the items in Appendix 3 are ill-defined and it is subject to review, so it is not clear how this would work in practice.

Can the priorities, costs and funding sources for the different types of infrastructure be easily identified from the Schedule?

The Schedule shows all the non-strategic transport infrastructure is deemed to be 'Essential'. Note 4 shows the highways infrastructure was conceived in a very short time period in early 2021. The speed of the process could not have enabled a proper understanding of the practical issues and constraints. As such the costs shown must be regarded as merely a ball-park figure with a very high probability of error.

Furthermore, SCG/5 Transport (4.2) lists many factors that still need to be resolved regarding the impact and value for money of all the mitigation measures proposed. (4.3) states that more work is required to identify sustainable transport opportunities to support a shift from cars to more sustainable modes. This recognition is very welcome, but it comes far too late in the process. It should have been considered from the outset.

With regard to funding sources, many of the non-strategic transport items listed in the Schedule simply state "*S.106 developer contributions / local authority highway funding*". It is not clear how the funding would be split between S106 and the LHA.

SCG/5 (4.5) states that "*The parties will seek to explore all potential routes for funding and will continue discussions to ensure that the appropriate evidence to access all funds is provided*".

It is not clear when such evidence could be provided. The total cost of the local transport schemes listed is over £87million. With regard to Note 1 of the Schedule it seems strange that it includes schemes that are already included in Section 106 Agreements for the approved 'SUEs'.

SCG/5 (4.8) notes that Leicester City Council has raised issues of soundness in relation to several CLP policies that we have criticised: CC5, INF1 & INF2. The impact of major development within the city in close proximity to Charnwood has been a concern for decades and it has not been addressed. A recently completed development at Ashton

Green, just south of Thurcaston was permitted without any facilities or a bus service. More development is now proposed in the Leicester Local Plan.

Question 8.3

Will Policy INF1 be effective in securing new and improvements in capacity to existing infrastructure to support proposed development and are any main modifications necessary for precision and effectiveness including in relation to:

a. Including a cross reference in Policy INF1 to the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule in Appendix 3 of the Plan

....

c. The use of S106 legal agreements to fund highway improvements

d. Joint working to address cross boundary infrastructure needs and capacity.

The very extensive modelling work outlined in (TR/5) is highly unusual. The highway authorities and Midlands Connect have concluded that the SRN in the vicinity of Leicester is a major problem and that it must be tackled by adding extra capacity; despite this adding to the problems while ignoring climate change mitigation and the environment.

The Traffic Forecasting Report (EB/TR/11) details some of the assumptions used. A mode share analysis (3.4) shows an increase in highway share from 2014 to a new 2037 baseline. The 2037 baseline includes the Lubbethorpe 'SUE' and the three Charnwood 'SUEs' (excluding 925 at NEL). The Active Mode share of 26% for Charnwood in 2014 seems far too high as most 21st Century development has very few or no local facilities. A figure no higher than 10% would seem much more representative for the developments in the locations proposed.

Total network time and distance statistics can provide an insight into how the road network copes with the forecast growth. Table 3.10 shows a 29% increase in distance in the PM peak results in a staggering 81% increase in journey time in 2037. This is because the model is struggling to cope with the extra traffic. The additional Local Plan development is very small compared to the 2037 baseline but this shows a further 15% increase in time arises from Development Option 2. This is discussed in 3.6 although many of the statements are very questionable and reveal both the limitations of modelling and a lack of understanding of local traffic movement and constraints.

SRN Issues (EB/TR/6) provides some background to the operation of the Strategic Road Network. It rightly recognises (3.5) what it calls 'junction hopping', where local traffic uses the SRN. While it states that the modelling shows that development in Charnwood

will only increase the flow in the M1 slightly (4.14), this is because the route is congested in the model.

Increasing the capacity of the SRN will encourage traffic growth and junction hopping. All of the junctions on the M1 in Leicestershire have been altered (some significantly), as have those on the A46 Leicester Western Bypass. More changes are being sought through S106 Agreements for example to the A46/A6 junction at Broadnook. TP/5 5.1 is proposing a further investigation of Junction 23; which was altered in the last year! This is further that proof that the failure to properly consider sustainable transport from the outset is creating a situation where more highway capacity is seen as essential.

