



Mrs S Housden BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI &
MR H Baugh-Jones MRTPI
Inspectors – Charnwood Local Plan
c/o Mr Ian Kemp, Programme Officer
PO Box 241
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By e-mail: idpkemp@icloud.com

Date: 11th October 2024
My ref: JT
Your ref:
Contact: Julie Thomas
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Dear Inspector Housden and Inspector Baugh-Jones,

We are writing following correspondence from Richard Bennett, Head of Planning & Growth at Charnwood Borough Council, with the Planning Inspectorate dated 4th October 2024, in relation to representations received to the Main Modifications consultation, which we have been copied into.

Mr Bennett stated that, following the consultation responses submitted to the County Council on its proposed Transport Contributions Strategy (TCS) and draft Local Plan Main Modifications, the Borough Council was “*now minded to prepare a Community Infrastructure Levy to secure contributions to mitigate the impact of growth in Charnwood, including transport contributions to mitigate cumulative transport growth*”. Mr Bennett asked you to conclude that this would be an acceptable way forward to achieving a sound Local Plan, and if so, stated that the Borough Council would be “*pleased to update the Local Development Scheme (LDS) when it is reviewed in March 2025 to reflect this commitment*”.

As you are aware, the aim of the draft TCS was to provide guidance on how the County Council would apply policy INF2 and how requests for sustainable travel contributions would be quantified and justified, in the absence of any other mechanism being brought forward by the Borough Council, and in the spirit of co-operation between councils.

We welcome the Borough Council’s acknowledgement that a CIL scheme is necessary, and we agree that is the appropriate delivery mechanism to mitigate the cumulative transport growth in the Charnwood Borough area, alongside mitigating the impact of growth overall. As you are aware the County Council has consistently raised concerns about the impact of the Borough’s dispersed strategy of growth.

Contd/...

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We must, however, express concern that this acknowledgement comes at such a late stage in the Local Plan process. We are also concerned that the Borough Council has not given any timing commitment to produce a CIL and, being mindful that drafting, consulting and examining a CIL schedule can be a lengthy process, consider that there is now a need for a firm commitment to urgently publishing a CIL to be written into the Borough Council's development policy. This is particularly important because a number of allocated sites have already been approved/granted permission ahead of the adoption of the plan and a large number are significantly progressed through the planning process. Therefore, an intervention is required to prevent development coming forward, ahead of local plan and CIL adoption, without proportionate contributions to the necessary infrastructure and to ensure that a CIL can be an effective means of mitigating the impact of growth on the highways and transport network.

In the interim, we do not believe that it is sustainable to leave the important issue of transport contributions as one for the development management process to resolve, without any firm timescales for development of a CIL in place. Therefore, until such a commitment to an expedited CIL process is in place, endorsed by a clear policy directive by the Planning Inspectorate as part of its findings on the Local Plan, it is our view that any further planning applications seeking to be determined in advance of the examining Inspector's report should be considered as premature and should therefore be treated as deferred. Once this has taken place, the County Council will then review its position and update our statutory consultation responses accordingly.

To address this issue, which is fundamental to the soundness of the strategy and therefore the overall soundness of the plan, we would welcome the Inspectors' guidance as to what would be required to secure a sufficient policy basis for CIL as part of the local plan and how CIL may be incorporated into the LDS at this stage of plan development.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Thomas

Head of Planning, Historic and Natural Environment

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