



**REPRESENTATIONS STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF:**

RICHBOROUGH

**HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN
PROPOSED SUBMISSION
DRAFT REGULATION 19
CONSULTATION**

**Comments on Separation,
Employment and Housing Issues
and Land West of Lutterworth**

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1. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Richborough have instructed Planning Prospects Ltd to prepare and submit these representations to the Proposed Submission Draft (Regulation 19 stage) Consultation for the Harborough Local Plan (HLP) 2020 – 2041. The representations are informed by supporting material which is set out where relevant in a set of appendices to this document.
- 1.2 Richborough is one of the UK’s leading land promoters. They identify sites and secure planning permission on behalf of landowners. Originally focusing on residential development they subsequently broadened their scope also to promote land for employment use. They are promoting land west of Lutterworth (“the Site”) for development.
- 1.3 The Site is not identified as a location for development in the Regulation 19 document. The Site is broadly consistent with the land identified in the SHELAA with a reference of 21/8191.

PURPOSE OF REPRESENTATIONS

- 1.4 These representations support the aspirations of Richborough successfully to promote the Site through the emerging HLP and support the delivery of development there. The Regulation 19 Plan includes the Site within an Area of Separation. It also identifies a requirement for employment land and housing land. These representations explain why the inclusion of the Site within an Area of Separation is misplaced. They explain why the approach to identifying and allocating the requirement for employment and housing land in the emerging HLP is understated and misdirected. They explain why the Site should be identified in the Plan moving forward as an allocation to help meet the requirement for development which is currently unaccounted for.

STRUCTURE OF REPRESENTATIONS

- 1.5 These representations are presented in report format because their length, detail, narrative, and supporting material, plus the requirement for these opening remarks, does not lend itself well to submission solely through the dialogue boxes on the response form or Consultation Portal. The consultation allows for additional material to be provided where required, and this document plus its appendices has been prepared accordingly.

This document and the appended material should be read as a whole to understand Richborough's position and the substance of their representations.

1.6 The purpose of the representations summarised above invites a response to three main parts of the Regulation 19 Plan. First, draft Policy DS04 includes provisions around the definition of Areas of Separation. Second, draft Policy DS02 identifies the amount of employment development needed and is then concerned with its distribution. Third, draft Policy DS01 identifies the amount of housing development needed and is then concerned with its distribution. These Development Strategy employment and housing policies then relate to further Site Allocation policies. Additional draft policies concerned with directing development are also relevant.

1.7 Against this background, following this introduction, this statement comprises:

- Section 2: provides an overview of the Site, demonstrating its immediate suitability to accommodate development required but currently unaccounted for in the emerging HLP.
- Section 3: focuses on the approach to Areas of Separation and how the Site is capable of accommodating development whilst still providing physical and visual separation between Lutterworth and Magna Park.
- Section 4: examines the approach to identifying employment development requirements and sites through the HLP and supporting evidence base, and explains why the Site should be considered favourably in this regard to contribute towards otherwise unmet need.
- Section 5: examines the approach to identifying the housing requirement and sites through the HLP and supporting evidence base, and explains why the Site should be considered favourably in this regard to contribute towards otherwise unmet need.
- Section 6: sets out a concise answer to the relevant questions from the consultation drawing on the discussion within Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5.

1.8 Further evidence to support the case presented here is provided in the appendices listed at the end of this document and which are referred to throughout the text.

2. THE SITE

OVERVIEW

- 2.1 Land identified in the SHELAA with a reference of 21/8191 (“Land north of Coventry Road”) extends to about 93.5ha. It addresses a relatively broad area north of the A4303 between Lutterworth to the east and Magna Park to the west. It principally comprises farmland, with some farm buildings.
- 2.2 The Site (location plan at Appendix 1) is broadly coincident with but slightly smaller than this. It is contained fully within parcel 21/8191 but excluding an area on the eastern side towards the southern end. The Site extends to about 74ha, and it is this land that is being promoted for development by Richborough. The scale of this Site presents a significant opportunity for built development and extensive Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- 2.3 A roundabout has been introduced to the A4303 immediately south of the Site with one arm currently providing access to the farm buildings. Effective pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is in place along the A4303 here along with a network of Public Rights of Way that provide connections between existing employment and residential areas. Land immediately to the west of the Site is treed; beyond this is Magna Park. The recent westward residential expansion of Lutterworth is alongside the Site at its southern end. This accessibility and relationships help establish the development potential here for employment and residential use.

EVOLUTION

- 2.4 The Site has progressed through the Call for Sites process into the SHELAA. It has also been considered elsewhere in strategic and topic specific evidence. These elements are considered in turn below.