The cost of the 8 'Strategic' proposals in the Infrastructure Schedule is around £250million. All show Delivery as 'tbc'. Six of these are shown with a delivery period starting between 2026 & 2031. The other two are shown as starting after 2031; all run through to 2037.

Highways England 2021-22 Delivery Plan Update (*Examination Reference*)¹ is an update of the HE Delivery Plan 2020-25 (EB/TR/15). Annex C of the Update is an 'Enhancement scheme list'. It notes that a scheme on the A5 near Hinckley has been cancelled. 'Smart Motorways' are now being reviewed. A proposal to extend and widen Newark Bypass is the only scheme in the Midlands shown with a starting date. Annex D is a 'Pipeline of proposed future schemes'. Highways England point out that the inclusion of schemes in the 'pipeline' does not mean they are guaranteed to progress; as the A5 scheme shows.

There are two schemes in the Delivery Plan relevant to Charnwood: 'M1 North Leicestershire extra capacity' and 'M1 Leicester Western Access'. The latter is looking at the M1 between Junction 21 and 21a, where the Leicester Western bypass joins the M1. This was recognised as a problem before the Leicester Western Bypass opened in 1995. Millions of pounds have been wasted on studies and some tinkering but the constraints have since increased.

A list of Government contracts earlier this year showed the value of Leicester Western Access as £564m, somewhat higher than the £20m in the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule. The £20m figure is possibly for yet another assessment. There is no realistic scheme that would solve the congestion problem on this section of the M1 and one consequence would be to encourage more junction-hopping along the M1 and A46 and increase traffic overall.

¹ See: CPRE Matter 8 Highways England Delivery Plan Update 2021-22

This is further proof that a Plan which relies on additional road capacity is not meeting its legal obligations and why it needs substantial modifications.

Issue 2 - Transport

Question 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?

There is no sign that there has been any serious attempt to consider sustainable transport in the modelling. This is despite it being enshrined in government and local policies for over thirty years. The 2004 and 2011 Charnwood Local Plans had very similar objectives and policies seeking to reduce the need to travel while encouraging modal shift through development patterns and improved alternatives.

The Charnwood Climate Change Strategy EB/CC/3 encourages a sustainable pattern of development supported by a low carbon transport infrastructure. TP/5 shows an emphasis on high carbon roads and the modelling shows the problems with that approach.

As we explained in response to Matter 3 there does not appear to have been any serious consideration of the need to mitigate climate change or to consider from the outset the importance of ensuring that development and transport are designed to support sustainable travel. Despite numerous references to cycling, walking and public transport the balance of spending identified in the infrastructure schedule is hugely weighted towards high carbon roads to facilitate traffic growth. This also applies to the three supposedly sustainable urban extensions 'SUEs' which have been approved.

Question 8.5

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

Policy INF2 states that "We will support development that:" and this is followed by three bullet points. It is not clear whether all or some of the bullet points apply.

Bullet 1 refers to a "*robust transport assessment of the impact of the development on the road network, including any cumulative impacts.*"

Examination of previous transport assessments shows no evidence that the cumulative impacts have been considered. While such traffic assessments are often voluminous,

they are by no means robust. There is a lack of evidence of any assessment of earlier TAs to see how outcomes match the assumptions.

Bullet 2 refers to infrastructure which supports sustainable transport choices being prioritised before any improvements to the local or strategic road network.

There is no evidence of any such prioritisation and it is not clear how it would work in practice. It is obvious that the balance of funding in the Infrastructure Schedule does not reflect this approach. Neither does the failure to properly assess what is needed to support sustainable travel.

Bullet 3 refers to *"the reasonable costs of measures required to mitigate the cumulative impacts of the development strategy upon the local and strategic road network."*

This is wide-open to interpretation. What is a reasonable contribution? How would it be assessed? By whom? Who else would need to contribute?

