



Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 Examination

Council Responses to the Matters and Issues - Statement 4 -

7th September 2018



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MATTER 4.1

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.*

Overall summary

4.1.1. It is considered that the plan's policies are sound and effective in delivering a wide variety of quality homes to meet the diverse needs of the District's changing population over the plan period. The policies reflect the evidence on housing needs and maximise opportunities to meet identified needs.

4.1.2. Whilst H1 sets out the scale and location of provision to meet the overall housing requirement, the following policies take a positive approach to ensuring that the homes delivered are of an appropriate mix and quality:

- H2 Affordable housing: This policy includes criteria to ensure a range of affordable homes are delivered, recognising that affordability is a continuing issue across the District.
- H3 Rural exception sites: This policy allows for the delivery of rural affordable homes to meet identified local need on sites which would not normally be permitted for housing.
- H4 Specialist housing: This policy aims to encourage the delivery of specialist accommodation to meet the varying needs of the District's ageing population.
- H5 Housing density, mix and standards: This policy sets out the approach to:
 - Ensuring an appropriate mix of housing types is delivered on major sites that reflects up to date evidence on housing need;
 - Securing that accessible and adaptable homes are delivered; and
 - Providing land for self-build and custom build dwellings.

- H6 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation: This policy aims to meet the identified needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities.
- GD8 Good Design in Development: This policy requires all proposals to achieve a high standard of design quality for the benefit of new residents and existing communities. In addition individual site-specific housing allocation policies set out requirements to ensure delivery of quality neighbourhoods.

4.1.3. Where appropriate, policies have been tested for their impact on viability to ensure that their provisions do not threaten delivery. This was done through the Local Plan Viability Assessment 2017 (HSG 10) which found that the requirements were considered to not unduly burden the delivery of residential delivery. Where appropriate criteria have been included to provide for some flexibility in approach to ensure that policies will deliver the housing needed (i.e. H2 Affordable housing, H3 Rural exception sites).

The plan's proposals in respect of a mix of sizes and types of home, including family homes and homes for older people

Summary

4.1.4. It is considered that policies in the Local Plan are effective in ensuring the delivery of an appropriate mix of housing size and type over the plan period. They take a positive approach to meeting the housing requirement, ensuring that a range of homes are delivered to meet the needs of all sections of the community.

Mix of sizes and tenure

4.1.5. Tables 54 and 56 of the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (HSG8) set out the results of modelling in relation to the mix of housing size needed over the plan period, for market and affordable provision respectively. Table 4.1.1 below shows the results of the modelling carried out.

Table 4.1.1: Harborough modelling outputs

Housing type	House size			
	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 or more bedrooms
Market housing	5%	33%	40%	21%
Affordable housing	43%	35%	21%	2%

Source: HEDNA (Housing market modelling)

4.1.6. Based on the results of the modelling, the HEDNA goes on to identify a suggested mix of housing for both market and affordable housing. This is set out in Table 4.1.2.

Table 4.1.2: Suggested Mix of Housing

Housing type	House size			
	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 or more bedrooms
Market housing	0-10%	25-35%	35-45%	15-25%
Affordable housing	35-40%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%

Source: HEDNA (Housing market modelling)

4.1.7. Criterion 2 of policy H5 responds to the HEDNA's findings with the inclusion of wording to ensure that major housing development should provide a mix of housing types that is informed by up to date evidence of housing need. Currently this is the HEDNA and the mix will be expected to be broadly in accordance with its findings. It may be appropriate to replace 'informed by' with 'broadly in accordance with' in H5(2) so as to give the evidence on mix greater weight.

4.1.8. This mix of housing will allow for the delivery of family homes and downsizing at the rate at which this currently occurs. Given the ageing population, the HEDNA considers it appropriate to assume current rates of downsizing will continue. Overall this will result in higher numbers downsizing as the pool of households who might downsize is increased. The provision of smaller sized homes will allow for this downsizing and help younger people and young families to access housing.