SHELAA

- 2.5 The initial promotion of the Site through the first Call for Sites anticipated residential development and yielded the response evident in the SHELAA as site reference 21/8191. From its treatment there:
- No “red constraints” are identified. There are no local or national environmental or heritage designations that affect the Site. The Site represents a straightforward development opportunity.
 - The Site is regarded as “potentially suitable”. The questions raised in this regard are minor, surmountable, and routine for a site of this nature. Reference is made to the

setting of Bitteswell Conservation Area, Public Rights of Way, limited areas of potential flooding, potential contamination; the comments refer to the need for careful masterplanning, and that is right, it would allow these matters to be addressed. Reference is made to areas of Mineral Consultation but that should not be an absolute constraint here. The potential requirement for a secondary point of access is flagged. As noted above effective primary access is already in place and if a secondary point of access is needed for any development this should be possible from the south or east. The location in the Area of Separation is noted; this is considered further in section 3 below.

- The Site is regarded as available. This is correct. Richborough are working with the Landowners to promote the Site for development.
- It is regarded as not currently achievable. Further thought around access is noted in the commentary here, but two main issues are raised in this regard. The first, again, is the Area of Separation, considered in these representations at section 3. The second questions the deliverability in market capacity terms alongside the planned East of Lutterworth scheme. That concern might only arise in relation to housing (not employment) development of the Site. Moreover, for the reasons set out below (section 4) it is considered that more housing land needs to be provided indicating that any capacity or over provision concern is misplaced. Additionally, the lack of progress with development East of Lutterworth indicates that the reliance placed on it is also unsound. More and different sites need to be found.

2.6 A portion of the Site was submitted through the subsequent (January 2024) Call for Sites, and is reflected in the SHELAA as site reference 24/10238. This includes the entire frontage of the Site to the road, plus the western half of the land to the rear. It extends to about 46ha and was proposed as an employment or residential development opportunity with additional open space BNG resource / ecological enhancement area.

2.7 In suggesting this reduced area it was noted that the proximity of the land to the A5 (to the west, alongside Magna Park), the M1 (to the east, alongside Lutterworth), and other key strategic routes (such as the M69, M6 and A14) position it at the heart of a very highly desirable area for warehousing and distribution use (the “Golden Triangle”). It is extremely well positioned in one of the most attractive locations to the market anywhere in the country. It was further observed that it is also well positioned as a residential site relative to the rest of Lutterworth to continue the westward expansion of the town whilst also maintaining an attractive landscaped setting and open space capable of contributing positively to ecological objectives.

- 2.8 The SHELAA identifies parcel 24/10238 as suitable, available, achievable and developable. Its detailed commentary includes, “Although being located within a Local Plan 'area of separation', it is not considered that [parcel 24/10238] would result in the merging of Magna Park and Lutterworth. Identified constraints could be appropriately managed or mitigated to allow development. This site would be an attractive location for both developers and the housing market, and would provide an attractive location for other industrial, logistics and warehousing uses given the proximity to Magna Park and the A5.” We concur with the Council’s assessment of the Site in this regard.
- 2.9 In summary, the Site as a whole is treated positively in the SHELAA, albeit with some reservations. Of those, it is only the Area of Separation that warrants further consideration as a matter not immediately addressed. Moreover, part of the Site (the full frontage, and western half to the rear) is treated positively and without equivocation as offering potential for employment and residential use. Taking these points together it should be that through effective masterplanning of the Site as a whole this must be capable of being successfully resolved, providing as it does more land for development and for attending to the questions raised through the SHELAA.

Strategic Growth Options

- 2.10 The County, City and District Authorities in Leicestershire commissioned consultants AECOM to look at Strategic Planning Matters across the City and County area. The resultant study (Strategic Growth Options and Constraints Mapping for Leicester and Leicestershire, August 2023) assesses 42 Strategic Growth Options (individually and cumulatively) to determine whether they offer suitable and appropriate solutions to deliver sustainable locations for new communities and economic growth, capable of meeting identified needs for homes and employment land. In this context Strategic Growth Options are defined as locations capable of delivering in excess of 1,000 homes and / or 25 hectares of employment land.
- 2.11 In the study each of the 42 Strategic Growth Options is scored based on performance using criteria derived from and measured against national policy, having regard to local characteristics and RAG assessment bringing together secondary sources, mapping data and professional judgements from the project team. Site visits, deliverability analysis and engagement with statutory consultees also feeds into this assessment with a summary of each site provided alongside a composite judgement of overall suitability for growth.
- 2.12 Of the 42 Strategic Growth Options, 27 are identified as potential areas for strategic growth, nine as unsuitable, and just six as suitable. One of those six, with a reference of 3f, is “Land West of Lutterworth” which coincides with SHELAA site reference 21/8191 and

so encapsulates the Site. In circumstances where, as above, the Site was principally being promoted for residential purposes at that time the study focuses on this use and gives it a “green” rating for environment, landscape, heritage, transport, housing and economy. Utilities and infrastructure is given an “amber” rating, and the study indicates reinforcement and investment would be needed in this regard. The detailed analysis provided by the study recognises the potential within the land to mitigate harm to separation through the inclusion of Green Infrastructure.