Question 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?

The extensive amount of traffic modelling and the comments in the various reports show that the road network is overstressed and the proposed development will make it worse. All the local transport items in the Infrastructure Schedule are deemed to be 'Essential'.

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?

TP/5 refers to Technical Note 2 which shows that work on a preferred mitigation package started with a 'long list of interventions' commencing in January 2021. Technical Note 3 (Jan 2021) recognised the congestion caused by the proposed developments and reports that it identified areas where it considered 'more strategic traffic' is using the local road network as a result of congestion on the SRN. It does not define 'more strategic traffic' so it is not clear what is meant by this statement or how critical it is. The modelling process is not transparent so the extent and sensitivity of this cannot be verified.

Revised Technical Note 3 (April 2021) sought to address comments made by 'stakeholders' on the various reports. It is not clear what comments were made or what weight was given to them.

Question 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?

The modelling undertaken so far appears to be based on the assumption that previous trends and preferences will continue and should be accommodated. We have argued that there is a huge body of evidence that shows that building more road capacity facilitates the growth of traffic and moves the congestion around since mitigation measures do not tackle the wider problem. We would also argue that an analysis of historic funding shows that it is insufficient to keep pace with traffic growth even if such an approach was considered desirable. The likelihood of an increase in funding seems improbable now that there is a growing awareness of climate change, although there is very little sign that this is being taken seriously.

Monitoring of sustainable transport

While monitoring is being considered separately as Matter 9, at which hearing we are not represented, we offer these brief comments as they are related to our comments on transport.

Re Question 9.6

Will the monitoring indicators and targets in Appendix 1 of the Plan provide a robust basis for assessing the Plan's delivery?

No, particularly in relation to assessing whether the Plan is actually delivering a reduction in car use and the mitigation of climate change. The lack of meaningful indicators and targets has allowed successive iterations of the Local Plan to ignore the consequences of what has been delivered.

Three indicators are proposed for CC5 Sustainable Transport.

1. Railway Station entry and exits. This is expected to monitor a modal shift towards increased rail use
2. Bus usage data. This is supposed to monitor a modal shift towards bus use
3. Amount of new development at Sustainable Urban Extensions and service centres with access to a half-hour frequency public transport service. The target is 100% of houses to be within 400m of a local bus service.

These indicators are not meaningful at all.

1. It is not possible to measure modal shift without considering all modes.

2. It does not state what data would be sought, the area covered or how it would be collected.
3. It is already evident that this has not been achieved in the approved SUEs. It does not state how 400m would be measured or what would be considered a local bus service - for example in terms of places served, the periods over which buses would run at a half-hourly frequency; either over the day or week.

INF 1 has one indicator and no target. It is assumed that the word 'amount ' relates to a monetary value and not a quantity. INF 2 has no indicator or target.

The quickest and most effective way to achieve modal shift will be through measures which create safe and attractive facilities for walking and cycling. Suggested indicators could be:-

- Does infrastructure spend show the priority is being given to deliver walking, cycling and the use of public transport before any improvements to the local and strategic road network.
- Is development really being put in places where cycling and walking are very realistic options?
- How much land has been lost for roads and car-parking?

Re Question 9.7

Does the Plan have sufficient flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and which policies/measures will ensure that?

No. It seems inevitable that substantial changes to planning policy will be required to mitigate climate change. NPPF as it currently stands contains a lot of rhetoric and presumptions. For reasons explained in our objections the Plan will not achieve sustainable transport. Once a site is committed it will be very difficult to change it or remove it. It will be there for decades.

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 8: Infrastructure and Transport

Additional Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

January 2023

Representation Number: 340

We would like to submit an update to our response on Matter 8 (RN 340) given the time interval, several factors arising and documents that have been made available since then.

In our previous submissions we tried to show how planning and transport must be considered together as the type and location of development has a fundamental impact on where and how people travel; as does the provision of infrastructure.

