

**Representation from the Director of Planning and Regeneration of Harborough District Council to the resumed examination hearings into the Charnwood Local Plan: 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022.**

**Representation to Inspector's Matter No.10, Question No.1**

**MATTER 10: LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS**

**10.1 What is the up-to-date position with the signing of the SoCG (Exam 43) by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities (including the County Council)? Are there any implications for Plan preparation by the authorities and if so, what are they?**

**9<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

1. The longstanding partnership of Leicester and Leicestershire Councils have prepared a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) that sets out a framework for the distribution and apportionment of unmet housing and employment need from the City of Leicester.
2. This SoCG is proceeding through each partner Council's individually tailored governance processes. Some partner Councils have already approved the SoCG and have signed it. Other partners are yet to conclude their governance processes and have not yet signed it.
3. There is nothing unusual about this given that there are nine separate local authorities involved (including the City and County Councils) and each have separate governance requirements: some of which are shorter or longer than others.
4. In the case of the Council I represent, Harborough District Council, there exists a longer process than in some other Councils. In short, the road map of the process is that there is to be a briefing of all members of the Council. This will be followed by the following steps:
  - Consideration of the SoCG by the Communities Scrutiny Panel,
  - Consideration of the SoCG by the Cabinet,
  - Consideration of the SoCG by Council.
5. It is anticipated that the Council meeting where members will make their final decision on the SoCG will be held in January 2023.
6. It is also anticipated that the officer recommendation to members will be to approve and sign the SoCG.
7. Clearly, it will be a matter for members to approve the SoCG, and subsequently sign it, and it is not possible to give a commitment either way on this, as it would not be for any of the partner Councils. The democratic process must run its course and cannot be pre-empted or predetermined.
8. It is important to stress that an integral part of the governance process set out at paragraph 4 above will be to make clear to Councillors the role and importance of the SoCG to Local Plan making.

9. So, in summary Harborough District Council has a clearly laid out governance process for the SoCG. Councillors will be guided through that process in the weeks and months ahead.
10. I wish to assure the Inspectors that the SoCG governance process will be robust and will be aimed at culminating in a recommendation from officers for Councillors to approve the document, and for it then to be signed by the authority.
11. In the light of this scenario, it is considered that if there are any implications for plan preparation associated with this matter, then those implications are positive from a Harborough District Council perspective.
12. I would wish the Inspectors to consider inviting me to participate in the debate on this matter at the resumed hearings.

**David C. Atkinson**

**9<sup>th</sup> September 2022**