- 2.13 The study is clear that it is an overarching piece of work, to contribute towards the evidence base for the constituent authorities, and it is not intended to imply that individual sites should be allocated. Nonetheless, it is very extensive and considers Leicestershire on a consistent and systematic basis to arrive at just six suitable locations across the entire County. The Site is one of those.

Employment Land

- 2.14 The evidence base for the emerging Local Plan includes a Strategic B8 Needs Sensitivity Report (iceni, December 2024). The implications of this from an employment land perspective are considered in more detail below (section 4). However, solely in terms of the credentials of the Site as a place for development it is noted that this report carries out an initial filter of potential locations based on size, accessibility, key constraints and availability. Locations that pass through this process are then subject to a more detailed RAG assessment based on accessibility, suitability, and deliverability. The report assesses parcel 24/10238, so including the frontage of the Site and the western half of land to the rear. This parcel passes through the initial filter.
- 2.15 In the more detailed analysis the report incorrectly assumes that this parcel would have capacity for up to 398,000 sq ft (37,000 sq m) of employment space. In fact, material previously shared with the Council by Richborough shows how a series of units ranging in size from 110,000 sq ft to 370,000 sq ft (plus ancillary office space) could be arranged on the parcel, delivering a total of about 1.14M sq ft of development within a strong landscaped framework. Land in the north would be set aside for ecological enhancement, and land in the south east as open space (a country park), so still maintaining a separation between new employment development and the western edge of Lutterworth. That material also shows how this arrangement could deliver BNG well in excess of that needed to support development at this scale.
- 2.16 The RAG assessment for accessibility of this parcel in the report is “green”. For suitability the rating is “red”, with the conclusion of, “Long, thin layout of the site constrains potential layout of development. Is separated from existing Magna Park development by woodland

buffer (Magna Wood). Would result in merging of Lutterworth and Magna Park.” In fact, as above, the material previously shared with the Council shows that development concentrated in the southern and central parts of the parcel can yield an effective layout with extensive Green Infrastructure to the north and east providing a BNG resource and effective separation from Lutterworth. As discussed above both the SHELAA and the Strategic Growth Options study note how effective separation can be achieved here, both through the development of this parcel and effective masterplanning of the Site as a whole. This is further considered in section 3 below but it is clear that discounting this parcel as unsuitable on this basis is wrong.

- 2.17 The commentary on deliverability includes, “Ownerships, infrastructure issues and sensitivity of site make delivery more challenging. Potential for medium-term delivery if site was considered suitable.” The reference to ownerships appears to reflect the point that there are six ownerships making up this parcel. However, as set out in the Call for Sites submission these six are in the same family. They act together. As also noted in the Strategic Growth Options Study reinforcement of infrastructure is needed, but this can be achieved.
- 2.18 The principle concern within this report is around sensitivity relating to separation, but that is misplaced. Again, the SHELAA and the Strategic Growth Options study as well as the material previously shared with the Council demonstrate that this can be attended to in an acceptable manner.

SUMMARY

- 2.19 The Site as a whole is treated positively in the SHELAA, albeit with some reservations. Of those, it is only the Area of Separation that warrants further consideration as a matter not immediately addressed. Part of the Site (the full frontage, and western half to the rear) is treated positively and without equivocation as offering potential for employment and residential use. Effective masterplanning of the Site as a whole is capable of being successfully resolved.
- 2.20 The detailed analysis provided by the Strategic Growth Options study recognises the potential within the Site to mitigate harm to separation through the inclusion of Green Infrastructure. This study considers Leicestershire on a consistent and systematic basis to arrive at just six suitable locations for strategic growth across the entire County. The Site is one of those.
- 2.21 Part of the Site is also considered by the Strategic B8 Needs Sensitivity Report. This passes through the initial filter but is discounted principally due to concerns around separation which are at odds with the other elements of the evidence base reviewed here.

The report appears unaware of previous submissions made to the Council around the scale of development achievable here, the potential for a significant BNG offer, effective separation, and unified ownerships.

2.22 Read as a whole, it is considered that the Site should be readily capable of being regarded as acceptable to accommodate employment and residential development. Its suitability in terms of the ability to maintain separation is further explained in section 3 below. Sections 4 and 5 explain why more land should be allocated by the emerging Plan. That being the case, the Site should be allocated to help make good this shortfall.

3. CHARACTER AND SEPARATION

RELEVANT POLICY

- 3.1 Draft Policy DS04 is concerned with “Preserving and Enhancing our Heritage and Rural Character”. The principle difficulty with this draft policy relates to its approach to Areas of Separation and the expression of those areas on the Policies Map. That is considered in detail below. This has consequential implications in terms of draft Policies AP03 and AP04 and the extent to which they seek to control development within Areas of Separation, and the allocation of additional land for development which these representations demonstrate is needed.
- 3.2 At the outset though a further difficulty with Policy DS04 in relation to its approach to heritage is considered.