Mix of housing types

4.1.1. The housing needs of specific groups within the HMA population are considered in the HEDNA as follows:

- Older persons and types/tenure of specialist housing (paras. 9.1 – 9.18)
- People with disabilities (paras. 9.19 – 9.25)
- Student housing (paras. 9.35 – 9.54)
- Self and custom build (paras. 9.55 – 9.59)

4.1.2. The findings in relation to these sections vary in their significance to Harborough District. The approaches taken to issues relevant to the District are covered in greater detail in the following sections. However, H5(2) provides an overarching approach to ensuring that a suitable mix of housing types are delivered on major housing sites thus reflecting demographic and

market trends as set out in the HEDNA. Achieving an appropriate mix of housing types and sizes will provide opportunities for increased home ownership and help deliver further affordable homes.

Family homes

4.1.3. Policies in the plan support the delivery of identified housing needs, including family homes, by:

- Identifying housing targets for sustainable settlements within the District, where there are services and facilities to support families (H1);
- Requiring 40% affordable housing contribution on qualifying sites and expanding the range of affordable options for families to access (H2);
- Ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure to support new communities, particularly in the SDAs (SC1, L1); and
- Requiring an appropriate mix of house types on major developments (H5).

Homes for older people

4.1.4. In setting out policies for meeting the overall housing requirement the plan has taken into account HEDNA evidence and set out to meet the particular needs of the ageing population as follows:

- Delivery of a range of housing sizes to allow for downsizing (H5);
- Encouraging delivery of accessible and adaptable homes which are able to meet changing needs over time (H5); and
- Encouraging the delivery of specialist accommodation for those in need of some degree of supported housing (H4).

Conclusion

4.1.5. The plan provides an appropriate policy framework for the delivery of a range of housing types, size and tenures to meet the diverse need of the District's communities and their changing housing needs.

The delivery of affordable homes

Summary

4.1.6. It is considered that the Local Plan policy H3 relating to the provision of affordable housing is sound and effective. It seeks to balance the meeting of identified affordable housing needs with the need to ensure delivery of affordable homes by setting a justified percentage requirement on major sites and an appropriate tenure split. Viability testing has been carried out to ensure that the level and type of affordable homes sought through the policy will avoid overburdening developments and threaten the economic viability of

sites. It supports on-site provision wherever possible but allows for off-site commuted sums where this is demonstrated to be impractical.

Soundness

- 4.1.7. The proposed affordable housing policy is justified on the basis that there is a recognised ongoing affordability issue in the District. The HEDNA (HSG8) identified that Harborough had the highest median house price in the HMA, the joint highest rents, the highest land values and the highest lower quartile house price to income ratio. It brought together evidence in relation to affordable housing need and market signals and identified that a 15% upward adjustment should be included in the objectively assessed need (OAN). Evidence pointing to some deterioration in the lower quartile affordability ratio and further narrative around the appropriateness of the 15% adjustment is included in IC3 (response to Q6).
- 4.1.8. The HEDNA calculated affordable housing need by adding together the current unmet housing need and projected future housing need and then subtracting from this the supply of affordable housing arising from turnover of existing stock, in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance. Table 39 of the HEDNA shows the results of this calculation and identifies that 206 new affordable homes per annum are needed per annum in the District. 206 dpa equates to approximately 39% of the District's OAN of 532 dpa, resulting in a policy requirement in H2 for 40% of relevant developments to be affordable.
- 4.1.9. ID3 has updated the analysis of affordable housing need taking account of the latest data, which indicates a need for 179 affordable homes per annum over the 2017-31 period. However, it should be noted that this assessment of need is a point in time figure and is very sensitive to changes in housing costs and incomes. Moreover it is based on the 2012 Framework definition of affordable. The new Framework widens the definition and is therefore likely to increase the number of people counted as in affordable need.
- 4.1.10. The 40% requirement will be retained as it takes into account a shortfall in delivery of affordable dwellings since 2011 resulting from:
- Current lower overall target as set out in the Core Strategy (40% in two of the District's sub-market areas and 30% in three sub-market areas);
 - Some completed schemes have under-delivered against Core Strategy targets since 2011. Similarly committed schemes currently in the development pipeline will not deliver the percentage affordable homes target. Reasons for not achieving the target percentage include:
 - viability and the impact of delivering substantial infrastructure on viability;
 - specialist nature of the scheme concerned;
 - delivery of alternative substantial community facility/service;

