



Harborough Proposed Draft Local Plan 2020 – 2041 (Regulation 19 Consultation)

Land South of Dunton Road, Broughton
Astley

April 2025

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Stantec is instructed by The Trustees of the Crane Estate and Mrs Jean Williams (also part of the Crane Estate) to prepare and submit representations to the Harborough raft Local Plan 2020 – 2041 (Regulation 19) consultation, including relevant documents within the evidence base. Hereafter, our Client is referred to as “The Crane Estate”.
- 1.1.2 These representations follow the structure of the draft Local Plan consultation documents and seek to respond to the questions posed within the document, where relevant.
- 1.1.3 The Crane Estate are working to bring forward a residential led development at Land South of Dunton Road, Broughton Astley (the ‘Site’). The Site is not currently proposed as a draft allocation in the Local Plan.
- 1.1.4 The Site was submitted as part of the previous Call for Sites Consultation in June 2021 and is included as Site Ref: 21/8223 (Land South of Dunton Road) within the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), 2021 and 24/12209 (Land South of Dunton Road) within the SHELAA 2024 update.
- 1.1.5 These representations relate to the following draft Harborough Local Plan 2020 – 2041 Regulation 19 consultation documents:
- Harborough Local Plan 2020 – 2041;
 - Harborough Policies Map;
 - Harborough Sustainability Appraisal;
 - Harborough Proposed Submission Evidence Base Documents.
- 1.1.6 The following supporting documents are appended to these representations:
- **Appendix A** – Site Location Plan
 - **Appendix B** – Site Concept Masterplan
 - **Appendix C** – Site Vision Document
 - **Appendix D** – Landscape and Visual Appraisal
 - **Appendix E** – Transport Technical Note
- 1.1.7 Whilst the Site is not proposed as a draft allocation, it is worth noting that Land South of Dunton Road, Broughton Astley has the capacity to deliver up to 280 dwellings, alongside land for open space and biodiversity net gain. The Site could be brought forward in phases.
- 1.1.8 The proposed allocation of the Site would form a logical extension to the settlement of Broughton Astley and will see the delivery of an attractive, high quality and locally distinctive place to live.
- 1.1.9 The Crane Estate welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft Local Plan and look forward to engaging with the Council further in respect of this Site and its contribution to meet the market and affordable housing needs of the District and Broughton Astley.





2 Land South of Dunton Road, Broughton Astley

2.1 The Site Context

- 2.1.1 The Site is shown outlined in red on the Site Location Plan (Drawing No. BM-M-01) which can be found at **Appendix A**.
- 2.1.2 The Site totals 22.3 hectares and is currently in use as agricultural (cattle grazing) and horse grazing land. The Site lies adjacent to the urban area of Broughton Astley. The Site lies either side of two recent developments: off Crowfoot Way / Murray Close and the former Charlie Brown's Garden Centre.
- 2.1.3 There are existing hedgerows and trees on site which can be incorporated into the development proposals. The Site is surrounded by residential development to the north, east and west, with agricultural land to the south. An area of green space (disused railway line) lies adjacent to the western boundary of the Site, beyond which lies the development off Crowfoot Way / Murray Close.
- 2.1.4 The Site is fronted by Dunton Road (B581), which provides sustainable transport connections into Broughton Astley via existing footpaths and bus routes. Bus stops are located approximately 40-45 metres to the south of the proposed site access, providing an hourly service (no.84 operated by Arriva). Existing pedestrian footways on Dunton Road provide connections into Broughton Astley village and other local amenities situated to the north-west of the Site.

2.2 The Development Proposals

- 2.2.1 The Site is proposed to accommodate a sustainable housing development of up to 280 new homes, including a policy compliant level of affordable housing, with accompanying open space, as illustrated within the accompanying Vision Document.
- 2.2.2 The Site is capable as being brought forward either in its entirety, or as two distinct phases, dependent on the scale of housing need. A Concept Masterplan which illustrates how this might be achieved is submitted as part of this representation. A summary of the key design principles and development benefits is listed below.
- 2.2.3 The Site seeks to deliver the following benefits:
- The proposed development comprises approximately 8ha of residential development, amounting to approximately 4.3ha of development within Phase 1, and 3.7ha in Phase 2;
 - The Site is capable to accommodating up to 280 dwellings at 35 dwellings per hectare (dph). Of these, 150 could be delivered within Phase 1, with a further 130 in Phase 2.
 - The proposals retain existing hedgerows and planting on the Site wherever possible, incorporated within 13.3ha of extensive new public open spaces (5.0ha within Phase 1 and 8.3 ha in Phase 2).



- Additionally, the proposals include new and enhanced planting across the site within public open space. As part of the proposals, we will also retain and enhance all existing PRowS running through the Site and explore the potential for new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle connections through to the north of the Site.
- The high point of the Site is a central plateau which falls within the second phase of the site. If the second phase was brought forward for development, the area surrounding this high point would be retained for open space as a new 'hilltop park' offering an expansive space for recreation and activity whilst offering views of the surrounding landscape. By pulling development away from this high point in parallel with proposed additional planting, the visual impact of the development on the surrounding area will be minimised.
- Attenuation areas will be located around the Site edges at the low points of the site to maximise their effectiveness.
- A minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will be provided on-site.

2.2.4 Analysis has been carried out looking at landscape and visual baseline of the Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (**Appendix D**). This concluded that there is potential for sensitivity located residential development within the Site, subject to a number of opportunities and constraints and strategic design principles outlined in this Appraisal and within the vision Document (**Appendix D**).

2.2.5 The accompanying Transport Technical Note demonstrated how a suitable access to the site and the proposed capacity can be achieved, taking into account relevant guidance for providing access to a new residential development, In addition the findings of the note demonstrate that there are a number of potential opportunities with respect to the transport strategy for the Site which can be promoted to ensure future residents and visitors are provided with genuine modal choice.

2.2.6 Given the absence of any significant or overriding constraints, we consider that the Site is deliverable, and that development could commence within five years. Based on comparable sites (in terms of dwelling capacity), we estimate that a single developer on Site could deliver at least 40 dwellings per annum.

2.2.7 Broughton Astley lies within the Settlement Hierarchy's Tier 3 (Large Villages). The Site provides an opportunity for additional housing development that could contribute to both Harborough's own need and wider HMA unmet needs . The Site's location in Broughton Astley, with good access to the Leicester City urban area, supports the case for the proposed housing development to contribute to the wider HMA shortfall. It is considered that the Site can provide a well-designed and appropriately proportioned development which would integrate comfortably with the existing built-up area. There are no known constraints within the development area which cannot be mitigated.



3 Proposed Draft Local Plan Submission Document – Regulation 19

3.1 Local Plan Vision

- 3.1.1 The Local Plan vision for Harborough sets out the Council’s vision for how the District will evolve from the period 2020 – 2041. The Council state that “*by 2041, the communities and residents of Harborough District will have benefitted from the development of new homes and workspaces whilst the place maintains its mainly rural character*”. The Crane Estate **support** the recognition by the Council that the delivery of new homes will bring about a range of benefits for residents and the local community.
- 3.1.2 Paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework (‘NPPF’) (December 2024) informs that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities. The Council issued an updated Local Development Scheme (‘LDS’) (February 2025) on 3rd March 2025 which sets out the timetable for the preparation of the new Local Plan. The LDS proposes the following timetable:
- Regulation 18 Issues and Options Consultation – January / February 2024;
 - Regulation 19 and 20 Proposed Submission Local Plan Consultation – March – May 2025;
 - Regulation 22 Submission Local Plan for Examination – September / October 2025; and
 - Regulation 26 Local Plan Adoption – October – December 2026.
- 3.1.3 As currently proposed, the LDS recognises the need to comply with paragraph 22 of the NPPF and anticipates that the new Local Plan will be adopted by December 2026. A Plan period of 15 years is therefore proposed to 2041. Albeit should any delays be anticipated to the proposed timetable for the new Local Plan which prevents a minimum period of 15 years post adoption, the Council would need to take this into account and have due regard. However, like many stakeholders, we consider it vital that the new Local Plan is adopted as soon as possible and avoids any further delays.
- 3.1.4 The Local Plan vision goes on to inform that new development will complement the established townscape and offer a range of housing options, including affordable housing. To ensure that new development serves to complement the established townscape, proposals should be focused in the most sustainable locations, adjacent to existing development, such as Land South of Dunton Road. This is **supported** by The Crane Estate.
- 3.1.5 The vision also recognises the need for residents in new communities to benefit from improved access to local services and community provision, including healthcare, education, and recreational facilities. The vision then concludes that residents will shape new development across the District through effective community engagement and proactive neighbourhood planning. This approach is supported by The Crane Estate, as demonstrated by their commitment to engage with Broughton Astley Parish Council on the proposals.
- 3.1.6 On whole, The Crane Estate **support** the vision for the draft Local Plan and its timely adoption.