HERITAGE

- 3.3 Criterion 1b of the draft policy states that development must, “Avoid gradual erosion of the historic environment through piecemeal or cumulative development that could compromise the integrity of Conservation Areas and other heritage assets.” This is at odds with the approach in National Policy.
- 3.4 There is nothing in National Policy concerned with “gradual erosion” of the historic environment. The requirements of National Policy do not refer to the extent to which development might “compromise the integrity” of heritage assets. The longstanding position in National Policy has been one which requires assessment of the degree of harm against the value of the asset. Substantial harm or loss is more strictly controlled, whilst less than substantial harm is balanced differently. These principles apply whether harm is isolated, incremental or cumulative.

SEPARATION

- 3.5 Criterion 2 of the draft policy includes that, “To maintain the distinctiveness of settlements and prevent the merging of these, Areas of Separation, as defined on the Policies Map, have been identified. Development in Areas of Separation must avoid coalescence and preserve the existing visual and physical separation between... b) Bitteswell, Lutterworth and Magna Park.” That Area of Separation comprises a very expansive tract between Magna Park and the settlements, and includes the Site. The approach to the definition of this designation and the ability for it in fact to accommodate allocated development whilst

still maintaining adequate integrity is considered in the Area of Separation Review provided here at Appendix 2.

3.6 The analysis presented in the Review includes extensive consideration of the evidence base and adopted and emerging policy approaches, and a detailed independent assessment to arrive at a position in terms of how this Area of Separation should be approached. The key findings of this work include:

- This area is not considered to be a Valued Landscape, and does not have an elevated landscape or visual sensitivity to development.
- The Site provides a limited (if any) contribution to the separation of Bitteswell from Lutterworth, although it does contribute to the setting of the southwestern edge of Lutterworth and there are also sensitivities along its southern frontage.
- Any new development would result in a physical encroachment into the Area of Separation, as would be expected with greenfield development. However, landscapes are not experienced in two dimensions on mapping, but on the ground when passing through the area.
- A considered and considerate development within the Area of Separation would not result in the physical or visual merger of Lutterworth and Magna Park, and there can remain a clear experience of leaving Lutterworth before entering the latter.
- A modelling exercise has been undertaken to understand the visibility of development within the Site. This shows that the Site could accommodate new residential development, and through stepping development back from its northern and eastern edges and using non-developed land for mitigation, there is unlikely to be any discernibility of such a scheme within the Site, and this would be feasible without visual coalescence. Further modelling reveals a similar outcome for an alternative employment treatment of the Site.
- As such, a new development of residential and / or employment would have a limited visibility from Lutterworth and Bitteswell with almost no views during summer months due to existing tree cover, which would be enhanced through development and stepping development into the Site area.
- Carefully planned development within the Site would not result in the loss of any of the characteristics of the Area of Separation and would accord with the associated guidance. There is capacity within the Site to deliver new development and maintain the separation (physical, visually and sensory) between Bitteswell, Lutterworth and Magna Park.

- 3.7 The overall conclusion reached is that the Site has capacity to accommodate new development with the Area of Separation still able to function without resulting in the physical or visual merger of the settlements with Magna Park, and there would remain a clear experience of leaving one settlement before entering Magna Park, and without this separation being merely fleeting and across a minor geographical extent.
- 3.8 Policy DS04 is concerned with maintaining the distinctiveness of settlements and preventing merger. Policies AP03 and AP04 are similarly concerned with not compromising the effectiveness of Areas of Separation in terms of identity and distinctiveness. The Area of Separation Review shows that development can be achieved in the Bitteswell, Lutterworth and Magna Park Area of Separation without compromising these objectives. Furthermore, the merits of maintaining an Area of Separation must also be balanced against other factors, foremost of which is the compelling need to find additional land to address housing and employment needs which should occur in the most sustainable locations. This is considered in sections 4 and 5 below.

4. EMPLOYMENT

RELEVANT POLICY

- 4.1 Draft Policy DS02 is concerned with “Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy”. It sets out, inter alia, the local employment land requirement and how this is to be met (part 2) and also (part 7) the strategic distribution requirement. Its provisions for both elements are flawed and the draft policy does not provide an appropriate basis for meeting employment needs in the District without significant modification. These shortcomings are explained in detail in the Review of Harborough DC Employment Evidence Base (“the Review”) provided here at Appendix 3. An overview of the position set out in the Review is provided below.
- 4.2 The implications of this carry over into Chapter 5 of the Plan and its policies which identify specific Key Development Sites. The remedy to the points raised here includes increasing the planned for requirement (so to deliver the employment land needed) and allocate more land for employment (including at Lutterworth).