- lack of interest from Registered Provider in taking on affordable housing in location resulting in a commuted sum; and
 - delivery of affordable bungalows (count as 2 affordable units due to their land uptake).
 - The change in threshold to more than 10 dwellings to reflect government guidance means that small sites of 10 or fewer dwellings no longer deliver an affordable element. This will also be case going forward under the Local Plan.
- 4.1.1. Criteria H2(1)a-c set out the site threshold criteria for affordable housing contributions. These reflect the national policy and guidance in place at the time. The updated Framework specifies that provision of affordable housing should not be sought for non-major residential developments. Annex 2 defines major residential development as 10 or more dwellings. This definition could be reflected in a modification to the policy by lowering the threshold to in criterion a. to '10 dwellings or more'.
- 4.1.2. As regards the required tenure split for affordable housing, evidence from the HEDNA (Table 43) identifies the gross need for intermediate and affordable/social rented housing for the District as 23% Intermediate and 77% affordable/social rented. The tenure split identified in H2(2) is based on these figures (rounded to 25% and 75% respectively). Where the term 'intermediate' is used in the HEDNA, this has been replaced by 'low cost home ownership products' (criterion b) in order allow for a broader range of products including starter homes. Criterion c. allows for consideration of a more up to date assessment of affordable need should it become available.
- 4.1.3. In line with national policy affordable housing provision is expected to be delivered on-site, although H2(3) allows for off-site commuted sums of an equivalent value should on-site provision be impractical.
- 4.1.4. In order to increase the effectiveness of affordable housing delivery, the policy takes steps to ensure that where small housing sites developed adjacent to each other or sharing an access, or where parts of a site are developed via separate planning applications within 5 years of each other, affordable housing provision will be sought.
- 4.1.5. Both the total percentage requirement and the tenure split identified through the HEDNA were tested through various iterations of the Local Plan Viability Assessment to determine their impact upon viability and therefore deliverability. The final Local Plan Viability Assessment (2017)(HSG10) found that both the required percentage of affordable housing and the mix of tenures are viable across a range of housing development in the District and both Strategic Development Areas. However, H2(5) recognises that in some cases a different level or mix of affordable provision may be needed to make a development viable. It will be for the applicant to demonstrate why this is the case.

- 4.1.6. Securing the delivery of affordable housing in the most rural parts of the District is likely to be challenging, given that any housing sites are often small and below the H2 threshold. In order to encourage delivery at smaller settlements, a rural exception sites policy (H3) is included in line with the Framework. This allows for the delivery of rural affordable housing to meet and identified local affordable housing need on sites which would not normally be permitted for housing. Thus policy H3 complements H2 and allows for the delivery of rural affordable housing subject to a number of criteria to ensure such sites are well related to the settlement.

Conclusion

- 4.1.7. Policy H2 will be effective in delivering a range of affordable homes across the District. It has been positively prepared to address the identified need for affordable dwellings set out in evidence and the requirements have been subject to viability testing and found to be viable. In combination with policy H3, setting out criteria for the delivery of rural exception sites, the policy approach to affordable housing provision is considered to be soundly based.

The provision of accessible homes

Summary

- 4.1.8. It is considered that policy H5(3) will contribute to ensuring that the homes built over the plan period assist in providing accessible and adaptable accommodation to help anyone with a long-term health problem or disability by meeting optional requirement M4(2) Category 2 of the Building Regulations. It will add to the range of housing and help homes be adaptable to meet the needs of the occupants as they grow older and/or their needs change.