3.2 Introduction

- 3.2.1 As set out at paragraph 1.3 of the draft Local Plan Consultation Document, the new Government requires every Local Planning Authority to have an up to date Local Plan. From previous discussions with Officers, it was confirmed that Harborough District Council are seeking to progress the draft Local Plan under the transitional arrangements set out at Annex 1 of the NPPF. It is therefore acknowledged that the new Local Plan will need to meet 80% of the



Standard Method requirements and will be examined under the previous version of the NPPF (December 2023). This is further recognised at paragraph 1.8 of the draft Local Plan Consultation Document.

- 3.2.2 For the purpose of this submission therefore, any further references to the NPPF will be to the 2023 version unless stated otherwise.

3.3 Development Objectives

- 3.3.1 The Plan objectives, in overall terms, provide a guiding framework for the Plan's policies and proposals. A total of five objectives are proposed by the Council within the draft Local Plan. These objectives have been detailed below and our responses to each objective can be found in orange.

- **Delivering Homes** – Deliver the housing needed, provide housing that addresses the specific needs of different communities and age groups, including the provision of affordable, accessible and specialist housing;
- The Crane Estate **support** the Council's objective of delivering the housing needed for the District during the Plan period. It is considered that this aligns with paragraph 61 of the NPPF and supports the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, especially where they help to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types. The Site is proposed as having a capacity of up to 280 homes and is able to help the Council meet their development needs in a sustainable location in Broughton Astley. The proposals will see the delivery of 40% affordable housing onsite to meet the needs of the local area and will deliver a range of housing types and tenures (details subject to future Reserved Matters). It is therefore considered that further site allocations should be considered.
- **Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy** – Support vibrant town centres to adapt to changing needs and retain and provide employment land and create opportunities for business expansion, job creation and economic growth;
- Whilst there are no specific comments to be made regarding this objective, The Crane Estate wish to emphasise that development of the Site would sustainably contribute towards economic growth within Broughton Asley and support those seeking to live and work within the locality.
- **Tackling Climate Change and Enhancing the Natural Environment** – Reduce carbon emissions and implement climate adaptation strategies, improve the quality of the natural environment by reducing pollution, protecting, enhancing, and extending biodiversity, and creating Green Infrastructure;
- The Crane Estate **support** the Council's commitment to supporting the environment and seeking to tackle climate change. To ensure that development sites are considered on an individual basis, it is considered that the relevant policies within the draft Local Plan should have regard to this and be worded flexibly where appropriate.
- **Retaining and Celebrating our Heritage and Rural Character** – Thoughtfully accommodate development to preserve and enhance our rural landscape, built heritage and the vitality of rural communities;
- The Crane Estate have no further comments to add to this objective at this moment in time. However, The Crane Estate reserve the right to comment on this further as the draft Local Plan progresses.
- **Enabling Supporting Infrastructure** – Work with partners to deliver infrastructure (including schools, health and transport), supporting healthier communities through active



and sustainable travel, expanding access to open spaces and expanding and enhancing community facilities;

- The Crane Estate **support** the Council's objective of delivering infrastructure and supporting healthier communities through active and sustainable travel, whilst expanding access to open spaces and enhancing community facilities. It is considered that by allocating developments such as 24/12209 (Land South of Dunton Road), the Council will be able to ensure that this objective is achieved during the Local Plan period.

3.3.2 On the whole, The Crane Estate **support** the Local Plan objectives in principle and their ability to meet the longer-term vision for Leicester and Leicestershire. It is considered that the development proposals at Land South of Dunton Road contribute significantly towards meeting the development objectives and regard should be had to this by the Council.

3.4 Policy DS01 – Development Strategy: Delivering Homes

3.4.1 In terms of housing, paragraph 61 of the NPPF informs that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.

3.4.2 Policy DS01 of the draft Local Plan sets out that the housing requirement for Harborough District consists of 13,182 dwellings between 2020 and 2041. The annual housing requirement for Harborough is then broken down to 657 dwellings per year between 2020 to 2036 and 534 dwellings per year between 2036 to 2041. As previously referenced, we are aware that Harborough District Council are progressing the draft Local Plan under the transitional arrangements set out at Annex 1 of the NPPF. It is therefore acknowledged that the Harborough Local Plan will need to meet 80% of their updated Standard Method requirements or accord with the previous figures of the Standard Method should this equate to 80% of the updated Standard Method requirements.

3.4.3 In context to the above, it should be stressed that local housing **need** is not the same as the housing **requirement** to be set out in the Local Plan. The Council should therefore consider whether it is appropriate to set a higher housing requirement in line with paragraph 67 of the NPPF. This includes the consideration of unmet housing needs from neighbouring authorities and delivering additional development to meet prevailing affordable housing need.

3.4.4 The Standard Method for Harborough District has now been updated to make provision for 723 dwellings per annum. Previously under the former Standard Method, Harborough District Council were required to deliver 510 dwellings per annum. Regard is also had to the unmet housing needs arising from Leicester City and the requirement for Harborough District Council to provide an additional 123 dwellings per annum between 2020 to 2036 to meet this need.

3.4.5 We note that as part of the previous Regulation 18 consultation for Harborough, three growth options were presented for the scale of housing requirement during the Plan period. These included:

- 1) Option A (534 homes per year) – Low Scale of Growth
- 2) Option B (657 homes per year) – Medium Scale of Growth
- 3) Option C (780 homes per year) – High Scale of Growth

3.4.6 In our representations to the Regulation 18 consultation, the point was made on behalf of The Crane Estate that if the Council pursued Option B, then enough land would be provided to accommodate an additional 123 dwellings annually across the period 2020 to 2036 towards the wider housing shortfalls of Leicester City Council. However, as per Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), paragraph ID: 68-001-20241212 states "*The Standard Method for calculating local housing need provides a minimum number of homes to be planned for. Authorities should*



use the Standard Method as the starting point when preparing the housing requirement in their Plan, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach". With this in mind, Option B (657 dwellings) should therefore be considered as a minimum figure and a starting point for calculating the requirement.

- 3.4.7 To enable the housing needs for the whole Plan period to be met, it is essential that sufficient headroom is provided within the housing supply. This will ensure that any currently unknown unmet needs of Leicester are met and any issues relating to affordability are addressed. As set out within the Harborough Local Housing and Employment Land Evidence (February 2025), 421 affordable homes are required per annum to address affordable needs. To ensure 421 affordable homes are delivered per annum, reliance on the Standard Method alone would not meet this identified need. As such, if the affordable housing need alone is to be met, this will require 1,053 dwellings per year (based on 40% affordable housing requirement, as set out at draft Policy HN01 (Housing Need: Affordable Homes)). It is important that sufficient dwellings are provided to address affordability issues within the District.
- 3.4.8 The table below takes account of the minimum housing need figures under the previous Standard Method requirement (as per Annex 1 of the NPPF for transitional arrangements), in comparison to the actual need figures which consist of the previous Standard Method, affordable housing needs and unmet needs within Leicester and Leicestershire. When comparing the below figures against the proposed draft Local Plan figures of 657 dwellings per year between 2020 to 2036 and 534 dwellings per year between 2036 to 2041, it is apparent that the proposed figures in the draft Local Plan are a fraction of the actual need figures which are required within Harborough during the Plan period. Therefore, the Council’s approach to calculating its overall requirement is incorrect, principally due to the conflation between housing need and housing requirement.

