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## **Examination of Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031**

### **Statement on behalf of Bloor Homes Ltd**

#### **Submitted by Define Planning & Design Ltd**

### **Matter 4 – Homes to Meet the Needs of all the Community**

#### **Q4.1: Sizes and Types of Homes**

1. Bloor Homes submitted representations in relation to Policy H5 that included an objection to the proposed imposition of a requirement for housing developments to meet the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS). The Written Ministerial Statement dated 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 requires there to be clear evidence of a need to impose the standards and as that had not been presented by the District Council the requirement in Policy H5 was unjustified.
2. This matter was also highlighted in the Inspector's Initial Questions, and in response the Council have referred to "The Case for Requirement Nationally Described Space Standards through the Harborough Local Plan" (HSG13), which highlights the analysis that has since been undertaken in this respect and confirms that the matter has also been considered in the Local Plan viability assessment.
3. However, the District Council's report presents no robust evidence of a need to impose the NDSS in the District. That is, what actual harm is arising that must be addressed through the application of the NDSS? There is no evidence of dissatisfaction with the size and standard of housing that is being delivered in the District to meet the identified need and demand or of the dwellings being provided actually being too small. The report only makes a number of unsubstantiated assertions in relation to larger sized dwellings being required to provide future adaptability for an aging population that is looking to downsize. However, there is no actual evidence presented that downsizing is and will occur (there is a tendency to under occupy housing) or that the application of the NDSS would effectively address this issue in any case. For example, a 2 storey 2 bed dwelling will never be suitable for downstairs living. The provision of specialist housing and specific accessible and adaptable housing as required elsewhere in the Local Plan is needed to address that issue.
4. Moreover, the District Council's evidence also highlights the relative high price of housing the District and the affordability issues that arise from that. However, the implications of imposition the NDSS in that respect have been ignored. Taking just one example from Bloor Homes' committed development at Bushby: a 2 bed 4 person dwelling with 68m<sup>2</sup> internal floorspace will be marketed at £190,000. To meet the NDSS that dwelling would need a floorspace of 79m<sup>2</sup> that would inflate the market price to £220,000. The unjustified imposition of the NDSS through Policy H5 will, therefore, clearly exacerbate the recognised housing affordability issues in the District.
5. The NDSS requirement should, therefore, be removed from Policy H5.