COMMENTARY

- 4.3 The Review assesses the supply relied on by the emerging Local Plan (particularly in relation to the local requirement), the methodology used to inform the requirement for strategic warehousing allowed for in the Plan, and the apportionment of unmet need.
- 4.4 It identifies a concern with historical low rates of local delivery on allocated sites, and the continued reliance placed on “rolling over” those sites into the new Plan. It sets out deliverability concerns regarding three of the proposed allocations that have been rolled over from the extant plan and two of the sites included in the existing commitments which have seen no development to date. Taken together, this means that reliance cannot be placed on over half of the local supply identified in the draft Plan.
- 4.5 The review identifies difficulties with the approach taken to the modelling used in the evidence base for strategic employment land. It expresses concern around the absence of evidence for key assumptions, and the treatment of old properties and replacement development. This is then compounded by an apportionment exercise that fails to take into consideration the ability of the other authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire region to accommodate additional demand.
- 4.6 As a result of this the Review reaches the conclusion that Harborough’s non-strategic deliverable employment land supply amounts to just 28.8ha against a requirement of 60ha, so a shortfall of over 31ha. The Review recalculates the strategic requirement and

on the basis of this assessment demonstrates that Harborough should look to allocate some 275ha of B8 Strategic Distribution and Warehousing in contrast to the 137ha currently proposed in the Draft Local Plan. In essence, then, the deliverable supply of non-strategic employment land, and the identified supply of strategic employment land, are both just less than half of the actual requirement.

- 4.7 This failure adequately to meet the employment land needs of the District is contrary to longstanding national policy requirements to plan and make sufficient provision for development needs.
- 4.8 Consideration of further sites is clearly required to both meet the requirement for local and strategic employment use and to help the Council achieve its stated aim to increase the "flexibility in the supply of employment land to provide choice for businesses starting up or relocating to our district as well as to enable existing business to expand to retain the jobs they provide".
- 4.9 The Site provides an opportunity to provide flexible employment uses in a location that maximizes access to the strategic road network, complements the existing use of and further allocations at Magna Park and achieves market attractiveness to ensure its deliverability. This will additionally ensure compliance with the NPPF that requires planning policies to be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

5. HOUSING

RELEVANT POLICY

- 5.1 Draft Policy DS01 is concerned with “Delivering Homes”. It sets out first (Part 1) the annual housing requirement, and second (Part 2) the proposed distribution in terms of where and how it will be met. It is fundamentally flawed on both counts. Its failure is explained in detail in the Housing Assessment provided here at Appendix 4. An overview of the position set out in the Housing Assessment is provided below.
- 5.2 The implications of this carry over into Chapter 5 of the Plan and its policies which identify specific Key Development Sites. The remedy to the points raised here includes increasing the planned for requirement (so to deliver the housing needed) and allocate more land for housing (including at Lutterworth).

COMMENTARY

- 5.3 The approach in draft Policy DS01 does not grapple with the scale of housing needed in Harborough as calculated using the Government's updated Standard Methodology to calculate Local Housing Need. Instead, the Council openly admits that it has been rushed through specifically to avoid planning for the District's latest Local Housing Need which was known when the Regulation 19 draft was published. The Development Objectives of the Plan include to deliver the housing needed. The approach leading to and then expressed in draft Policy DS01 is at odds with this. It deliberately seeks to avoid meeting the housing need.
- 5.4 It does not grapple with unmet need from other authorities in the HMA, not just Leicester which has a known unmet need but also Oadby and Wigston which has had to stall its own draft Plan because of its higher Local Housing Need calculated using the latest Standard Method, and which is likely to result in Oadby and Wigston having an unmet need also.
- 5.5 In rushing through the Regulation 19 version of the HLP 2020 to 2041 Harborough Council is unlikely to have a Plan that will plan for the minimum required 15 years as required by national policy set out in the NPPF. In such circumstances, the HLP is likely to require an immediate review, and the immediate review will need to Plan for the higher Local Housing Need in any event.
- 5.6 Additionally, the draft HLP's trajectory indicates that Harborough will be unable to demonstrate the minimum required 5 year housing land supply upon its adoption - which will make its housing policies out of date upon adoption, and fails to include sufficient

contingency to ensure that the homes needed in Harborough will be delivered and this is compounded where the Plan relies too heavily on existing commitments and delivery from windfall sites.

