

Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031

Matters and Issues for Examination

Preamble

It is important to read the accompanying Inspector's Guidance Note which sets out details of the organisation of the Examination and the hearings.

The questions below are the key Matters and Issues that relate to the Plan's soundness. Together with my associated comments, they should be addressed by the Council and other relevant parties in their hearing statements.

It will be seen that I have not referred to every policy or allocation. My Matters and Issues do not address every aspect of the plan; only those issues that I need to know more about at this stage.

I have already raised with the Council (in my Initial Questions) a number of soundness issues relating to detailed policy wording, and the Council's proposed revised wording is expected in due course.

After the hearing statements have been received and the number of participants is known, I will issue an agenda for the hearings with approximate timings. If I consider that any matter has been satisfactorily addressed in the written statements it will not be included in the agenda for the hearings. The questions below are therefore likely to be refined and/or reduced in extent for the hearings.

A number of landowners and developers seek to promote sites that have not been allocated in the submitted plan. It is the purpose of the Examination to consider the soundness of the submitted plan, not to consider sites that have not been allocated ("omission sites"), so time will not be allocated to omission sites in the hearings. However, the overall soundness of the spatial strategy will be scrutinised.

From my reading of the written evidence it appears that the Council has satisfied the Duty to Cooperate and that the plan has met the legal requirements in respect of compliance with the Local Development Scheme and the Statement of Community Involvement. I have therefore not included these in my Matters and Issues.

Matters and Issues

1. Calculation of the objectively assessed need for housing (OAN)

1.1 Are the calculations contained in the HEDNA and in the updated analysis contained in Document IC3 an appropriate basis for establishing the OAN for Harborough, having particular regard to demographic and employment growth calculations and the affordability uplift of 15%? Do the latest affordability indices and trends suggest a different level of uplift?

2. The housing requirement and its delivery

2.1 Is the uplift of 25 dpa associated with growth at Magna Park appropriate?

2.2 What are the risks to the achievement of the plan's housing delivery, in terms of infrastructure or other impediments to delivery?

2.3 Are the assumptions about delivery start dates and rates from the SDAs reasonable?

2.4 Is it sound to rely on the headroom provided by the currently calculated supply of 12,948 dwellings (IC3) to cater for both unmet need from Leicester and any contingency allowance for slower than anticipated delivery from allocated and committed sites?

2.5 Given that the housing requirement would be the basis for the calculation of the 5 year housing land supply, should it be increased beyond 11,140 dwellings or 557 dpa now in order to allow for a proportion of unmet need for Leicester, or should there be a trigger in the plan which increases the requirement once the amount of unmet need has been quantified?

3. Five year housing land supply

3.1 What is the current 5 year housing land supply position?

3.2 Is the methodological basis for calculating the 5 year housing land supply sound?

3.3 Is the plan resilient and flexible enough to maintain 5 or more years' supply of deliverable housing land going forward?

4. Homes to meet the needs of all the community

4.1 Are the plan's policies sound and effective in delivering a wide variety of quality homes to provide for the needs of all the community? Relevant issues are:

- The plan's proposals in respect of a mix of sizes and types of home, including family homes and homes for older people.
- The delivery of affordable homes
- The provision of accessible homes.
- The provision of specialist accommodation.
- The provision of student accommodation.
- Sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- Houses in multiple occupation.
- Self-build and custom homes.
- Rural exception sites.

5. Meeting employment needs

5.1 Does the plan provide for an appropriate amount of land and floorspace for business purposes, and is the plan effective in its approach to new employment development?

5.2 Is there satisfactory evidence-based justification for the allowance of 700,000 square metres of strategic storage and distribution? Is there sufficient headroom in demand to enable this amount of development without compromising the employment strategies of other local authorities?

5.3 What is the latest position regarding the planning applications for strategic distribution?

5.4 Is Policy BE2 an adequate means of controlling and mitigating the impact of this amount of strategic storage and distribution?

5.5 As significant growth in strategic distribution is a major feature of the plan, with consequent housing, employment, transport and countryside effects, under the plan-led system should not the relevant land be identified as an allocation?

5.6 Does the plan's approach to Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground in Policy BE4 strike an appropriate balance between economic development and environmental protection?

6. Spatial strategy and countryside protection

This is a section on the soundness of the spatial strategy and the overall approach to the countryside. Detailed site-specific matters will be dealt with separately in relation to the individual sites.

6.1 Is the spatial strategy as set out in Policies SS1 and H1 and their supporting text soundly based? Is the settlement hierarchy soundly based?

6.2 What regard has been given by the SA and the other analyses to the impact on community severance and the difficulties of urban integration arising from allocation L1, which would result in development on both sides of a major motorway? Have these factors been taken account in evaluating the performance of this option against others, and if so, what weight have they been given?

6.3 What regard has been given by the SA and the other analyses to the impact on neighbouring communities arising from allocation SC1, which would be remote from a main road such that all movement would be channelled through residential and village streets? Have these factors been taken into account in evaluating the performance of this option against others, and if so, what weight have they been given?

