

CABINET - 10th June 2021

Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration Lead Member: Councillor Bailey

Part A

ITEM 6 PRE-SUBMISSION CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN (2021-2037)

Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the publication of the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) version of the Charnwood Local Plan (2021-2037) and its supporting documents for public consultation and to recommend that Council submit the Local Plan and its amended supporting documents to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.

Recommendations

1. That the Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan (2021-2037) and Policies Map, contained in Appendix A to this report, be approved as the Cabinet's preferred planning strategy for Charnwood 2021-2037.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration to make minor amendments to Appendix A including the insertion of illustrations to aid the interpretation of the local plan, prior to publication.
3. That the Consultation Plan set out in Appendix G be approved.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration to revise the Consultation Plan set out in Appendix G.
5. That the Pre-Submission Local Plan, Policies Map, Sustainability Appraisal Report, Habitat Regulations Assessment, Statement of Consultation and the other supporting documents contained in the Appendices of this report be published for public consultation for at least six weeks, in accordance with the consultation plan recommended in 3 above
6. That the Head of Planning and Regeneration be given delegated authority in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning to update the Statement of Consultation in light of the representations received to the Pre-Submission Local Plan and to make amendments to the supporting documents to improve the legibility and/or to respond to factual inaccuracies identified in those representations before it is submitted to the Secretary of State.
7. That subject to amendments made in 2 and 6 above, that it be recommended to Council that the Pre-Submission Local Plan, Sustainability Appraisal Report, Habitat Regulations Assessment, Statement of Consultation and the other supporting documents set out in the Appendices of this report are approved for consultation and submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public, and that delegated authority be given to the Head of

Planning and Regeneration to submit additional background documents to support the examination of the Local Plan and make any minor factual, typographical or graphical amendments prior to submission.

- 8 That it be recommended to Council that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Group Leader Plans, Policies and Place Making to accept a request from the Planning Inspector to make main modifications and to propose modifications during the Examination as may be required.

Reasons

1. To ensure that the Pre-Submission Local Plan (strategy, policies and policies map) are subject to public consultation under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
2. To allow minor corrections and amendments to be made in a timely manner prior to publication.
3. To demonstrate compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement (2021).
4. To ensure that any changes required to the proposed dates or methods for consultation, arising from public health measures or practical considerations, are made in a timely manner.
5. To comply with Regulations 19 and 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
6. To ensure that the Statement of Consultation is updated in light of the consultation undertaken on the Pre-Submission Local Plan and that the supporting documents can be updated in light of the consultation responses before submission in a timely manner before it is submitted to the Secretary of State, as required under Regulation 19 and 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
7. To ensure that the local plan and supporting documents can be submitted to the Secretary of State under Section 20(3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
8. To ensure that officers have authority to respond to proposals for main modifications made by the Inspector during the examination under S20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and propose modifications during the examination hearings to assist the Inspector.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Council is required to review its Local Plan at least every five years in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework

(NPPF). The Council's currently adopted development plan comprises the Charnwood Core Strategy 2011 to 2028 (adopted 2015) and the Saved Policies of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991 to 2006 (adopted 2004). These local plans are older than five years and now need to be updated.

When the new Local Plan is adopted, it will replace the current plan and play an important role in delivering the Council's vision and the key aims of the Corporate Strategy. A new Local Plan will ensure that policies are in place that provide a robust plan-led development strategy to 2037 that meets the Borough's development needs and coordinates the delivery of associated infrastructure.

Government policy for local plan preparation is contained in the NPPF with additional guidance provided in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF outlines a presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 11 which makes it clear that for plan making, opportunities to meet the Borough's development needs should be positively sought and sets the principle that plans should meet objectively assessed needs as a minimum, unless:

- policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole.

The NPPF reminds us that plans should be based on relevant, up-to-date evidence and supported throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal. Plans should provide a vision and address housing, economic, social and environmental needs. They should achieve sustainable development; be prepared positively in an aspirational but deliverable way; be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement; be clearly written and unambiguous; accessible; and avoid unnecessary duplication.

The local plan must include strategic policies to address the priorities for the development and use of land in the Borough in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The NPPF defines strategic policies as those that set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for (para 20):

- housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The NPPF states that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities (para 22). Broad locations for development should be indicated on a key diagram, and land-use designations and allocations identified on a policies map. It goes on to explain there is a requirement to maintain effective cooperation on

strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries through a Duty to Cooperate and that statements of common ground may be used to document how these issues are being addressed and progressed (para 24).