Soundness

- 4.1.9. The ageing population is a particularly important element in understanding why the provision of adaptable homes is necessary over the plan period. Table 4.3 below is taken from the HEDNA (table 60) and shows that the projected percentage change in population of older persons over the plan period is 76.2% (see Table 4.1.3 below). This is the highest percentage change in the HMA and well in excess of the overall increase for the HMA (60.2%) and the national figure (54.1%).

Table 4.1.3: Projected Change in Population of Older Persons 2011- 2031

	Under 65	65-74	75-84	85+	Total (all age groups)	Total 65+ age groups)
Harborough District	3.0%	53.3%	91.9%	131.5%	16.5%	76.2%

Source: HEDNA (ONS 2014-based projections)

4.1.10. This ageing population will impact on the numbers of people with a Long Term Limiting Health Problem or Disability (LTHPD) as older people are more likely to have a LTHPD. The HEDNA (Table 68 below) estimates that over the plan period the District will see the largest percentage increase (52.3%) in the number of people with a LTHPD within the Leicester and Leicestershire HMA. By 2031, it estimates that 18,646 could be living with a LTHPD.

Table 4.1.4: Estimated change in population with LTHPD, 2011-2031

Table 68: Estimated change in population with LTHPD (2011-2031)

	Population with LTHPD		Change (2011-31)	% change from 2011
	2011	2031		
Leicester	56,610	72,768	16,158	28.5%
Blaby	14,661	19,917	5,256	35.8%
Charnwood	25,642	36,644	11,001	42.9%
Harborough	12,247	18,646	6,399	52.3%
Hinckley & Bosworth	17,769	24,932	7,162	40.3%
Melton	7,779	11,013	3,235	41.6%
NWL	16,898	23,337	6,439	38.1%
Oadby & Wigston	9,650	12,259	2,609	27.0%
HMA	161,256	219,515	58,259	36.1%

Source: Derived from demographic modelling and Census (2011)

4.1.11. Furthermore, Table 62 of the HEDNA estimates that between 2011 and 2031 the number of people with mobility problems in the District will increase by 2,640, a 92% increase and the highest percentage increase in the HMA. It also estimates that the District will see a 108% increase in those with dementia over the plan period.

4.1.12. It is important that homes able to be adapted for those with disabilities are considered in the overall provision of homes. The Council's own figures on the number of Disabled Facilities Grants (Table 4.1.4) show that on average 48 grants have approved and completed over the past 3 years.

Table 4.1.4: Disabled Facilities Grants awarded 2015/16 – 2017/18

Year	Owner Occupier	Private Rented	Registered provider	Total number completed
2017/18	30	1	15	46
2016/17	33	4	7	44
2015/16	42	7	4	53

Source: Harborough District Council

4.1.13. Analysis of the Council's Housing Register indicates that 71 applicants (7% of the total) state that they have mobility issues (there are 6 categories in total covering degrees of mobility).

4.1.14. The HEDNA (paras. 9.24 - 9.25) considers research into the need for wheelchair adapted dwellings at the HMA level which concludes that, as of 2011, there is a need for about 1,368 wheelchair adapted dwellings. Moving

forward, the research used estimates a wheelchair accessibility need from around 3% of households. If 3% is applied to the household growth in the 2014-based Household Projections (2011-36) then there would be an additional need for around 2,954 adapted homes. If this figure is brought together with the estimated 1,368 current need then the total wheelchair adapted need would be for around 3,923 wheelchair adapted homes over the 2011-31 period or approximately 4% of the housing requirement. Applying this to the Harborough's housing requirement (11,140) results in a need figure of approximately 440 dwellings over the plan period.