6.4 Is policy GD2 a sound approach to allowing additional development in sustainable locations (having regard to any modifications the Council propose to make to the policy as indicated in IC3 in their response to IC2 Q13)?

6.5 Are the range of policies GD3 to GD7 governing rural development and the protection of landscape and the countryside sound (having regard to any modifications the Council propose to make to the policy as indicated in IC3 in their response to IC2 Qs 12, 13 and 14)?

7. Built Environment and Heritage Assets

7.1 Is the plan, and in particular Policy GD8, effective in respect of the promotion of good urban design on all sites, and especially on its major strategic allocations?

7.2. Is the plan sound in respect of its approach to heritage assets (having regard to any modifications the Council propose to make to the policy, as indicated in IC3)?

8. Site allocations

General

8.1 Please will the Council provide details of the current planning status of each of the allocated sites.

8.2 LCC's Design Guidance has not itself been subject to examination so the Local Plan policies cannot require parking and servicing to be in accordance with that guidance. The wording should be changed to "have regard to". This applies to all site allocation policies.

8.3 Some of the Market Harborough allocation policies seek contributions towards measures outlined in the Market Harborough Transport Strategy 2016. The measures have not themselves been subject to examination, so they should be set out in the policy or at least the supporting text.

SC1: Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area

The strategic issues arising from the location of this site are addressed in question 6.3.

8.4 What is the full anticipated effect of this allocation on the following locations, having regard to the evidence base?

Scraptoft
Keyham Lane West
New Romney Crescent
Station Road and its junction with A47 Uppingham Road
A47 towards Leicester
Other relevant streets and roads

In respect of:

traffic movement and congestion
safety and congestion near schools
the pedestrian environment
air quality
the village character
the historic environment
residential living conditions

8.5 What mitigation measures are realistically capable of being put in place through a development scheme on this site, and what mechanisms would be employed?

8.6 What are the factors, including on- and off-site infrastructure provision and market-related build-out rates, that would influence the start date and the rate of housing delivery from this site and what are the risks to delivery?

8.7 Is it necessary to include social infrastructure trigger points in the policy? Are the thresholds for the provision of the school and social facilities appropriate and what provision is made for residents prior to those thresholds being reached?

8.8 What would the strategy for the bus service look like (having regard to Leicester City Council's request for a strategy for removing bus pinch points in the city and providing infrastructure)?

8.9 What planning purpose would the new Green Wedge fulfil? Would it be an adequate replacement? Is it appropriate for a school and its grounds, a cemetery, and for built recreational development?

8.10 The policy does not appear to tie the provision of the replacement golf course to the development of Site SC1; is it necessary to do so?

MH1: Overstone Park

8.11 What is the current position regarding planning permission?

8.12 What impact would the allocation have on the landscape?

MH3: Burnmill Farm

8.13 How many dwellings are already served by Kingston Way and Bates Close? Is it sound to expect these roads to accommodate vehicle movements from a further 90 dwellings given their traffic calmed, winding, residential character? What effect would the allocation have on highway capacity and on the residential environment?

8.14 What effect would the allocation have on the wider landscape?

MH4: Airfield Farm

8.15 Is it necessary to be specific about the location of the site access? Would this preclude a better solution?

L1: East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Area

The strategic issues arising from community severance consequent on an allocation east of the M1 are addressed in question 6.2.

8.16 How should this allocation be regarded: part of Lutterworth or a self-contained community? What measures can realistically be taken to provide attractive links between this development area and Lutterworth town centre, given the presence of the M1, the proposed spine road and the location of the business uses?

8.17 Will the reality of the situation mean that this development will be mostly car-based? In that regard, what will be the effect on Lutterworth town centre?

8.18 How is it proposed to deal with air quality issues given the presence of the M1 and spine road?

8.19 What measures are likely to be necessary to protect the character of Misterton and the setting of its church?

8.20 What are the specific characteristics of Misterton Marshes SSSI that require protection? What work has been carried out so far to assess the impact of the allocation on the SSSI and the effectiveness of mitigation measures to protect it?

8.21 What are the factors, including on- and off-site infrastructure provision and market-related build-out rates, that would influence the start date and the rate of housing delivery from this site and what are the risks to delivery?

8.22 Is it necessary to include social infrastructure trigger points in the policy? Are the thresholds for the provision of the school and social facilities appropriate and what provision is made for residents prior to those thresholds being reached?

F1: Land off Arnesby Road, Fleckney

8.23 Is the policy too prescriptive in its reference to the avoidance of large retention ponds?

K1: Land south and west of Priory Business Park

8.24 Is there planning permission for a scheme on this site? Should the terms of the allocation policy reflect the terms of the planning permission?

GI3: Cemetery allocations (added 24.08.18)

8.25. Are the cemetery requirements in Policy GI3 justified, in particular the allocation in Market Harborough and the cemetery requirements in Policies SC1 and L1, and are they the most appropriate locations against the alternatives, having regard to the evidence?

Jonathan Bore
15 August 2018