We would add the following:

Re: Issue 1 - The Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Question 8.1

Most of the transport projects identified in the Dec 2021 IDP have been withdrawn. That version and the original IDP said that the transport measures included in it were essential. The updated June 2022 IDP now includes vague local Transport Strategies for North of Leicester, Soar Vally and Loughborough/Shepshed. It is unclear what will emerge from these or how they would be phased or delivered. Many costs are shown as 'tbc'. It is not clear how any costs would be apportioned between developments or how delivery could be guaranteed. An examination of this aspect is vital.

Question 8.2

The transport elements in the Delivery Schedule of the June IDP supersede those in Appendix 3. See Answer to 8.1.

Question 8.3

Leicestershire County Council is one of several authorities nationally now encountering significant problems with the delivery of transport infrastructure, particularly that which is associated with developments.

The County Council has now recognised that it is in a dire financial position, made much worse, by making commitments to fund road schemes; now hugely more expensive than anticipated. It also realises that it will not be able to fund future projects without guaranteed funding up-front and is proposing to seek additional contributions from developers by working in conjunction with its local planning authorities. Statutory duties will take precedence for funding over other functions and that it may not be possible to mitigate the impact of development on the road network.¹

Following a flawed assessment process, Leicestershire CC decided to make the A6 from Leicester to the M1 at Kegworth its top priority as part of the Major Road Network (MRN). Most of this falls within Charnwood and it goes through Loughborough and Hathern. There is no clarity regarding what is proposed or what it hopes to achieve or cost. There is no option to provide a bypass to Loughborough.

Against this developing background, CPRE has continuing concerns. Plans for the delivery of appropriate transport infrastructure need to be examined in detail.

Re: Issue 2 - Transport

Question 8.4

There is still no sign of any effective commitment to the delivery of better public transport or active travel. The proposed Major Modifications include the substitution of the word 'excellent' with 'good' accessibility by non-car modes. Good is not defined and therefore it is just as meaningless.

The bus service between Cossington and Leicester was withdrawn in August. A further 357 houses have recently been given outline permission there in addition to the 130 proposed on site HA59. There is no way Cossington could be said to have good accessibility without a car. It has negligible facilities: this is typical, but is ignored.

¹ These issues were the subject of a report, *Managing the Risk Relating to the Delivery of Infrastructure to Support Growth*, discussed by Leicestershire County Council Cabinet at its meeting on 25th November 2022. <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s172416/FINAL%20-%20Managing%20Growth.pdf>

Question 8.5

There is now even more uncertainty regarding the possibility of a coordinated and strategy led approach to transport particularly having regard to sources of funding and the lack of clear proposals.

We note a statement in National Highways (NH) response to Q8.5: "*the proposed developments in the Charnwood Local Plan would have an adverse impact on the operation of the M1 J23 and along the A46 Corridor...*" NH is awaiting further detail of the mitigation and says it is "*important to note that the costs and timings of some improvements are likely to be subject to variation, particularly those where the delivery would be the responsibility of other parties.*"²

In a letter dated 28th September 2022 from NH to Ian Kemp, the Programme Officer, there was reference a note which NH said provided the evidence on which Leicestershire CC had based "*their simplistic approach to the prospective reduction in demand for highway road space due to the imposition of different public transport measures*".³

We have attempted to obtain a copy of the note by FOI to see what had been proposed but this has been refused. An FOI for this to Leicestershire CC and NH was refused on the grounds that it "*relates to material which is still in the course of completion, to unfinished documents or to incomplete data.*"

We consider that as NH had formulated a response based on it, the argument that it was still in the course of completion carried little weight. We suggested Leicestershire CC should submit it in full to the inquiry so the NH response could be seen in context.

Question 8.6

See our answers to Q 8.1 to 8.3. NH also notes the difficulty of linking sites to mitigation measures.

Question 8.7

The status of modelling is now more unclear than ever. The extent to which modelling prioritises alternative modes or effective planning as a serious option to reduce the need to travel is unknown. There is no transparency of the inputs or process.

² National Highways: Hearing Statement Matter 8 – Infrastructure and Transport.