Plan Period 2020 - 2041	Stantec’s Option A – Harborough’s Local Housing Needs	Stantec’s Option B – Harborough’s Local Housing Needs, including Affordable Housing Needs and Unmet Needs from Leicester and Leicestershire
Dwellings per annum	510	1,053 + 123 = 1,176

- 3.4.9 Further to the above, we have reviewed the supporting evidence base in relation to housing and the new Local Plan, including the Harborough Local Housing and Employment Land Evidence (February 2025) and the Local Plan Development Strategy (February 2025). It is apparent when reviewing the Local Plan Development Strategy in particular that the document has not been suitably updated and still continues to make reference to the NPPF (December 2023) and the previous Standard Method figure of 534 dwellings. Whilst the Harborough Local Housing and Employment Land Evidence is based on more up to date information, in accordance with paragraph 36 of the NPPF (December 2024) and for the reasons set out above, it is considered that draft Policy DS01 is not positively prepared, justified or consistent with national policy.
- 3.4.10 It is therefore considered that there is a need for Harborough District Council to plan for a higher level of housing growth than the minimum Local Housing Needs as calculated using the Standard Method. This will allow ongoing flexibility to ensure local and unmet housing needs can be met in full during the Plan period. As such, it is considered that the Council should review the housing figures proposed within the Local Plan and the supporting evidence base.
- 3.4.11 In addition to the above, it is acknowledged that the housing target set out in policy DS01 has been used to inform the site selection process to assess all sites put forward around Broughton Astley. This has then been used to help determine that the Site (12209/ 8223) is not an appropriate location for development when compared with other locations and sites at Broughton Astley. However, as outlined above, within the context of having an increased



housing requirement, additional sites must be considered. Within Broughton Astley, the Site was one of thirteen sites discounted at Stage 4 of the technical assessment stage. Of these sites, draft allocation BA1 (24/10554, Land off Frolesworth Road) was considered to be the most suitable, however we consider that an additional site allocation in Broughton Astley should be allocated. This will ensure that the needs of Broughton Astley and the wider area are met in both the short and long term and are accommodated in a Large Village .

- 3.4.12 On this basis it is considered that the Site should be reconsidered for allocation to ensure the needs of Broughton Astley and the wider area are met in both the short and long term and are accommodated on a single sustainable site.
- 3.4.13 The Crane Estates therefore do **not support** policy DS01 and consider that the policy as drafted is not currently **positively prepared** or **effective** for development.
- 3.4.14 We consider that the following amendments would make the policy sound, as per the requirements set out at paragraph 36 of the NPPF:
- Plan for 1,176 dwellings per annum to account for evidenced local housing needs, affordable housing needs, and the unmet needs of Leicester and Leicestershire, rather than the proposed 657 dwellings per year between 2020 to 2036 and 534 dwellings per year between 2036 to 2041
 - Increase the number of site allocations within the Local Plan area including the Land South of Dunton Road, Broughton Astley. This would also contribute an additional 280 dwellings towards the evidenced needs for 1,176 dwellings

3.5 Policy SA01: Site Allocations

- 3.5.1 Policy SA01 lists the proposed site allocations which will support and enable the delivery of the development strategy policies listed in the draft Local Plan. Policy SA01 advises that the Council will seek to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement with promoters of strategically important sites to ensure a programmed approach to determination and site delivery/implementation.
- 3.5.2 The Site is not a preferred allocation, as it was discounted at Stage 4 of the 2021 Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. This identified no significant constraints, it is highly accessible, the Site is in keeping with the scale of development identified in the Development Strategy for Broughton Astley, and has moderate landscape sensitivity. However, it was concluded that this scale on the edge of the village would negatively change the character and setting of the village and impact on the locally important landscape feature , Clump Hill, and the site is not as well related to the village centre as other sites in the settlement.
- 3.5.3 We consider this assessment needs to be seen in the context of the time it was carried out, housing and the development that has occurred since, the availability of sites and the significant housing need now. In addition, the proposed development would be adjacent to the existing residential development to the north, east and west of the Site. To the east, the Site would be bound by the Dunton Road and adjacent to the redevelopment of the former Garden Centre site. To the north is existing residential development at Orchid Place and to the west of Foxglove Close. Based on these relationships, and the lack of brownfield sites in Harborough and particularly in Broughton Astley, it is considered necessary to develop on this well located and development countryside site. See SHELAA update (2024) below.
- 3.5.4 It is understood that the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Update (2024) has noted the Site to be Deliverable and Developable and reiterates that the site was assessed within the 2021 version of Harborough's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment under reference (21/822). The Site Assessment Summary concludes by stating that the Site is considered potentially suitable, available and potentially achievable. Given the above assessment in regard to housing requirement, it is considered that additional allocated sites are required. The Site represents an ideal development opportunity to increase housing provision in a sustainable location.



3.5.5 The Crane Estate consider that the policy as drafted is not justified as it does not reflect evidenced based needs. Further allocated sites are required to meet the Council's housing requirements and as such restricting development within Broughton Astley to the BA1 allocation would not be appropriate. The Crane Estate do not consider the draft list of allocated sites to be **justified** or based on **sound** evidence. The Crane Estate therefore wish to see the allocation of the Site in order to increase the housing provision within Broughton Astley. The Crane Estate also wish to comment further on any reconsideration of the site.

3.6 Policy HN01 – Housing Need: Affordable Housing

3.6.1 Paragraph 66 of the NPPF informs that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures

3.6.2 Policy HN01 sets out that to meet the need for affordable housing (40%) of the total number of homes in residential developments of 10 or more dwellings, provision should be made for this onsite with a tenure split of 75% affordable / social rented and 25% affordable home ownership. The mix of size and type of affordable housing development will be informed by the latest housing needs assessment. New affordable housing should be well designed and integrated with market housing which contributes to the creation of mixed communities.

3.6.3 Based on the Harborough Local Housing and Employment Land Evidence (February 2025), the Local Plan document specifies that Harborough's affordable housing need consists of:

- 310 affordable homes for rent per annum; and
- 111 affordable homes ownership per annum.

3.6.4 The supported Viability Report (January 2025) to the draft Local Plan informs that new affordable housing should be delivered onsite unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated and robustly justified. The Viability Report demonstrates that the majority of draft allocations in the draft Local Plan are able to support 40% affordable housing provision. The Viability Report also informs that the tenure split for affordable housing will consist of 75% affordable / social rent and 25% affordable home ownership. Where it is robustly demonstrated that the required provision of affordable housing would make a scheme unviable, the requirement for a lower level of provision will be considered. The Viability Report considers that for schemes of 500 dwellings or more, where a non-policy compliant scale of affordable housing is accepted as a result of viability issues, viability will be reassessed at agreed times over the lifetime of a development based on actual costs and values generated by the development.

3.6.5 It is understood that the above figures for affordable home ownership presents the highest possible requirements. When adding the above affordable needs together, it is apparent that a total requirement of **421 homes per annum** is needed to meet local affordable need. This figure equates to over half of the updated Standard Method figure of 723 dwellings and close to the previous Standard Method figure of 510 dwellings in which the draft Local Plan is being assessed under. The figure of 421 affordable dwellings doesn't even consider market need. A such, this demonstrates that there is a clear need to account for a higher number of homes to address local affordable need in District.