The NPPF also sets out the need to significantly boost the supply of housing and requires strategic policies to be informed by a local housing need assessment using the standard method in national planning guidance (para 59).

The Council has prepared the local plan, in consultation with stakeholders and the community. Initial work to prepare a new Local Plan began in 2016 and in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) 2012, the borough council undertook a consultation in the summer of 2016 to understand and engage with interested parties on the future for Charnwood, the scope of the plan and what it should contain. In 2018 a discussion paper, titled 'Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood' was consulted on that explored the scale of development needed in the Borough, the key issues and opportunities that need to be taken into account and set out the options for the overall development strategy.

The Council most recently undertook consultation on the draft Local Plan, which was approved for consultation by Cabinet on 17th October 2019 (minute 38 19/20 refers). The consultation was held in November/December 2019 and a total of 425 responses were received. The Council produced a Statement of Consultation (March 2020) which responded to all comments submitted on the draft local plan. The Pre-Submission Local Plan that is the subject of this report has been informed by comments received throughout the stages of consultation including the draft local plan consultation. A summary of the consultation undertaken on the plan to date is provided in Appendix D to Part B of this report and will need to be updated in response to consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

The Local Plan and supporting documents have been scrutinised at various times during its preparation:

- Local Development Scheme (Local Plan Programme)
 - Pre-Decision Scrutiny & Cabinet each March
- Scope of Local Plan
 - Policy Scrutiny Group, 27 Sept 2016 – scope and relationship to Strategic Growth Plan
- Towards a Local Plan – Issues and Options
 - Policy Scrutiny Group: 26 Sept 2017 – planned consultation and relationship with Neighbourhood Plans
 - Policy Scrutiny Group: 24 April 2018 – timetabling changes
 - Policy Scrutiny Group: 10 July 2018 – consultation and its effectiveness
- Draft Local Plan
 - Pre-Decision Scrutiny: 14 October 2019 & Cabinet: 17 October 2019
 - Scrutiny Commission: 10 February 2020 – Consultation feedback and how the responses would be used to inform the Local Plan

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

A Local Development Scheme (LDS) is considered by cabinet on an annual basis. This document sets out the project plan and milestones for local plan preparation.

The current LDS approved in April 2021 shows the Pre-Submission Local Plan being consulted on in July 2021 and submitted in October 2021.

Cabinet is asked to consider approving the Pre-Submission Local Plan and Policies Map, contained in Appendix A, for consultation and to refer it and its supporting documents to Council with a recommendation that, following the consultation, it be submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public. If the Inspector finds the plan to be sound it will need to be formally adopted by Council.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

The cost of preparing the Charnwood Local Plan in 2021/22 can be met within budget.

Risk Management

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Delay in consulting on the Pre-Submission Local Plan would delay its eventual submission, which could result in developers submitting applications for planning permission without the benefit of an overarching strategy.	Likely (3)	Serious (3)	Moderate (9)	To ensure adequate resources are available to meet the indicative timetable for the Local Plan. To work with members to ensure they understand the implications of growth and are in a position to take difficult decisions at Council.
Submission Local Plan documents fail the test of soundness at examination due to new evidence or national policy changes that emerge through consultation	Likely (3)	Serious (3)	Moderate (9)	Consider delaying submission to the Secretary of state to allow the council to revisit its proposals if it considers new evidence or policy suggest there are fundamental soundness issues

Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment of the Local Plan has been prepared and is attached as Appendix C. This assessment has built on the previous assessment made for the Draft Charnwood Local Plan (minute 38 2019/20 refers) and equalities recommendations made have been incorporated into the plan in accordance with the public sector equality duty.

Crime and Disorder

There are no crime and disorder issues arising directly from the report.

Sustainability

There is a legal requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment during the preparatory stages of a local plan and submit a final report to the Secretary of State when the Plan is formally submitted. These reports are prepared by independent consultants to ensure an objective challenge to policy writing and to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the local plan from the outset. This is an integral part of the plan making process and will help to ensure that the plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development. The Sustainability Appraisal Report including the Habitat Regulations Assessment (May 2021) is available in Appendix B.