³ Letter 28 September 2022 from National Highways to Ian Kemp with reference to technical note from Leicestershire County Council named 'Environment and Transport – Commissioning Framework, High Level Strategic Growth Plan – Technical Note 001, Evidencing Highway Reduction Factors Associated with Public Transport Measures dated 22 August 2022.

https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/matter_10_written_statement_national_highways/Matter%2010%20Written%20Statement%20-%20National%20Highways.pdf

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Matter 10: Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Employment Land Needs

Submission from CPRE Leicestershire

Sept 2022

Representation Number: 340

Issue 1 – The Assessment of Housing Need

Question 10.2

Is the HENA (Exam 44a) assessment of Leicester and Leicestershire's housing need from 2020 to 2036 (91,408 dwellings) based on a robust assessment of relevant factors? Are there any exceptional circumstances which would justify planning for a lower or a higher figure?

The HENA calculations predate the 2021 CENSUS. The interim CENSUS results have significantly downgraded the existing 2021 households in both Leicester (-10,367) and Charnwood (-2452), and overall, in Leicester and Leicestershire, (-7899) when compared with the ONS2014 figures. The number of households are closest to the ONS2016 projections.

This discrepancy is only likely to increase when projected forwards and gives sound evidence (as required in NPPG) for the use of a lower figure than the Standard Methodology result for Charnwood itself, reinforcing what we said in Matter 4.1.

This is also of particular importance, given that the main assumed unmet need is from Leicester and the SM calculation, includes, not only demographic need but an affordability uplift and a 35% addition to Leicester (some 639 dpa) a need which does not exist.

The CENSUS results would also suggest support for the contention that falling household size may not continue at the same rate. The HENA suggest household suppression as evidence for why the ONS2014 HRRs are

preferable to the ONS2018 HRRs (5.42-5.48). However, there is another interpretation which suggests that there have been structural changes (for example the age at which people buy property) which mean that relying on the longer 2014 trends does not allow for a levelling off of household size.

Importantly, we consider the CENSUS represents 'robust evidence' for a lower figure based on realistic assumptions of demographic growth, which alongside the local circumstances relating to urban regeneration, congestion and carbon emissions, justify a deviation from the SM.

Question 10.3

What implications, if any, do the levels of net migration in the 2018 Sub National Household Projections compared with the 2014 projections (on which the standard method is based) have for the standard method of assessing housing need for Leicester and Leicestershire? Is the use of an alternative internal migration assumption justified and if so, why? (Table 5.13)

The 2018 sub-national main projections rely on only two years of internal migration data, largely reflecting changes in the way NHS data is gathered. The choice to limit the period is likely to make it both more volatile and more influenced by short-term effects including recent house-building activity.

This change has impacted both on the housing distribution nationally and regionally and has led to a distribution more concentrated in the Leicestershire districts rather than Leicester.

As stated above it would be consistent with the Census to use the 2016ONS projections. However, if the ONS 2018 projections are adopted a longer time frame for Internal Migration would seem appropriate.

Question 10.4

Is the minimum local housing need figure for Charnwood from 2020 to 2036 of 1,111 dwellings set out in the HENA (Table 13.1) robust and justified? Does the evidence in the HENA update any of the assumptions used in the Charnwood Housing Needs Assessment (EB/HSG/1)?

The HENA analyses the jobs that would be supported by the Standard Methodology approach across Leicester and Leicestershire. Employment baseline growth is 27,000 but the SM would provide three times higher than this (Para 8.24). The aspirational growth figure would lead to 81,400 jobs. However, one needs to be careful in adopting aspirational figures which are potentially circular. Even so, the high figure would leave Charnwood in a position where it only needs 640 dpa based on 2011 CENSUS level commuting, 598 if it achieves 1:1 commuting.

There is an economic shortfall identified in North West Leicestershire, Melton and Blaby but promoting housing in Charnwood would still lead to an increase in car commuting over longer distances so cannot be supported. This would suggest that, even taking the ONS2016 figures, Charnwood would be likely to be exporting commuters to other areas.