3.6.6 Whilst the Council consider that the scale of affordable housing need is significant, they consider that their position is justified in seeking to maximise delivery on sites where possible. The Council go on to acknowledge that the affordable need within the District represents 2/3 of the proposed housing requirement. However, the Council consider that this level of affordable housing provision is unlikely to be deliverable and regard needs to be had to viability considerations and the acknowledgement that public funding is a constraint to affordable housing delivery.



- 3.6.7 It is evident that that the delivery of housing based purely on local need assessed via the Standard Method (i.e. 510 dwellings per annum) will not deliver sufficient market housing to fully meet the identified affordable need, if planning obligations remain the primary source of delivery. As set out at Section 3.4, if the affordable housing need alone is to be met, this will require 1,176 dwellings per year based on 40% affordable housing requirement.
- 3.6.8 Taking account of the above, the provision of 40% affordable housing onsite is **supported**. In terms of the tenure split, the provision of 75% affordable / social rented and 25% affordable is **broadly supported**, although this needs to be expressed with flexibility to allow for change over time.

3.7 Policy HN03 – Housing Need: Housing Type and Density

- 3.7.1 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF sets out that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances, the use of minimum density standards should also be considered. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range.
- 3.7.2 Policy HN03 advises that the Council will expect the following **minimum** residential densities unless a lower density is justified based on the character of the area and availability of public transport and other services and facilities:
- a) 40 dwellings per hectare within Lutterworth and Market Harborough town centres
 - b) 30 dwellings per hectare elsewhere
- 3.7.3 The Crane Estate wish to emphasise that the densities included within the policy should be viewed as a minimum. The Crane Estate reserve the right to comment further on this topic should the Site be reconsidered for allocation.

3.8 Policy HN04 – Housing Need: Supported and Specialist Housing

- 3.8.1 Paragraph 63 requires the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community to be assessed and reflected in planning policies.
- 3.8.2 Policy HN04 sets out that specialist housing for older people will be required as an integral part of all residential developments of 100 dwellings or more at a rate of at least 10% of all dwellings proposed, providing the site offers a suitable location for the provision of this type of accommodation.
- 3.8.3 Whilst the evidence set out in the Harborough Local Housing and Employment Land Evidence (February 2025) indicates that in the future household sizes are projected to drop whilst the population of older people will increase, based on the evidence presented, it is unclear as to where the need for 'at least 10%' of all dwellings on sites of 100 dwellings or more as specialist housing has been presented. The Harborough Local Housing and Employment Land Evidence also confirms that there is no standard methodology for assessing the housing and care needs of older people. The policy also fails to clarify as to what types of development 'specialist housing' relates to. Therefore, the provision of 10% has not been positively prepared and is unjustified.
- 3.8.4 In regard to the above and to ensure that more flexibility is built into the policy, it is considered that a reduced percentage rate should be included within the policy to ensure that all developments of 100 dwellings or more can suitably accommodate a portion of specialist housing onsite. It is considered that a 5% contribution towards specialist housing is a more reasonable quantum that will be better accommodated by development sites. Whilst we acknowledge that the evidence prepared fails to justify the need for 10% specialist housing onsite and also doesn't make reference to the need for 5% specialist housing, The Crane Estate



consider that a quantum of 5% is more reasonable and will be better accommodated within development sites. A quantum of 5% is also considered suitable given the evidence confirms that there is no standard methodology for assessing the housing care needs of older people.

- 3.8.5 Taking the above into account, The Crane Estate consider that policy HN04 fails to accord with the tests set out at paragraph 36 of the NPPF and is therefore not justified. It is considered that part 2 of the policy should be amended as follows to make policy HN04 sound:

“Specialist housing for older people will be required as an integral part of all residential development of 100 dwellings or more at ~~a rate of at least 10%~~ at an approximate rate of 5% or more of all dwellings proposed, providing the site offers a suitable location for the provision of this type of accommodation”

- 3.8.6 The Crane Estate therefore do **not support** the policy as currently drafted.

3.9 Policy HN05 – Housing Need: Self and Custom Build Housing

- 3.9.1 Under Section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, Local Planning Authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking self-build and custom house building plots. Section 2 of the Act requires Local Planning Authorities to provide sufficient suitable permissions to meet the identified need on the register.

- 3.9.2 The NPPF informs at paragraph 73(b) that Local Planning Authorities should seek opportunities for small – medium scale sites to be delivered for self and custom housebuilding.

- 3.9.3 Policy HN05 sets out that in order to contribute to meeting demand for self and custom build plots, all non-specialise development of 40 dwellings (gross) or more must provide at least 10% of the total number of dwellings as self or custom build plots. Policy HN05 goes on to inform that a lower level of provision will only be permitted where there is clear evidence of lower demand. If plots on developments of 40 dwellings or more remain unsold for 18 months, then these plots may be built out as market housing.

- 3.9.4 The Harborough District Council Self and Custom Build Register suggests that there is a demand for 298 plots (as of 30 October 2024). Further to this, the Council have typically seen an average of 36 registrations a year for self and custom build plots. The Harborough Local Housing and Employment Land Evidence (February 2025) considers that there is a need for self and custom build units across the District. The Housing and Employment Land Evidence goes on to inform that despite a relatively permissive policy for self and custom build plots in the adopted Local Plan, the volumes of permissions have not matched registrations. As such, the Council have sought to tighten the policy framework under the draft Local Plan, hence the 10% requirement for sites of 40 dwellings or more.

- 3.9.5 Whilst Policy HN05 includes a cascade mechanism should there be no interest in self and custom build plots on sites, the requirement for ‘at least 10%’ self and custom build plots as currently drafted is **not supported**. The requirement for 10% is considered excessive, even when considering the volume of permissions and registrations. Given the rate of demand detailed above, as well as other sites within the District and the draft allocations listed in the draft Local Plan, the availability of plots would significantly exceed demand. As such, this would result in plots sitting vacant for extended periods of time which can lead to a range of issues such as security and fly tipping. This risk is obviously a shared concern of the Council’s, hence why a cascade mechanism is suggested within the draft policy.

- 3.9.6 With regards to the cascade mechanism, whilst it is positive to see that the Council have included this to support the provision of any unbuilt plots being built out as market housing, in reality this mechanism is **not supported** due to the build out implications and phased approach of the development. This could have significant implications for new residents onsite who would then have to endure construction works and traffic, whilst the proposed self and custom build plots are built out for market dwellings. As such, this approach is not practicable or suitable. Further to this, it is also considered that the requirement for properties to remain unsold for a period of 18 months is excessive and a period of 12 months is more suitable.



3.9.7 We note that part 6 of the policy also requires detailed applications for self and custom build homes to have a plot passport and design code. It is considered that the need for a specific design code for these plots is excessive and will potentially delay self and custom houses coming forward for development. The policy also fails to specify who would be responsible for preparing the design code and what the process for this would entail. Therefore, this requirement should be removed.

3.9.8 In light of the above, The Crane Estate consider that policy HN04 fails to accord with the tests set out at paragraph 36 of the NPPF and is therefore not justified. The following recommendations are made to amend the wording of draft policy HN05 in order for it to be considered sound:

“To contribute to meeting demand for self and custom build plots, all non-specialist development of 40 dwellings (gross) or more must provide ~~at least 40%~~ **approximately 5%** of the total number of dwellings as self or custom build plots.

A lower level of provision will only be permitted where there is clear evidence of lower demand. If plots on developments of 40 dwellings or more remain unsold, these plots may be built out as conventional market housing subject to detailed permission being secured which must be supported by evidence that a thorough marketing exercise has been undertaken over a period of at least ~~18 months~~ **12 months** commencing from the date at which the serviced self or custom build plot was available.

~~Detailed applications for self and custom build homes on plots with a plot passport and design code will be supported where they adhere to the approved parameters of the plot passport and clearly demonstrate how specifications have been satisfied. Variations to plot passport specification must demonstrate that they are suitable for the plot if they are to be supported.”~~

3.9.9 The Crane Estate therefore do **not support** the policy as currently drafted.

3.10 Policy AP01: Development in Settlements

3.10.1 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land meeting the need for homes. Paragraph 126 adds that Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development need.