- 5.7 Each of these points individually highlight that the Regulation 19 HLP 2020 to 2041 fails to address in any tangible way how the HLP will deliver the homes needed in Harborough and its neighbouring authorities during the HLP period. As a result, it fails to meet the tests of soundness set out in the Framework. When combined, these points compound the Plan's failure.
- 5.8 This fundamental concern is exacerbated where there is also a distinct lack of flexibility to deliver the suppressed 13,182 homes identified as being needed in Policy DS01 of the draft HLP. This necessitates identifying additional housing sites to provide flexibility in Harborough's housing supply over the HLP period and to ensure that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, also required by National Policy.
- 5.9 Moreover, the draft Plan's lack of flexibility is compounded in Lutterworth, which is a top tier settlement in the draft Plan's Settlement Hierarchy, reflective of its high level of sustainability. Despite this, the draft Plan has allocated a disproportionately low level of housing growth towards Lutterworth.
- 5.10 The low level of growth allocated in Lutterworth is also heavily reliant on a single site for strategic level growth which has been allocated previously, in the 2019 HLP. However, the East of Lutterworth SDA has so far failed to deliver any homes in the 2019 HLP period to date and continues to be substantially delayed. In fact, recent submissions made to reduce the level of affordable housing and to increase the scale of warehousing at the East Lutterworth SDA have confirmed that the allocated site is unviable if it is going to be delivered in accordance with its permission and in accordance with Policy.
- 5.11 The draft HLP's entire housing strategy is inextricably linked to, and built upon, the delivery from strategic scale allocations, including East Lutterworth SDA, but also in Scraftoft which is identified because of its proximity to Leicester and to meet Leicester's unmet housing need, but which has also been the location for a failed SDA in the 2019 HLP. However, the East Lutterworth SDA in particular is inextricably linked to the draft HLP's growth strategy and if as seems likely it fails to deliver the homes anticipated of it the HLP's failure will be substantially worsened.
- 5.12 Moreover, as a result of the draft HLP's near entire reliance on the East Lutterworth SDA to deliver the homes, and affordable homes, needed in Lutterworth over the period 2020 to 2041, its continued failure will also compound the failure to deliver homes needed in Lutterworth specifically

- 5.13 The concerns raised above in reference specifically to Policies DS01 (and by implication SA01 and Chapter 5 more generally) are far reaching and point to a fundamental failing of the draft Plan to meet the tests of soundness set out in the Framework. It certainly brings into question whether the draft Plan has met the requirements of paragraph 234 of the Framework. It is our view these transitional arrangements relating to plan making do not apply to Harborough for the reasons explained in the Housing Assessment contained at Appendix 4.
- 5.14 In terms of a remedy for these shortcomings, at a basic level, these Policies require amendment to identify significantly more deliverable and developable housing sites, including in Lutterworth specifically. As such, the HLP must allocate additional land in Lutterworth for residential development, and Richborough's site to the west of Lutterworth is suitably placed in this regard.
- 5.15 However, and crucially, the draft Plan fails to address in any tangible way how the minimum number of homes needed in Harborough, and in its neighbouring HMA authorities, during the HLP period can be delivered, and this exacerbates the very serious shortcomings within Leicester and Leicestershire more generally. This is a recurring strategic planning issue and requires significant bold intervention including a step-change in approach to avoid the new homes that are needed in Harborough and its neighbouring authorities not being provided over the emerging HLP period.
- 5.16 This is a fundamental point. The HLP must do everything possible to meet as much of its minimum requirement, and its neighbouring authorities' unmet needs, as possible within Harborough and more homes are needed, including specifically within Lutterworth. It must also demonstrate convincingly how it will ensure any remaining requirement will be taken up. As drafted, it fails on both counts.

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

- 6.1 The commentary set out in the preceding sections of this statement, supported by the documents provided in the appendices, explains in detail the position of Richborough in relation to issues raised by draft Policies DS01, DS02, DS04, SA01, and IM01. Drawing on and informed by that material, highly focused summary responses to the specific requirements of the consultation are set out below. For a full understanding of Richborough's position these comments must be read alongside and in the context of the full submissions made here.
- 6.2 The consultation invites commentary on the soundness of the Plan and that is provided in the preceding sections. Where that commentary exceeds 100 words (as it does in each case in this statement) a summary is requested – that is provided below. The modifications needed to make the Plan sound are also asked for – that too is provided below.

Draft Policy DS01: Development Strategy – Delivering Homes

Representations made here in section: 5

Summary

- 6.3 The housing requirement in the policy is understated and does not reflect need; the Plan will fail to meet the minimum requirement. It deliberately seeks to avoid meeting this need. It invites an immediate review of the Local Plan if adopted. It would result in an inability to demonstrate the required supply of housing on adoption, immediately making its policies out of date. Housing growth directed to Lutterworth is inadequate, inflexible, and the Plan seeks the continuation of a previous failed delivery strategy. Changes are required to identify significantly more deliverable and developable housing sites, including in Lutterworth specifically.

Modifications Needed

- 6.4 Policy DS01 should be fundamentally recast. The Regulation 19 document fails to address in any tangible way how the HLP will deliver the homes needed in Harborough and its neighbouring authorities during the HLP period. As a result, it fails to meet the tests of soundness set out in the Framework. A step-change in approach including in terms of the requirement (which should be elevated so that it reflects need) and distribution (which should direct materially more growth towards Lutterworth) is required to avoid the new homes that are needed in Harborough and its neighbouring authorities not being provided over the emerging HLP period.