This would also have implications for the sustainability of the SM figure, and suggests any increase to meet needs elsewhere would be likely to increase commuting, as well as other journeys to major services.

Question 10.5

Notwithstanding that the Charnwood Local Plan has been submitted for Examination, is the use of 2020 affordability data for Charnwood (HENA para 8.13) justified? Would the use of 2021 affordability data for Charnwood feeding into the standard method affect the calculation of housing need for Charnwood in Table 8.1? If so, how?

If one adopted the most up to date Standard Methodology calculation (2022-2032, 2021 affordability) Charnwood's need would increase from 1,111 to 1,156 dpa, and in the case of the 2016ONS figures, which we favour, from 946 to 981.

This, of course, demonstrates one of the flaws in the SM approach as it is volatile to house price changes without any actual need being generated. Moreover, the additional 35% was fixed for cities like Leicester but any general deterioration in affordability does not reset that so it only meets the Government's political target.

Moreover, it is unclear how the impact of COVID and inflation will impact on house prices moving forwards. The HENA examines this and suggests on-going house price growth (Para 4.16 - 4.24), but acknowledges the market was driven in the pandemic by particular needs and that this growth could be impacted by external events. Of course, some of those, such as the current inflation level, were yet to emerge at time of writing. There is then a risk in adopting the latest affordability figures, especially as the existing SM calculation itself appears to be exaggerated.

Question 10.6

What are the implications, if any, of Charnwood having a 12% increase in population 2011-19 but a 9.2% increase in dwelling stock over the same period as indicated in the HENA (Table 5.16)? Does this point to a level of suppressed household formation which would justify an uplift in the level of need? Does this trend have any implications for the future distribution of development as indicated at paragraph 5.36 of the HENA?

Leaving aside the structural long-term changes described above that might impact on household formation, it is worth asking the question whether household size has significantly changed in reality. The CENSUS figures from 2011 and 2021 suggest that in the case of Charnwood there has not been a significant change, the average dipping from 2.497 to 2.492. The growth is also closer to 11% (up to 2021) rather than 12% (up to 2019) in both households and population.

Charnwood	Population	Households	Household Size
Census 2011	166,100	66,516	2.497
Census 2021	183,900	73,800	2.492

In terms of the distribution of development it is also worth noting that past trends do not provide a policy basis for any future redistribution. This needs to be guided by sustainability aims.

Issue 2 – The Scale of the Unmet Need for Housing

Question 10.7

Is the 18,700 dwelling figure a reasonable working assumption for Leicester’s unmet need from 2020 to 2036 as set out in the Housing Distribution Paper (paragraph 3.7) (Exam 45) and the SoCG (paragraph 3.19), pending further testing through the Leicester Local Plan? Is it a reasonable basis on which to apportion the unmet need across the Leicestershire authorities?

As set out above, the actual number of households in Leicester is considerably lower than that provided in ONS2014 (-10,367). This would suggest that the unmet need (18,700) may become untenable when the Leicester Plan is tested against up-to-date ONS projections taking account of the CENSUS.

Furthermore, there is no up-to-date publicly available evidence to support the supply figure which is given in the SoCG. It is simply assumed to be the case. Our criticisms (Question 1.8) remain substantially the same, in terms of out-of-date evidence, low level of windfalls and the likelihood of new sources of supply. Any shortfall is also likely to be late in the plan process.

It is worth noting two further factors. Para 3.37 of the HENA refers to the oversupply of office space in Leicester with the main demand for downsizing by some 30% in size. This would support the view that additional housing supply can be expected to come forwards as a result of changes of use from offices, retail and leisure.

Fig 4.3 also shows how different the housing need is in Leicester with more terraces, semi-detached and flatted properties sold. This would suggest both that there is more opportunity to meet the need with additional land in Leicester as development will be higher density and also that building in other areas may not provide what is needed in Leicester, indeed it may only attract specific higher income segments of the Leicester population, increasing social segregation.

Question 10.8

Why is an unmet need of 15,900 dwellings tested through the Sustainability Appraisal (Exam 47a) and how was this figure arrived at? Has the figure of 18,700 dwellings been tested?