3.10.2 Policy AP01 identifies Broughton Astley as a large village in the settlement hierarchy for Harborough District. This is after the market towns of Lutterworth and Market Harborough. The Crane Estates are pleased to see the Council’s recognition of Broughton Astley as a sustainable location for growth within the District.

3.10.3 The Crane Estates have no further comments to raise in respect of policy AP01 and **support** the identification of Broughton Astley as a sustainable settlement capable of growth.

3.11 Policy DM05: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Open Space

3.11.1 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF informs that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space).

3.11.2 Policy DM05 informs that all development must:

- a) contribute to creating high-quality multifunctional green and blue infrastructure in accordance with the Open Spaces Strategy 2021 (or subsequent revisions) and Green and



Blue Infrastructure Study (2024), including using trees and other planting where appropriate, to provide access to shade and manage surface water run-off as part of a wider resilience to climate change and, where needed, use noise and pollution barriers/absorption measures;

- b) create and enhance accessible links for all between new developments and surrounding recreational networks and facilities; and
- c) enhance access to publicly accessible open space.

3.11.3 Policy DM05 then goes on to advise that all residential developments of 10 or more dwellings must meet the requirements set out at 1a, 1b and 1c and meet the following local standards:



Open Space Type	Existing Standard (ha per 1,000 population)	Accessibility Standard
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.35	4km or 10 minutes by bus / driving
Amenity Greenspace	0.9	800 metres or 10 minutes' walk
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	8.5	1.6km or 20 minutes' walk
Parks and Gardens	0.4	4km or 10 minutes by bus / driving
Provision for Children and Young People	0.3	400 – 800 metres or 5 – 10 minutes' walk
Outdoor Sports	In accordance with Playing Pitch Strategy	In accordance with Playing Pitch Strategy
Cemetery and Burial Grounds	In accordance with Open Spaces Strategy	In accordance with Open Spaces Strategy

- 3.11.4 The policy then considers that if onsite provision is not feasible by virtue of location, management limitations, or the open space will not be of a sustainable size, a payment equivalent to the offsite provision will be required.
- 3.11.5 Whilst The Crane Estates **broadly support** the principle and requirements of the policy, it is considered that in parts, the wording of the policy is too onerous and does not provide any flexibility. This is also applicable to the open space typologies and it is considered that more flexibility should be built into the accessibility standard. The Crane Estates therefore consider that policy DM05 fails to accord with the tests set out at paragraph 36a of the NPPF and has not been positively prepared. Therefore, in order for the policy to be considered as sound, justified and positively prepared, the amendments below are considered necessary to the wording of the policy.
- 3.11.6 The wording of the policy and accessibility standards prevent sites been considered on a site by site basis. It is also acknowledged that the Open Space Strategy was prepared back in 2021 prior to the Local Plan Review and for the purposes of the draft Local Plan is now considered to be out of date. As such, an updated version of the Open Spaces Strategy should have been prepared in support of the evidence base for the draft Local Plan.
- 3.11.7 Further to this, whilst the open space standards are helpful and provide guidance on the quantum's that are considered necessary for development, it is again considered that these standards do not provide any flexibility and fail to have regard to individual schemes. For example, should a development not provide all of the above open space typologies listed in the table, but provide an excess of some typologies, it is considered that due regard should be had to this by the Council and the wider application merits should considered in the balance.
- 3.11.8 Having regard to the above, the following recommendations are made to amend the wording of draft policy:

“All development ~~must~~ **should aim to**:

- a. contribute to creating high-quality multifunctional green and blue infrastructure in accordance with the Open Spaces Strategy 2021 (or



subsequent revisions) and Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2024), including using trees and other planting where appropriate, to provide access to shade and manage surface water run-off as part of a wider resilience to climate change and, where needed, use noise and pollution barriers/absorption measures;

- b. create and enhance accessible links for all between new developments and surrounding recreational networks and facilities; and
- c. enhance access to publicly accessible open space.

Residential development of 10 or more homes **will should aim to** meet the requirements set in 1 (a) to 1(c) and local standards **where possible below** or as set out in up-to-date evidence of open space requirements published by the Council. Developments will be expected to provide an appropriate landscaping and landscape maintenance scheme, ensuring high standards of maintenance. **Due consideration will be had to the individual merits of development proposals and the open space types provided onsite**

Residential development of 10 or more homes **will should aim to** meet the requirements set in 1 (a) to 1(c) and **the approximate** local standards below”

Open Space Type	Existing Standard (ha per 1,000 population)	Approximate Accessibility Standard
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.35	4km or 10 minutes by bus / driving
Amenity Greenspace	0.9	800 metres or 10 minutes’ walk
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	8.5	1.6km or 20 minutes’ walk
Parks and Gardens	0.4	4km or 10 minutes by bus / driving
Provision for Children and Young People	0.3	400 – 800 metres or 5 – 10 minutes’ walk
Outdoor Sports	In accordance with Playing Pitch Strategy	In accordance with Playing Pitch Strategy
Cemetery and Burial Grounds	In accordance with Open Spaces Strategy	In accordance with Open Spaces Strategy

3.11.9 The Crane Estate therefore do **not support** the policy as currently drafted.

3.12 Policy DM06: Transport and Accessibility

3.12.1 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF sets out that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth and significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable. Paragraph 116 goes on to advise that development should only be prevented or



refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

3.12.2 Policy DM06 informs that development will be permitted subject to:

1.
 - a) ensuring the safe, connected and convenient movement across the transport network, including bus passengers, cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders
 - b) providing safe access, servicing and parking arrangements as defined in this policy and having regard to Highway Authority guidance and standards
 - c) ensuring that additional traffic movements are not detrimental to highway safety or result in the residual cumulative impact on the road network being severe

3.12.3 Policy DM06 goes on to advise that all major development is required to submit a Transport Assessment which considers the impact of the development and identifies suitable mitigation. All major development must also:

2.
 - a) incorporate measures to facilitate and encourage safe access by cycle and on foot along with protection of, connection to and extension, where practicable, of existing pedestrian, cycle and equestrian routes
 - b) provide accessible cycle parking
 - c) deliver public transport enhancements where feasible to mitigate development impacts, including but not limited to bus routes, information and waiting facilities and measures to encourage public transport use
 - d) where appropriate, contribute to provision for the transport needs of specific groups in the community, such as the elderly and those with disabilities
 - e) ensure car parking provision sufficient for the location and type of development, and make provision for Car Club spaces and EV charging points
 - f) mitigation for any adverse impact on residential amenity and air quality, especially in Air Quality Management Areas

3.12.4 In terms of the requirements and the wording set out in policy DM06, The Crane Estate do **not support** the policy as currently proposed. Further clarity is requested and it is considered that amendments to the wording are required to ensure the policy is justified and sound.

3.12.5 Turning to part 1c of the policy, it is considered that the policy should be reworded to ensure consistency with paragraph 116 of the NPPF. This will ensure that the policy is in accordance with the requirements set out in national policy and adopts a consistent and justified approach.

3.12.6 With regards to part 2c of the policy and the need to deliver public transport enhancements, it is considered that the policy fails to have regard to Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and the increased demand for this service. This is particularly relevant in the Leicestershire area where the 'Fox Connect Service' operates locally. Therefore, it is considered that part 2c should incorporate reference to the DRT to also ensure demand for this need is also taken into account.

3.12.7 Looking at part 2d of the policy, it is considered that the wording as proposed is very vague and suggests that contributions will be sought from development proposals coming forward to fund other services, which in turn can lead to wider complications. It is therefore considered that part 2d can be incorporated into part 2c of the policy as community based services.