Draft Policy DS02: Development Strategy – Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy

Representations made here in section: 4

Summary

- 6.5 The development of non-strategic employment land in Harborough has been slow. Continued reliance on land previously identified which cannot be relied on to deliver is inappropriate; more land is needed. The approach taken to identify and apportion the requirement for strategic employment land is problematic and understates the need in Harborough. The deliverable supply of non-strategic employment land, and the identified supply of strategic employment land, are both just less than half of the actual requirement. Consideration of further sites is required to meet the demand for local and strategic employment and help the Council achieve its policy aims.

Modifications Needed

- 6.6 Policy DS02 should be fundamentally recast. The Regulation 19 document fails to address how the HLP will deliver the employment land needed to meet both the local and strategic requirements during the Plan period; the shortfall in the former is over 31ha, and in the latter 138ha. As a result, it fails to meet the tests of soundness set out in the Framework. A step-change in approach including in terms of the requirement (which should be elevated so that it reflects this higher need) and distribution (to be more market responsive and flexible rather than focusing on a limited number of allocations and sites which are unlikely to deliver) is required to avoid the employment land needed in Harborough and its market area not being provided over the emerging Plan period.

Draft Policy DS04: Development Strategy – Preserving and Enhancing our Heritage and Rural Character

Representations made here in section: 3

Summary

- 6.7 The approach to heritage is inconsistent with national policy. The spatial expression of the Bitteswell, Lutterworth and Magna Park Area of Separation is expansive and includes the Site. Evidence submitted here shows that carefully planned development within this Area of Separation can be achieved without compromising the relevant policy objectives around identity, distinctiveness and separation. A redrawing of the Area of Separation to allow an allocation for development of the type sought elsewhere in these representations can successfully be made whilst still maintaining the integrity of that designation.

Modifications Needed

- 6.8 Part 1b of the policy should be redrafted to reflect the approach in national policy. The spatial expression of the Area of Separation identified at part 2b of the policy should be amended to allow the allocation of land within the Site (west of Lutterworth) for development.

Draft Policy SA01: Site Allocations**Representations made here in sections: 2, 3, 4, 5***Summary*

- 6.9 These representations demonstrate the housing requirement in the Plan is understated and does not reflect need; the Plan will fail to meet the minimum requirement. They show the deliverable supply of non-strategic employment land, and identified supply of strategic land, are both less than half the actual requirement. There is a failure to plan and make sufficient provision for development needs, making the Plan unsound. More development land is needed. The Site (west of Lutterworth) should be regarded as acceptable to accommodate employment and residential development whilst maintaining an appropriate Area of Separation and allocated accordingly.

Modifications Needed

- 6.10 Residential and employment requirements in Harborough are inadequately accounted for in draft Policies DS01 and DS02, and by some margin. As a result, the allocation provision made in Chapter 5 (principally draft Policy SA01) is manifestly inadequate. More land needs to be identified and allocated.
- 6.11 The nature of the shortfall here is extensive and fundamental. It is considered that the Plan should be paused whilst a full assessment is made of the extent of the additional development requirements and the opportunities that exist to accommodate them.
- 6.12 It has been demonstrated that the Site (west of Lutterworth) should be regarded as acceptable to accommodate employment and residential development. It should be allocated, and included within Policy SA01. It is suited to both employment and residential uses, or a mixture. In employment terms it is capable of accommodating strategic and non-strategic provision. The scale of the Site is also such that with careful planning and distribution of development within it very considerable opportunities will remain to preserve areas for landscaping such that an appropriate and well-functioning Area of Separation can be maintained here.

Draft Policy IM01: Monitoring and Review of the Local Plan**Representations made here in section: 6***Summary*

- 6.13 These representations show the Plan should be paused so development requirements can be properly assessed and additional sites allocated to meet it. Otherwise, the Plan will need immediate review and its policies will not adequately meet requirements. Draft Policy IM01 allows for the prospect of review, but without absolute triggers, rather governed by criteria relying on the Council's judgement (adopting SoCG, identifying "satisfactory" evidence, conducting a review). This is inadequate, unacceptable and unreliable, particularly in the context of the current Plan where the Council's approach has explicitly been to avoid fully identifying and meeting development requirements.

Modifications Needed

- 6.14 The correct approach here is to halt the Plan process and undertake an exercise that seeks properly and fully to identify development requirements and allocate land sufficiently to meet them. If that is not done, then an early review policy needs to be in place that ensures a review will be progressed, rather than leaving it to the discretion of an Authority that has decided to rush through an approach to avoid meeting those requirements. That early review policy should:
- Acknowledge that the current Plan is interim
 - Commit to the production of a comprehensive new Local Plan commencing immediately upon adoption of the current Plan
 - Commit to a programme for the prompt submission for examination of the comprehensive new Local Plan
 - Require that the comprehensive new Local Plan meets the minimum development requirements for Harborough in accordance with the NPPF
 - Require the publication of annual monitoring reports on development delivery by no later than 1 April each monitoring year to provide clear evidence of progress and implementation of sites allocated
 - Require the updating of the evidence base to inform this process
 - Require that the comprehensive new Local Plan be prepared to cover a minimum period of 15 years from the date of adoption, informed by an up-to-date evidence base, and prepared in line with Government policy and statutory requirements

- Acknowledge the implications of out of datedness if the requirements of the early review policy is not met

6.15 It is clear that the current (Regulation 19) document is not designed to meet development requirements in any real sense. That should be remedied through early review to ensure that the development required in Harborough is delivered.