The 15,900 dwellings figure appears to be based on the previous SoCG and the 18,700 has not been tested but the results are considered similar and comparable. We would be concerned that this under-estimates the impact of the additional 17% of dwellings on traffic growth and other issues and suggests too superficial an analysis.

Question 10.9

If the scale of the unmet need of 18,700 dwellings changes as a result of the Leicester Local Plan Examination, how would this be addressed by the respective Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities under the Duty to Cooperate? What would the implications be for plan making in other authorities in the Housing Market Area?

This would clearly depend on whether the Local Plans committed to higher housing levels to meet Leicester's unmet need and then allocated land. If so, those allocations could not be reversed. The CENSUS data would suggest it is more likely that there would be over-supply.

Issue 3 – Apportionment of the Unmet Housing Need

Question 10.10

The Housing Distribution Paper (paragraph 7.3) (Exam 45) refers to the proposed distribution of the unmet need as an 'interim arrangement'. What does this mean, is it justified and how would any changes to the evidence or other circumstances be dealt with?

It cannot simply be an 'interim' arrangement if it includes allocations in plans as those would be fixed and could only be added to not removed. We are concerned that in practice it would lead to a social hollowing out of Leicester which could not be reversed, as well as increasing commuting, congestion and carbon emissions.

Moreover, as 16 Dec 2020 statement says, the 'increase in the number of homes' to be delivered is expected to be met by the cities and urban centres themselves'. So, it is the additional land which should not be found in surrounding areas. In other words, it is anticipated that 10,224 (639x16 dpa) additional dwellings should be found in Leicester to meet that 35% uplift (assuming the ONS2014 figures). The urban opportunities to be examined are set out in the PPG and should be fully explored through the Leicester Plan before any land to meet that need is released elsewhere. This exploration has not yet been done.

It is worth noting, for comparison, that the West Midlands Combined Authority, faced with similar uplift and unmet need issues in the Black Country commissioned the Chilmark Study¹ to examine Brownfield land availability which has found considerable additional potential and is feeding into the evidence base for that Plan.

So, any interim consideration needs to be in terms of future plan reviews not immediate plan releases.

¹ <https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/t2/p4/t2p4m/>

Question 10.11

Are the following factors set out in the Housing Distribution Paper a robust and logical basis for the apportionment of the unmet need of 18,700 dwellings to 2036:

In our view the approach should be to consider the most sustainable option. This should include a study of capacity on routes into Leicester from Charnwood and the implications for congestion.

- *the functional relationships between the respective Leicestershire authorities and Leicester City based on migration and commuting patterns;*

Past commuting and migration rates can act as a starting point, but we do not consider these represent a desirable output situation. Table 4.3 of the SoCG shows the imbalance in commuting patterns between Charnwood and Leicester. This is likely to be exacerbated if housing is provided in Charnwood to meet Leicester's need. The Housing Distribution Paper shows a gross commuting rate of 24% (from 2011 census) but this masks an imbalance of 9,863 which may have deteriorated.

The assertion (Housing Paper 4.13) that locating housing where there is existing commuting into Leicester could lead to reduced journey times is simply untested. Any reduction in commuting is likely to be trivial compared to the comparative attractiveness of employment in the city. Moreover, there is no consideration of the capacity of the local network to accommodate extra traffic.

This is not a new issue. It goes back to the SGP where the supporting transport modelling only modelled large zonal inter-relationships. This resulted in an infrastructure analysis that concentrated on longer distance movement and not on the local traffic which plays such a key role in congestion, especially as you enter a city.

- *balancing the provision of jobs and homes;*

This makes more sense but there is no guarantee new jobs will materialise or that commuting will reduce.

It may lead to a justification for urban intensification but if jobs don't emerge it could lead to more commuting.

- *deliverability, based on potential supply, the rate of housing growth and adjustments to support a sustainable and deliverable distribution of development.*

This risk being a chicken and egg situation. Moreover, the assumption about housing land in Charnwood is based on supply in plan. Para 6.9 of the Housing Paper is cautious about this approach because the evidence on supply is out of date in some authorities. This is particularly the case in Leicester itself, suggesting any apportionment elsewhere should only take place when that evidence is in place.