- 4.1.15. In order to ensure the delivery of homes to the wheelchair and adaptable standard set out in Building Regulations Part M4(2) Category 2, policy H5(3) sets out that this standard should be achieved in 4% of dwellings proposed on sites capable of providing 100 dwellings or more. In assessing whether this criterion will be applied, a net density of 35 dwellings per hectare will be used. The explanation highlights that all bungalows will be expected to meet the higher accessibility standard, given that this type of accommodation is popular among the elderly and lends itself to adaptation to changing needs over time. This should be applied to both affordable and market provision. Given the proposed allocations in the Local Plan, this policy could bring forward up to approximately 150 accessible and adaptable homes. This will be over and above any specialist housing provision which comes forward through policy H4.
- 4.1.16. Recognising that H5(3) will have cost implications for development, the Local Plan Viability Assessment (HSG10) (Table 3.3, page 31, bullet point 3 and para. 5.64) takes into account the 4% requirement set out in H5(3) and makes an allowance of £521 per unit for housing development to meet the accessible and adaptable standards in Building Regulations, Part M4(2) Category 2. The findings of the viability report confirmed that this requirement is achievable and viable.

Conclusion

- 4.1.17. There is clear evidence of the need for properties which are capable of accommodating people's changing needs. In combination with other local Plan policies, it is considered that H5(3), through the provision of 4% accessible and adaptable homes on sites over 100 dwellings, will make a contribution to meeting this need. The District has an ageing population, a trend which is set to accelerate, and the opportunity to secure homes capable of adaptation should be secured. This policy is part of the Council's duty to plan for and create places that are inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being for existing and future users as set out in the Framework.

The provision of specialist accommodation

Summary

4.1.18. Specialist accommodation can include many different types of accommodation that cater for people's specific needs and where occupiers receive care and assistance of some kind. It is considered that policy H4 sets out a sound basis for the delivery of specialist accommodation across the District through a criteria based approach and through provision on appropriately located residential developments of over 100 dwellings providing it does not adversely impact on the scheme's viability or deliverability.

Soundness

- 4.1.19. As discussed in some detail above, the HEDNA indicates that the number of residents aged over 65 across the District is expected to increase by 76% over the plan period (2011-2031). This compares to a relatively modest increase of 3% in the under 65 population and a population increase of 16.5% overall.
- 4.1.20. Primarily as a consequence of the ageing population, the District will see significant growth in the numbers of those living with a Long Term Health Problems or Disability (LTHPD). The population with LTHPD is estimated to increase by 52.3% over the plan period.
- 4.1.21. Similarly the HEDNA projects an increase in people with mobility problems of around 5,504 (92% increase) and an increase of over 2,270 persons (108% increase) with dementia by 2031. Some of these households will require adaptations to properties to meet their changing needs (as discussed above in relation to Policy H5(3)), whilst others may require more specialist accommodation with varying degrees of support. Policy H4 seeks to meet the need for the latter category of accommodation.
- 4.1.22. Based principally on the expected growth in population of older persons, the report estimates a need for an additional 1,267 specialist dwellings for older persons in the District over the plan period, equating to 63 dwellings per annum (not 51 as currently set out in paragraph 5.7.3. in the Explanation to H4¹). This forms part of the HEDNA's conclusions on the objectively assessed housing need (OAN). The HEDNA expects equal provision (50:50 split) between market and affordable housing.
- 4.1.23. There is evidence of specialist provision delivery having taken place since 2011 through new build and redevelopment of existing schemes. Recent schemes delivered include:

¹ Since submission of the Local Plan it has been found that Table 65 of the HEDNA is incorrect with 'Specialist housing need (@170 units per 1,000)' having been divided by 25 rather than 20 to give the 'Per annum need (2011-31)'.

- Welland Place, Market Harborough - 103 Retirement apartments with care (housing association)
- Brooklands Gardens, Market Harborough – 67 independent retirement living scheme (housing association) – redevelopment scheme

4.1.24. The following sites have recently been granted planning permission and are yet to be built:

- Wilfreds Close, Kibworth – 45 retirement living scheme (private)
- Clarence Street, Market Harborough – 44 retirement living scheme (private)
 - Peaker Park, Market Harborough – 58 extra care apartments (C2) (private)

4.1.25. The HEDNA (para. 12.59) recommends that councils should give consideration to how best to deliver the identified specialist housing need, including, for instance, the potential to identify sites in accessible locations for specialist housing or to require provision of specialist housing for older people as part of larger strategic development schemes.