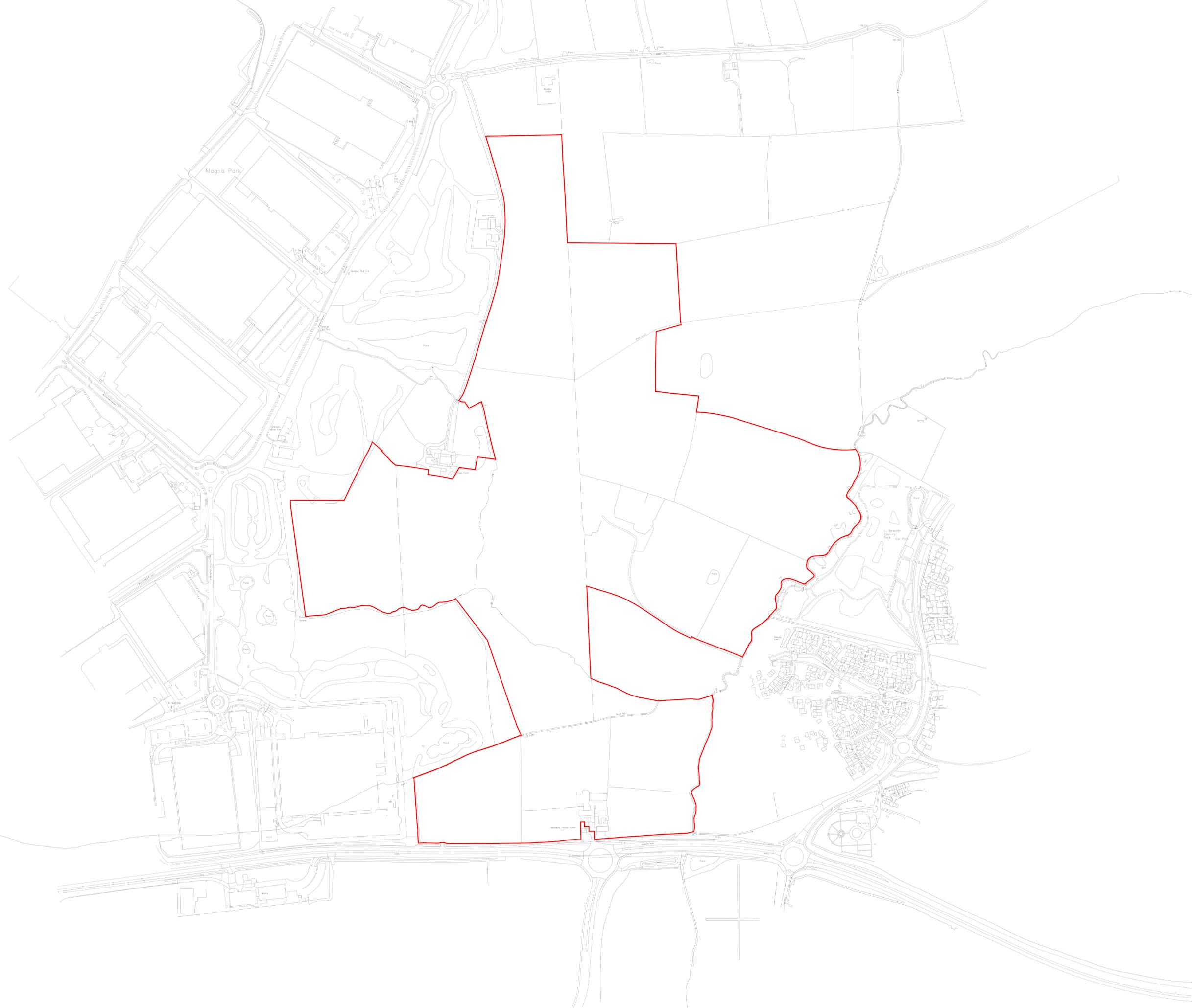
APPENDICES: SUBMITTED SEPARATELY SAVE FOR APPX. 1

Appendix 1 Site Location Plan (below)

Appendix 2 Area of Separation Review

Appendix 3 Review of Harborough DC Employment Evidence Base

Appendix 4 Housing Assessment



Notes:
This overlay is based on current OS base data.

KEY:
Site A (74.06ha) █

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Development Name: Land North of Coventry Road, Lutterworth

Title: Site Location Plan

Drawn by: 08/04/2025	Drawn by: ES	Scale: 1:2500 @ A0
Project Number: R-CRLU-LP-01	Revision: .	