

Matter 1 – Procedural and Legal Requirements

Introduction

- 1.1.1. This representation should be read in conjunction with the previous Regulation 18 and 19 representations made by William Davis Homes (WDH, ref. 7585, agent ref. 7779).
- 1.1.2. WDH is an established and highly respected housing developer based in Leicestershire and have been building new homes across the Midlands for over 90 years. Their work is underpinned by strong family values and understanding. WDH have been rated as a five-star housebuilder in the Home Builders Federation annual survey for the last 11 years; 90% of customers are happy with their home and their experience with the housebuilder.
- 1.1.3. WDH have been promoting Leicester Road, Lutterworth since 2021, submitting the site for a residential allocation as part of the 'Call for Sites' process for the draft Plan. The SHELAA assessment (ref. HSG-NLP 4) positively explained that the site is considered suitable for residential development and is available with the delivery of dwellings achievable within five years.
- 1.1.4. Following this, WDH support the site's identification by Harborough District Council as a proposed allocation (draft ref. L1) to deliver 230 dwellings within Lutterworth over the next plan period (2020-2041). WDH have continued to engage since the site's identification as a draft allocation by making representations to the Regulation 18 and 19 consultations in 2024 and 2025, respectively, and engaging with HDC through the pre-application process to support this proposed allocation and discuss how development on the site can be effectively brought forward.
- 1.1.5. An application (ref. 26/00447/FUL) was submitted in March 2026 to secure full planning permission for the residential development of the site, with access from Leicester Road (A426), alongside landscaping, drainage, open space and associated works. This indicates WDH's intention for the site to deliver housing early in the plan period, as the site is available now.
- 1.1.6. Alongside contributing towards meeting the housing needs of the District at a sustainable location which is supported by existing infrastructure and improvements associated with the Lutterworth East Strategic Development Area (SDA), development on the site will deliver several benefits including the delivery of affordable and specialist housing, provision of a high-quality, safe and well-connected residential environment, biodiversity improvements on and off-site, and incorporation of sustainability measures into the design of proposed dwellings and their associated plots.
- 1.1.7. WDH have provided hearing statements to support the allocation of Leicester Road, Lutterworth (draft ref. L1) in recognition of the contribution of the site towards the identified housing needs of Harborough District and specifically Lutterworth, and provide comments on some draft policies and criteria to ensure the Plan is effective in delivering the District's identified development needs, as required for the Plan to be sound per paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023).

Issue 1: Sustainability Appraisal

Question 1: The Council has carried out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Does the SA adequately assess whether the Plan's objectives are fully compatible with and actively contribute towards each of the sustainability objectives set out in the Sustainability Framework? Are the conclusions robust and justified by the evidence?

- 1.1.8. WDH believes the Sustainability Appraisal (ref. S-NLP 3) provides an appropriate framework for assessing the sustainability effects of the emerging Local Plan and supports the identification of suitable sites to meet the District's development needs over the Plan period. The assessment has assisted in identifying sustainable locations for growth to underpin the identified spatial strategy and appropriate distribution of growth over the Plan

period, in addition to identifying sufficient sites to meet the housing needs of Harborough District and the unmet housing needs of Leicester City.

- 1.1.9. In particular, the appraisal process supports the inclusion of sustainable and deliverable sites, including Leicester Road, Lutterworth, which is well-related to the existing urban area and capable of contributing meaningfully towards housing delivery. The assessment appropriately assesses the context of sites in understanding the sustainability of their location, including in recognising the existing and continued future sustainability of Leicester Road, Lutterworth (draft ref. L1) in relation to the market town of Lutterworth and future development at the Lutterworth East SDA (adopted Plan ref. L1). In doing this, the Sustainability Appraisal is based on up-to-date evidence to support the identification of an appropriate strategy, as required by the NPPF (paragraph 35, 2023) for the Plan to be sound.

Question 2: How has the SA informed the development of the Plan, including housing and economic needs, delivery and any mitigation measures? How has it informed the selection of strategic options, the development of policies and the selection of sites, all of which aim to identify sustainable development outcomes for the District?

- 1.1.10. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has shaped the assessment of options for the scale and distribution of growth, informing the development of the Plan, including the overall spatial strategy, housing distribution and site allocation process, as required by paragraph 35 of the NPPF. Alongside assessing the likely sustainability of alternative growth options and development locations, the SA has supported the selection of sites capable of delivering this and achieving the identified housing requirement in sustainable locations. WDH support this process in identifying suitable locations for growth, including Lutterworth, whilst balancing social, economic and environmental considerations, supporting the requirements of paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

Question 3: What is the robust justification for the selection of the medium level of growth scenario against which the refined housing distribution options were tested? Should they have been tested against all three growth scenarios?

- 1.1.11. WDH supports a strategy which seeks to provide an appropriate level of housing growth across the District. Whilst we do not wish to comment specifically on the Council's choice of growth scenario, within the Plan's strategy it is important the Plan provides sufficient flexibility to meet identified housing needs throughout the Plan period and supports sustainable growth in appropriate locations. The focus of growth within sustainable settlements such as Lutterworth is consistent with this objective.

Question 5: Are the scoring and conclusions reached in the SA reasonable, sufficiently accurate and robust so as to inform the Plan?

- 1.1.12. The scoring and conclusions reached in the Sustainability Appraisal (ref. S-NLP 3) are sufficiently robust to inform the preparation of the Local Plan, fulfilling the requirements of paragraph 32 of the NPPF and supporting legislation (Section 19(5) of the 2004 Act) alongside paragraph 35 in the identification of an appropriate strategy. The assessment appropriately recognises the role of sustainable settlements and the contribution that allocated sites can make towards delivering housing and economic growth. Therefore, the conclusions provide a reasonable basis upon which to inform plan-making and site selection, and support sustainable growth of an appropriate scale across the District.

Question 7: In overall terms does the Plan meet the legal requirements of Section 19(5) of the 2004 Act and accord with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 32 and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in this regard?

- 1.1.13. WDH believe the overall Plan strategy and evidence base which underpins this satisfies the requirements of Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and relevant national policy and guidance in relation to Sustainability Appraisal (i.e. paragraphs 32 and 35 of the NPPF). The evidence base demonstrates that sustainability considerations have informed the preparation of the Plan and the selection of development options, and so support the identification of an appropriate strategy to deliver the required scale of growth.

Issue 5: Plan Period

Question 1: NPPF paragraph 22 sets out the requirement for strategic policies (other than those in relation to town centre development) to look ahead over a minimum of 15 years from adoption. The Plan period runs from 2020-2041. If adopted in Q2 2027 it would not meet that requirement. In doing so would this be a sound approach?

- 1.1.14. WDH agree that the Plan should ensure compliance with paragraph 22 of the NPPF by providing strategic policies which support the identified development needs for a minimum of 15 years from the date of adoption. It is currently anticipated that the Plan will be adopted in 2027, owing to a delay to the Plan's submission to examination, in which case an extension to the Plan period and updates to the Plan's policies, as supported by the evidence base, would be appropriate to meet the requirement of NPPF paragraph 22. In doing this, the Plan will remain effective and consistent with national policy requirements, as required for the Plan to be sound (per paragraph 35 of the NPPF, 2023).
- 1.1.15. In recognition of this, WDH support the introduction of additional flexibility within the Site Allocation policies (ref. SA01 and supporting policies SA02 to SA04) to support the provision of additional dwellings on sites identified as suitable for development, where supported by technical evidence (e.g. at planning application stage).