3.12.8 In terms of part 2e of the policy, it is considered that flexibility should be applied to the provision of car clubs. This is on the basis that car clubs are more suitable for larger developments and will not be suitable or applicable to all schemes. Turning to the provision of EV charging points, the requirement for EV charging is an obligation under Building Regulations (Approved Document S) and it is therefore considered unnecessary to include this within the policy. However, if the provision of EV charging points is required to serve as a communal facility, then this should be specified in the policy. If communal EV charging facilities are required, it is worth noting that these are difficult to manage and assign. Therefore, unless a clear strategy is provided which sets out how a communal EV charging point can be secured and maintained, The Crane Estates do **not support** this.

3.12.9 Finally, looking at part 2f of the policy, it is considered that the requirement for impact on residual amenity is vague and fails to specify exactly what area this relates to. Therefore, The Crane Estates consider that this part of the policy needs to be more specific and specify whether residential amenity relates to noise etc. Policy DM06 as drafted is considered to be unsound and is not justified, as per the tests set out at paragraph 36 of the NPPF. Therefore, the below amendments are required in order to make the policy sound.

1.

- a) ensuring the safe, connected and convenient movement across the transport network, including bus passengers, cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders
- b) providing safe access, servicing and parking arrangements as defined in this policy and having regard to Highway Authority guidance and standards
- c) ensuring that additional traffic movements ~~are not detrimental~~ **do not cause an unacceptable impact** to highway safety or result in the residual cumulative impact, **following mitigation**, on the road network being severe

2.

- a) incorporate measures to facilitate and encourage safe access by cycle and on foot along with protection of, connection to and extension, where practicable, of existing pedestrian, cycle, and equestrian routes
- b) provide accessible cycle parking
- c) deliver public transport and **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)** enhancements where feasible to mitigate development impacts, including but not limited to bus routes, information and waiting facilities, **community based services**, and measures to encourage public transport use
- ~~d) where appropriate, contribute to provision for the transport needs of specific groups in the community, such as the elderly and those with disabilities~~
- e) ensure car parking provision sufficient for the location and type of development, and make provision for Car Club spaces **where suitable and EV charging points**
- f) mitigation for any adverse impact on residential amenity and air quality, especially in Air Quality Management Areas

3.13 Policy DM07: Managing Flood Risk

3.13.1 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF informs that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Paragraph 171 goes on to advise that strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources. Paragraph 173 then sets out that all Plans should apply a sequential, risk based approach to the location of development, taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change.



- 3.13.2 Policy DM07 states “*wherever possible, development should take place within Flood Zone 1. The Sequential Test and, where necessary, the Exceptions Test should be used to assess the suitability of proposed development*”.
- 3.13.3 In relation to the Site and its location within Flood Zone 1, policy DM07 requires a site specific Flood Risk Assessment to cover the following:
- a) Major development
 - b) Land with critical drainage problems
 - c) Land at increased flood risk in the future
 - d) Where a more vulnerable use is proposed on land which may be subject to sources of flooding other than rivers
 - e) Catchments that have experienced sewer flooding
- 3.13.4 The Crane Estates note the need for a Sequential Test where necessary and have no further comments to raise at this moment in time.

3.14 Policy DM08: Sustainable Drainage

- 3.14.1 Paragraph 182 of the NPPF requires applications which could affect drainage on or around the site to incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff and which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal.
- 3.14.2 Policy DM08 sets out that:
1. All development must promote an integrated approach to water management through planting and incorporating rainwater storage for reuse and irrigation.
 2. All major developments must incorporate SuDS and take account of the drainage hierarchy as follows (in order of priority):
 - a) store rainwater for later use for irrigation or non-potable purposes
 - b) promote natural infiltration with soakaways or permeable surfaces to recharge groundwater
 - c) use green roofs, rain gardens, or vegetated systems to hold and slowly release water
 - d) use engineered systems like underground tanks or ponds to temporarily store and control water flow
 - e) discharge to nearby rivers or streams where practicable, ensuring that any run-off does not negatively impact on the water quality of a nearby waterbody
 - f) discharge to surface water sewer
 - g) discharge to combined sewer only as a last resort in order to prevent overloading the sewer network
 3. The design and layout of the SuDS should prioritise nature based solutions and taking account of the hydrology of the site, must:
 - a) manage surface water close to its source and on the surface where feasible



- b) be designed to incorporate surface water management features as green and blue infrastructure wherever possible, maximising multifunctional benefits for biodiversity, amenity, cooling, and water quality
- c) use features that enhance the site design and sense of place and where it is incorporated in open space, provide a safe naturalised system without the need for fencing or barriers
- d) provide for the re-naturalisation of modified water courses where practical
- e) be located away from land affected by contamination that may pose an additional risk to groundwater or other waterbodies
- f) demonstrate that the peak rate of run-off over the lifetime of the development, allowing for climate change, is no greater for the developed site than it was for the undeveloped site and reduced wherever possible. Developments are required to achieve a 20% reduction in run-off rates compared to pre-development conditions to account for existing surface water runoff problems
- g) ensure that flooding would not occur to property in and adjacent to the development, in the event of an occurrence of a 1 in 100-year rainfall event (including an allowance for climate change) or in the event of local drainage system failure

3.14.3 As currently drafted, The Crane Estate do **not support** policy DM08.

3.14.4 Firstly, looking at part 1 of the policy, it is considered that the proposed approach is vague and fails to provide further details in relation rainwater storage. It is considered that rainwater storage could relate to either water butts or the provision of rainwater harvesting tanks. If the policy does seek to include the provision of rainwater harvesting tanks, regard will then need to be had to storage calculations and there being the possibility of an over provision of storage requirements. These comments also relate to part 2a of the policy.

3.14.5 Part 3f of the policy makes reference to peak run-off rates over the lifetime of a development and the need for developments to achieve a 20% reduction in run-off rates compared to pre-development conditions to account for existing surface water runoff problems. As currently drafted, it is unclear as to what return periods are being referenced to in respect of the 20% reduction in run-off rates. The wording of the policy needs to be more specific in this regard and advise how the 20% rate should be applied and what should be achieved. This is particularly crucial given the potential implications this can have on storage requirements. It is also unclear if the Council are suggesting whether brownfield sites would need to revert to greenfield sites and if a further 20% would then need to be applied, which would be seemingly onerous. Further to this, there are also practical implications associated with the 20% runoff rate, noting that discharge rates cannot be reduced to below 2 l/s due to blockage issues with the flow control devices.

3.14.6 Taking the above into account, The Crane Estate do **not support** policy DM08 as currently proposed and request that the policy is reviewed, with elements on rainwater storage and 20% runoff rates being specified further. It is considered that policy DM08 has not been positively prepared, is not justified or based on sound evidence, as per paragraph 36 of the NPPF. We therefore reserve the right to comment on this once further information is made available.

3.15 Policy DM09: Sustainable Construction and Climate Resilience

3.15.1 Paragraph 162 of the NPPF sets out that Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.

3.15.2 Policy DM09 informs that all development must:



Harborough Proposed Draft Local Plan 2020 – 2041 (Regulation 19 Consultation)

- a) minimise carbon emissions during construction, which may include use of low-carbon construction materials, and adopting energy efficient construction practices;
- b) where relevant, demonstrate that demolition of existing buildings is justified in comparison to their retention and re-use, and where buildings are retained, integrate measures to make these more energy and resource efficient in accordance with criteria 3 and 5 below;
- c) where demolition of existing buildings is required, demonstrate the reuse of demolition and construction waste;
- d) demonstrate the integration of passive design measures, including delivering cooling without increasing carbon emissions, such as through optimal building orientation, natural ventilation, solar shading and the use of thermal mass to regulate indoor temperatures;
- e) be supported by a water efficiency statement that outlines, in priority order, measures to reduce water consumption, reuse water, or offset its use and achieve minimum water efficiency equivalent to 110 litres per person per day for any residential use, or non-residential development to achieve at least 3 credits in the Wat01 Measure for water in the BREEAM New Construction standard; and
- f) Demonstrate how waste will be minimised during construction and during the operation of the development. Residential development.