Are there any other relevant factors which should be taken into consideration?

Sustainability, and not just economic growth, should be the key factor, including access to services, as well as reducing the need to travel and the availability of alternative modes. In particular the ability of congested roads going into and out of Leicester to accommodate additional traffic needs to be properly examined, both in terms of congestion and the increase in pollution (such as PM10s/2.5s) on sensitive links.

Question 10.12

Is the proposed 1.4% 'cap' to the redistribution of housing provision justified as a general approach and in relation to Charnwood in particular? What effect does the 1.4% cap applied to Charnwood have on the redistribution of the residual unmet need across the other Leicestershire authorities?

According to the SoCG Hinckley considers this arbitrary as it leads to higher housing in their area. CPRE simply does not consider redistribution is required at this level so the issue of the cap need not apply.

Even if the current level were accepted, we would approach the problem by allowing for a future review rather than allocating extra housing now.

In that case, applying the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) cap in Charnwood need not automatically lead to additional housing in Hinckley in the future. The appropriate approach would need to be assessed as part of that plan process.

Question 10.13

Have land supply, capacity and constraints issues been assessed in the apportionment of the unmet need? If not, how will these matters be addressed?

We are not convinced that these have been adequately considered, both in Charnwood, but as importantly elsewhere, and most significantly in Leicester, as we say above.

Question 10.14

What role will the review of the Strategic Growth Plan (EB/DS/6) have in the distribution of housing growth across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area in the longer term?

The SGP is out of date and, in particular, failed to consider climate change. It was also based on assumptions about infrastructure that cannot be justified or delivered. It doesn't address commuting that would result from moving population out of Leicester. An updated SGP needs to be more focused on sustainable development and reducing the need to travel.

Question 10.15

How has the SoCG Sustainability Appraisal report (Exam 47a) informed the apportionment of the unmet need?

While, the SA considers the sustainability implications of various targets, as well as the distribution it does not consider whether that 18,700 target is justified. Our evidence suggests that the target itself could be inflated and so result in a distribution which undermines some sustainability goals.

We have particular concerns about the Transport implications. Para 5.2.8 of the SA raises the spectres of increased congestion on roads into Leicester in line with our concerns and this could be a major negative impact (See also detail on Page 109 of the SA). The SA goes on to suggest that equally this could lead to public transport benefits that would be extremely positive, although these are undefined and may simply never be delivered.

Para 5.2.9 of the SA then makes assertions about public transport which we do not think will stand up to scrutiny either in terms of the way sites have been selected or designed to facilitate Public Transport or, equally, the likelihood of any source of funding to make them viable in a commercial de-regulated environment.

This is underlined by the Infrastructure Delivery Paper (Exam 30) which suggests Public Transport Investment will be concentrated on Loughborough and Shepshed, albeit without assessing its impact. In contrast, on arterial roads, the main emphasis is on providing capacity because public transport investment is seen as insufficient, which undermines the assertion in the SA.

Given the already high level of car-commuting, the major negative impacts seem more likely (but untested by any traffic modelling). This is likely to result in additional congestion problems and hence rises in carbon emissions as well as pollution. At the same time, it would, almost inevitably, further increase calls for additional road capacity with no consideration of the implications or funding.

Notably Para 5.2.8 on climate change does not seem to give great weight to traffic growth in terms of emissions (See also p125). Such an approach to climate change is, in our view, simply not acceptable given government commitments and the need for urgent action.

Question 10.16

Overall, is the apportionment of 78 dwellings per year to Charnwood over the period 2020 - 2036 to contribute towards the unmet need of 18,700 dwellings justified by the evidence, robustly based and will it support a sustainable pattern of development as required by NPPF paragraph 11?

The additional housing in Charnwood is not justified. Further work needs to be done in Leicester. There is no immediate shortfall and there is good evidence to suggest that the unmet need might be exaggerated.