4.1.26. In light of the evidence of need and the approach outlined by the HEDNA, H4 provides for a dual approach to provision of specialist accommodation (C3 development). Firstly on residential developments in excess of 100 dwellings at least 10% of homes will be expected to be specialist housing, providing the site is in a suitable location and delivery does not impact on the deliverability or viability of the overall site. This could deliver approximately 300 specialist dwellings, based on the capacity of proposed allocations without planning permission or not pending determination. Alongside this provision, other sites are expected to come forward through the enabling criteria based policy. The criteria set out in the policy aim to ensure that such development takes place in locations that are convenient to existing services/ facilities and is appropriately designed and accessible for occupation by people with disabilities and the elderly.

Conclusion

4.1.27. It is considered that policy H4 will deliver specialist housing to meet the needs of the District's ageing population. It allows for dedicated, well designed schemes to come forward in appropriate locations, whilst ensuring that the opportunity to deliver specialist accommodation on sites in excess of 100 units is encouraged where viable and deliverable. Delivery of specialist accommodation forms part of meeting the need for a variety of quality homes to meet the needs of the community.

The provision of student accommodation

- 4.1.28. Student accommodation has not been addressed in specifically in the Local Plan. There is no evidence to support that there is substantial unmet demand or issues arising from any student accommodation provision.
- 4.1.29. Across the HMA the need for student accommodation impacts primarily on Charnwood Borough, Leicester City and Oadby & Wigston through the need to provide for students of Loughborough, De Montfort and Leicester Universities.
- 4.1.30. Brooke House College in Market Harborough has a variety of accommodation both on and off campus in a number of town locations and properties. Students, some of whom are under 16 years of age, live in either supervised accommodation which has at least one live-in, full-time, residential tutor or one of the 18 boarding houses which are supervised by a full-time warden. There is no indication that there is unmet need for further student accommodation emanating from the college.
- 4.1.31. Student accommodation needs will be monitored going forward and any review of the Local Plan will consider the need for a specific policy at that time.

Sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 4.1.32. It is considered that policy H6 is sound and effective in meeting Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople needs as identified in up to date evidence (Leicester and Leicestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (HSG7)) through proposed site allocations and an enabling criteria-based policy against which applications for new sites and extensions to existing sites will be assessed. In addition to identified need, the policy also provides for potential 'unknown' need to 2031.
- 4.1.33. In accordance with 2016 draft guidance 'Housing need for Caravan and Boat Dwellers', policy H6(8) specifies the criteria to be applied for the provision of additional sites to meet the needs of those who do not meet the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) definition.
- 4.1.34. Further details regarding identified accommodation needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople and an up to date assessment of current progress towards meeting these needs is set out in IC3 (response to Q16).

Houses in multiple occupation

- 4.1.35. The Local Plan does not have a policy relating to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). At present it is considered that there is insufficient evidence to support the need for HMOs to be addressed in policy either in terms of demand or problems arising from their provision.
- 4.1.36. Currently the District has 3 HMOs which are licenced under the Housing Act 2004 (i.e. 3 storeys or more with 5 or more occupants). The extension to mandatory HMO licensing due to come into force from 1st October 2018 (The Licencing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018) is expected to result in a total of 10 licences being issued.
- 4.1.37. The number of HMOs will be monitored going forward and any review of the Local Plan will consider the need for a specific policy at that time.

Self-build and custom homes

Summary

- 4.1.38. It is considered that Policy H5(4) will encourage the delivery of sites for self-build and custom build homes in the District to meet a demand as evidenced through the Self-Build and Custom Build Register.