All new-build residential developments must achieve at least a three star rating under the BRE Home Quality Mark scheme. A whole life-cycle assessment should be undertaken as part of this assessment for major development.

- 3.15.3 When reviewing policy DM09 it is considered that the wording includes no flexibility and fails to have regard to viability and individual development proposals. As such, The Crane Estate do **not support** the policy as currently drafted.
- 3.15.4 Further to the above, policy DM09 requires all new-build residential developments to achieve at least a three star rating under the BRE Home Quality Mark scheme. This is **not supported**. The BRE Home Quality Mark scheme is a **voluntary** certification scheme for new developments. To achieve the Home Quality Mark certification, new dwellings must exceed the requirements of established standards set out in Building Regulations. If a site is already meeting the requirements of Building Regulations, then there is no requirement in national policy for a site to go above and beyond this. The approach taken by the Council for all new build residential standards to meet this voluntary certification is onerous and has not been supported by any evidence. It is not considered reasonable to restrict the delivery of residential development when the BRE Home Quality Mark certification is a voluntary certification and exceeds Building Regulations. The requirement for BRE Home Quality Mark certification may not be suitable or practicable in parts of a development. On this basis, it is considered that policy DM09 has not been positively prepared and is not justified.
- 3.15.5 Taking the above into account, it is considered that the below recommendations are necessary to ensure that policy DM09 is sound and justified, as per the requirements of paragraph 36 of the NPPF. Therefore, draft policy DM09 should be amended as follows:

“All development ~~must~~ should aim to:

- g) minimise carbon emissions during construction, which may include use of low-carbon construction materials, and adopting energy efficient construction practices;
- h) where relevant, demonstrate that demolition of existing buildings is justified in comparison to their retention and re-use, and where buildings are retained, integrate measures to make these more energy and resource efficient in accordance with criteria 3 and 5 below;



- i) where demolition of existing buildings is required, demonstrate the reuse of demolition and construction waste;
- j) demonstrate the integration of passive design measures, including delivering cooling without increasing carbon emissions, such as through optimal building orientation, natural ventilation, solar shading and the use of thermal mass to regulate indoor temperatures;
- k) be supported by a water efficiency statement that outlines, in priority order, measures to reduce water consumption, reuse water, or offset its use and achieve minimum water efficiency equivalent to 110 litres per person per day for any residential use, or non-residential development to achieve at least 3 credits in the Wat01 Measure for water in the BREEAM New Construction standard; and
- l) Demonstrate how waste will be minimised during construction and during the operation of the development. Residential development.

~~All new build residential developments must achieve at least a three star rating under the BRE Home Quality Mark scheme. A whole life cycle assessment should be undertaken as part of this assessment for major development."~~

3.15.6 The Crane Estate therefore do **not support** the policy as currently drafted.

3.16 Policy DM10: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Protection and Enhancement

3.16.1 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

3.16.2 Policy DM10 informs that all qualifying development proposals must deliver at least a 10% measurable biodiversity net gain attribute to the development. The net gain for biodiversity should be calculated using Natural England's Biodiversity Metric. Biodiversity Net Gain should be provided onsite wherever possible. All development must contribute towards protecting and improving biodiversity and geodiversity by:

- a) protecting and enhancing priority species and their habitats
- b) including measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the district's flora and fauna
- c) protecting and enhancing green and blue infrastructure assets
- d) protecting riparian zones and watercourses by creating and enhancing undeveloped buffer zones alongside watercourses to ensure functional habitat corridors for wildlife
- e) protecting features and areas of geodiversity value and enhancing them to improve connectivity of habitats, amenity use, education and interpretation
- f) include appropriate measures to manage construction impacts by demonstrating how existing wildlife habitats supporting protected or priority species will be retained, safeguarded and managed during construction

3.16.3 Whilst The Crane Estate **support** the principle of the policy and securing a mandatory requirement of 10% BNG, it is considered that the policy as currently worded does not provide any flexibility and sets an absolute requirement. For example, part c) of the policy requires developments to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure assets. It is unlikely that the majority of developments will be able to fully comply with this requirement. Many development



sites require the removal of some trees or hedgerows to facilitate development due to constraints such as access or levels. As such, it is requested that flexibility is built into the policy to allow developments to be delivered even when they cannot meet all of the requirements set out in draft Policy DM10.

- 3.16.4 On account of the above, the following recommendations are made to amend the wording of draft Policy DM10 to ensure that it is sound and justified, as per the tests set out at paragraph 36 of the NPPF:

All qualifying development proposals must deliver ~~at least~~ a 10% measurable biodiversity net gain attributable to the development. The net gain for biodiversity should be calculated using Natural England's Biodiversity Metric.

All development ~~must~~ ~~should aim to~~ contribute towards protecting and improving biodiversity and geodiversity by:

- a) protecting and enhancing priority species and their habitats
- b) including measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the district's flora and fauna
- c) protecting and enhancing green and blue infrastructure assets
- d) protecting riparian zones and watercourses by creating and enhancing undeveloped buffer zones alongside watercourses to ensure functional habitat corridors for wildlife
- e) protecting features and areas of geodiversity value and enhancing them to improve connectivity of habitats, amenity use, education and interpretation
- f) include appropriate measures to manage construction impacts by demonstrating how existing wildlife habitats supporting protected or priority species will be retained, safeguarded and managed during construction.

3.17 Policy DM12: Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities

- 3.17.1 Paragraph 98 of the NPPF sets out that in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
- 3.17.2 Policy DM12 informs that development proposals that protect, retain or enhance the provision, quality or accessibility of existing community, education and cultural facilities will be supported.
- 3.17.3 As drafted, The Crane Estate **broadly support** the wording of the policy and the support to proposals that enhance the quality of existing community and education facilities. On this basis, The Crane Estate wish to emphasise the development proposals at Land South of Dunton Road, Broughton Astley and its capacity to provide recreational space or community facilities.
- 3.17.4 The Crane Estate therefore have no further comments to make on this policy at this moment in time but reserve the right to comment further as the draft Local Plan progresses.



4 Sustainability Appraisal

4.1 Sustainability Appraisal

4.1.1 As part of the supporting evidence base for the draft Local Plan, a Sustainability Appraisal (February 2025) has been prepared by LUC on behalf of Harborough District Council.

4.1.2 The Sustainability Appraisal lists a series of objectives which include:

- 1) Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and develop a managed response to the effects of climate change
- 2) Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity
- 3) To support efficient use of resources, including soil
- 4) To conserve and enhance the historic environment including the setting of heritage features
- 5) Protect and improve air quality
- 6) Safeguard and improve health, safety and wellbeing
- 7) Achieve social inclusion and equality for all
- 8) To provide access to services, facilities and education
- 9) Provide affordable, sustainable, good-quality housing for all
- 10) Support the sustainable growth of the economy and provide employment opportunities
- 11) Reduce waste generation and increase levels of reuse and recycling
- 12) To manage and reduce flood risk from all sources and to protect the quality and quantity of water resources
- 13) Promote sustainable transport use and active travel
- 14) To conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape

4.1.3 The following scoring system is then used to score sites:

Symbol and Colour Coding	Description
++	Significant positive effect likely.
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely.
+	Minor positive effect likely.
+/-	Mixed minor effects likely.
++/--	Mixed significant effects likely.
-	Minor negative effect likely.
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely.
--	Significant negative effect likely.
0	Negligible effect likely.
?	Likely effect uncertain.