Soundness

- 4.1.39. It is recognised that providing for people who wish to commission or build their own homes is part of the Government's objective of improving the variety of land for housing and the options available to meet a range of housing requirements. As such it forms part of the District's total housing requirement and is part of provision to meet that need.
- 4.1.40. As footnote 26 to the updated Framework makes clear the Council has a duty under the Self Build and Custom Build Housebuilding Act 2015 to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area. As of 28th August 2018 there were 99 people on the Council's self-build register. The Council also has a duty to have regard to this register in carrying out its planning function and give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.
- 4.1.41. The HEDNA (para 9.59) states that it expects most new delivery to be on small windfall sites. However, it recognises that there is some potential through policy to encourage developers of larger schemes to designate parts of these as plots available for custom build.
- 4.1.42. The 99 people now on the register demonstrate that there is interest and demand in self-build/custom build plots within the District. Therefore the policy

H5(4) seeks to encourage the provision of land for self-build and custom build dwellings on sites capable of providing at least 250 dwellings (assuming a net density 35 dwellings per hectare). This will contribute to meeting local demand for such sites.

- 4.1.43. It is expected, however, that sites will also come forward for consideration through the development management process.
- 4.1.44. Whilst the Local Plan Viability Assessment (HSG10) has not assessed any self-build schemes explicitly, all the residential typologies in the report are on the basis that land can be acquired and developed into a new unit (including appropriate allowance for profit). Where self building involves plot sales and/or part completed units, the working assumption is that the developers profit is commensurate with the development work undertaken and therefore there is sufficient development surplus to incentivise the self-builder to complete the unit (Table 3.3, page 31, bullet 4). On this basis the policy approach to self-build/custom build is considered viable.

Rural exception sites

Summary

- 4.1.45. It is considered that Policy H3 presents a sound basis upon which to permit appropriate rural exception sites. It provides a positive approach to ensure such schemes come forward, allowing for flexibility, whilst at the same time ensuring that sites are appropriately located and of a suitable scale, incorporating provision to ensure that schemes remain affordable in perpetuity.

Soundness

- 4.1.46. The Framework makes it clear that local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites. Whilst policy H2 will require 40% of housing on sites of more than 10 dwellings, many of the smaller 'other villages and rural settlements' listed in the Plan's settlement hierarchy (Appendix F, Table D.23) are unlikely to have development on that scale and therefore affordable housing is unlikely to be delivered without an exceptions policy. In a rural district such as Harborough where affordability is a continuing issue (see IC3, Q6), a rural exceptions site policy supporting rural affordable housing development is justified.
- 4.1.47. Policy H3 will apply to rural settlements including Rural Centres, Selected Rural Villages and other villages/rural settlements.
- 4.1.48. Consistent with national policy, H3 supports the delivery of affordable housing on small sites that would not normally be permitted for housing, subject to a number of criteria. These criteria seek to ensure that the site is well related to

the settlement and of a suitable scale. The proposed development must also be accompanied by clear evidence of local affordable housing need and ensure that the housing would accommodate parish residents (or those with a strong local connection) wherever possible, and remain affordable in perpetuity.

4.1.49. To promote sustainable rural development and in line with national policy, H3 allows for some an element of market housing (up to 20% of total number of units) on exception sites where this would enable the delivery of affordable units and meet an identified element of local need. This local need could be provision to help meet the needs of the older population of the parish by allowing for downsizing.

4.1.50. H3(1) specifies that affordable housing on 'small' sites in rural areas will be approved subject to meeting the criteria. Whilst 'small' is not defined, it is intended to refer to sites of 10 or fewer dwellings. Sites above 10 dwellings will meet the threshold for the 40% affordable housing contribution threshold in policy H2. However, this does not imply that sites of up to 10 dwellings will be acceptable in all rural settlements. Development proposals will still have to meet criteria H3(1)a-e.

Conclusion

4.1.51. Since 2011, four rural exception sites have been approved with the delivery of 26 affordable dwellings across the District. It is considered that H3 provides a sound basis for further sites to come forward in rural areas where there is an identified need for affordable local homes.