- 4.1.4 Land South of Dunton Road (Site ID - 12209/ 8223) scores the following in relation to the above objectives:
1. Negligible effect likely
 2. Minor negative effective likely / likely effect uncertain
 3. Significant negative effect / likely effect uncertain
 4. Significant negative effective likely / likely effect uncertain
 5. Negligible effect likely
 6. Minor positive effect
 7. Negligible effect likely
 8. Minor positive effect likely / likely effect uncertain
 9. Minor positive effect likely
 10. Minor positive effect likely
 11. Negligible effect likely
 12. Significant negative effect likely / negligible effect likely
 13. Minor positive effect likely
 14. Significant negative effect likely / likely effect uncertain
- 4.1.5 In accordance with Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, policies set out in Local Plans must be subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). For these documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC), as transposed into law in England by the SEA Regulations and which remains in force despite the UK exiting the European Union in January 2020.
- 4.1.6 Turning to the assessment of the Site, it is positive to see that the Site mostly consists of positive, negligible or uncertain likely effects.
- 4.1.7 With regards to SA Objective 3 (To support the efficient use of resources, including soils), SA paragraph 5.10 states that the majority of land in Harborough is Grade 3 agricultural land, with smaller areas of both Grade 2 and Grade 4 land. From review of Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification Map East Midlands Region (ALC005), our Site is classified as Grade 3 (Good to Moderate).
- 4.1.8 SA Paragraph 5.11 states that due to the rural nature of Harborough District. 163 residential site options are expected to have significant negative effects on this SA objective as they are greenfield land and contain a significant proportion ($\geq 25\%$) of Grade 1, 2 and/or 3 agricultural land. As such, rather than reviewing the Sites as a collective impact, it would be prudent to assess each site option individually in comparison with other sites to assess the level of effect. There is a recognised local housing need in the District (plus an additional 123 homes per year towards Leicester's unmet housing need). As such, it will not be possible to avoid building on agricultural land if this housing need is to be met. This is also recognised by the Council at paragraph 5.13 who conclude that that "given the nature of Harborough and the lack of brownfield site options, significant effects on this objective may be unable to be avoided".

- 4.1.9 Indeed, the Settlement Hierarchy Paper (December 2023) specifically notes that brownfield land opportunities in Broughton Astley are very limited. In this regard, it is considered that the scoring of significant negative effect likely should be amended to minor negligible effect.
- 4.1.10 In terms of SA Objective 4 (to conserve and enhance the historic environment including the setting of heritage features), the Site is not the subject of any statutory heritage designations. The nearest designated heritage asset is located approximately 240 metres to the south of the site (Stemborough Mill, Grade II Listed Building). The nearest Conservation Area is situated approximately 1.3 kilometres to the south, at Leire.
- 4.1.11 As per normal application procedure, investigation and mitigation can ensure any heritage assets are suitably incorporated into a sensitive design. Overall, there are no constraints on the Site from a heritage perspective which cannot be mitigated against and overcome as part of the proposals. The SA recognises that this will depend on the design of the development. For this reason, The Crane Estate does not consider that SA4 should be scored as a potential 'significant negative effect likely' and instead this should be reassessed as a potential 'minor negative effect' or 'uncertain'.
- 4.1.12 With regard to SA Objective 12 (To manage and reduce flood risk from all sources and to protect the quality and quantity of water resources), the Government's Flood Map for Planning indicates the Site largely falls entirely in Flood Zone 1 Low Probability – land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding from rivers and sea). The Site is also at very low risk of surface water flooding. The Site is therefore considered to be suitable for residential development. The site's topography can be used to inform the location of attenuation areas as part of the drainage strategy for the proposals.
- 4.1.13 As such, the Crane Estate considers that the Sustainability Appraisal should amend the scoring from a potential 'significant negative effect likely' to a negligible effect. The Site is therefore considered to be suitable for residential development from a flood risk perspective.
- 4.1.14 In terms of the landscape, SA Objection 14 (To conserve and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape), given our Site is on greenfield land in the countryside, we agree that there will be an effect on the landscape by virtue of change. However, change does not automatically amount to a negative impact. The development will be designed to minimize impacts on the surrounding landscape. Therefore, the score should therefore be reviewed in the context of our below comments which account for scheme design.
- 4.1.15 We note that a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is submitted alongside these representations (**Appendix D**). This concluded the following:
- Development of the Site will form a logical extension and provide a sympathetic settlement edge to the existing settlement of Broughton Astley. Development will be set back behind a landscape buffer along the edges of the Site that will be reinforced by additional native landscape planting. Consideration to the nature of the landscape and potential views means the Development has the potential to be locally characteristic with built form set within a robust multi-functional Green Infrastructure framework.
 - Development of the Site has the potential to significantly increase and enhance hedgerow, tree and woodland cover within the Site, notably along historical field boundaries within and to the Site boundaries, in accordance with published character guidance and best practice. Further to this the proposed sustainable urban drainage proposals will introduce a series of waterbodies that will provide new and varied habits and increase the biodiversity of the Site. There is also potential for the built form to respond to the local vernacular which could provide reinforcement of sense of place and local identity.
- 4.1.16 Overall, in landscape and visual terms there is potential for a sensitive and sympathetic development of the Site, that would be a logical extension of the existing settlement in relation to its distinctive topographic setting; would minimise harm to landscape character and views;



and would provide potential for extensive locally characteristic and important multi-functional Green Infrastructure.

4.1.17 In account of the above scores afforded to the Land South of Dunton Road in relation to BNG, soil, historic environment, flood risk and landscape, the Crane Estate do **not support** the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal and recommend that the following amendments are made in order for the Sustainability Appraisal to be considered sound and justified, as per paragraph 36 of the NPPF:

- The Site should score minor negative effect in relation to SA Objective 3 on the basis that the wider Leicestershire area is rural in nature and therefore to ensure that the District Council meet their development requirements, it will be necessary to develop agricultural land
- The Site should score negligible effect in relation to SA Objective 12 given the Site is located in Flood Zone 1 and proposes a suitable drainage strategy to mitigate any surface water flooding onsite.
- The Site should score minor negative effect likely in relation to SA Objective 14 on the basis that the proposals will retain strong landscaping buffers along the Site boundaries and also propose large portions of open space and green corridors onsite.



5 Policies Map

5.1 Policies Map

- 5.1.1 The Harborough Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation is accompanied by an updated Policies Map which illustrates site allocations and designations within the District.

The Site is not subject to any formal designations. As outlined within this report, The Crane Estate consider it necessary for the Council to allocate additional sites within the District for housing, with the Site representing an unconstrained and deliverable option in a sustainable location. We ask this Site is considered to meet the District's and Broughton Astley's housing needs.



6 Summary and Conclusions

6.1 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 The Crane Estate support Harborough District Council in undertaking the review of the Local Plan. As detailed above, The Crane Estate consider that a higher housing figure should be provided within the Local Plan to address Harborough's needs, Leicester and Leicestershire's unmet needs, and the affordability needs within the District. The Crane Estate also wish to raise on this basis that additional sites will be required for allocation in order to meet these needs. It is considered that the Site AT Dunton Road, Broughton Astley has the capacity to deliver up to 280 dwellings via a comprehensive masterplan and one that is of good design. This can be delivered in a phased and managed way. The provision of an additional allocation of up to 280 dwellings will help meet significant market and affordable housing needs in Harborough District and Broughton Astley, as raised within these representations.
- 6.1.2 The Crane Estate seeks to engage with Harborough District Council and Broughton Astley Parish Council, as well as LCC Highways to discuss the Site and development proposals. A pre-application request will be submitted to Harborough District Council in due course to further discuss the Site proposals.
- 6.1.3 Within these representations, The Crane Estate have recommended amendments to a number of the draft policies to ensure that a justified and sound Local Plan for Harborough District Council is progressed. We trust that these comments and recommendations will assist Harborough District Council in developing their Plan positively. We reserve our right to comment further on these additional documents and changes once published. We would be pleased to discuss these comments and recommendations with Harborough District Council in further detail, potentially as part of pre-application discussions.



Appendix A Site Location Plan



Appendix B Site Concept Masterplan



Appendix C Land South of Dunton Road Vision Document



Appendix D Landscape and Visual Appraisal



Appendix E Transport Technical Note