Key Decision: Yes

Background Papers:

- Charnwood Local Plan Evidence Base:
<https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/evidencebase>
- National Planning Policy Framework:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Planning Practice Guidance:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- Local Development Scheme (April 2021):
https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/local_development_scheme_april_2021/Final%20Local%20Development%20Scheme%202021.pdf

Officers to contact

Richard Bennett
Head of Planning and Regeneration
(01509) 634763
richard.bennett@charnwood.gov.uk

Clare Clarke
Plans, Policies and Place-Making Group Leader
(01509) 634767
clare.clarke@charnwood.gov.uk

Part B

Background

1. The Pre-Submission version of the Charnwood Local Plan (2020-2037), once adopted, will replace the Charnwood Core Strategy (2015) and Saved Policies of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004) and provide the basis for determining planning applications in Charnwood, alongside adopted Neighbourhood Plans. The Pre-Submission Local Plan will respond to the strategy in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (2018) and take account of changes to national planning policy and guidance, including the standard method for assessing local housing need.
2. The Local Plan, contained in Appendix A to this report, includes strategic and detailed policies and sets out a vision and a framework for the future pattern, scale and quality of development in the Borough. It addresses needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities, and infrastructure as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places that contribute to healthy communities. The Policies Map provides a spatial context to the plan.
3. The Local Plan contains the proposed housing, employment and retail allocations to deliver sustainable growth to meet the Borough's identified requirements and the planning policies against which planning applications will be determined. A summary of the key requirements and policies set out in the plan is provided later in this report. The Local Plan will support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy 2020-2024 and seeks to deliver local priorities that are informed by a detailed evidence base.
4. Part A of this report summarises the key requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to plan making. The NPPF and the Government's Planning Practice Guidance also set out topic specific requirements for policy making. The NPPF sets out the four tests of soundness against which the Government appointed Planning Inspector will determine whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, the Duty to Cooperate, and whether it is 'sound' (para 35):
 - a. **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - b. **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - c. **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

d. **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.

5. The Local Plan is underpinned by a wide range of detailed evidence base reports and studies assessing various topic areas. Further consultation documents have been published to help engage the community and interested parties and to explain policy development. All evidence and consultations are available online on the council's website. Each principal stage of local plan preparation has been subject to sustainability appraisal and equalities impact assessment and final reports for each have been prepared and attached as Appendix B and C. The Local Plan has been amended in response to recommendations from the Equalities Impact Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal Reports, and these amendments are detailed in their respective reports.
6. Significant work has been undertaken to test the development strategy using Leicestershire County Council's integrated transport model (PRTM). This work has served to highlight the existing transport issues that are already obvious on the Borough's transport network, including in and around Loughborough and most particularly on the A46 (which is part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), for which Highways England is responsible).
7. The modelling work also highlights that the scale of housing growth required to be delivered through the new Local Plan will further impact on these areas; in particular, it shows that the failing functionality of the SRN is likely to lead to undesirable consequences elsewhere on the local road network. In practice, the failing functionality of the SRN is likely to have a material impact on the Borough's ability to grow successfully in the future, unless the issues can be appropriately addressed. The situation is compounded by the potential cumulative impacts of growth across the wider Housing Market Area, particularly in the city of Leicester and Blaby District. There is therefore a need to work collaboratively and meaningfully with Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Highways England and other HMA partners to establish an agreed position on the SRN impacts and agreement on how these impacts can be addressed by partners. To this end, the local plan makes clear in the Infrastructure section this collaboration is necessary and sets out policies to secure financial contributions from development where this is necessary, reasonable in scale and kind and directly related to the growth being provided.
8. The Local Plan has been prepared in consultation with partners and a series of Statements of Common Ground have been produced to evidence this under our Duty to Cooperate (see below). The policies of the Local Plan have been drafted to be consistent with NPPF. For these reasons, it is considered that the Local Plan meets the four tests of soundness and therefore is ready for consultation prior to being submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.
9. The Statement of Consultation contained in Appendix D provides a summary of the consultation carried out for the emerging local plan since 2016 and responses given to comments made on the draft Local Plan consultation from 2019.
10. The Local Plan that is published for pre-submission consultation should be the Plan that the Council ultimately wishes to submit to the Secretary of State. The

Council must submit a Local Plan that it believes to be sound. Whilst minor modifications to the plan are possible through the examination process, any major modifications that substantially affect the strategy itself will need to be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal process and be subjected to consultation before it is submitted to the Secretary of State.

Proposals

Local Plan

11. The next formal step in the process of preparing the local plan is the publication of a pre-submission draft local plan for consultation. This version of the plan should be the one that the Council would wish to adopt if there are no fundamental objections to it during formal consultation that affect its soundness. The emphasis of consultation on this 'pre-submission' stage of the plan is different to earlier stages in that views are sought on the soundness of the plan rather than inviting choices to be made between alternative options. This is an important distinction and one that reinforces the requirement that the pre-submission plan should 'be the best and final offer'. The views of the public, stakeholders and partners will therefore be invited on whether they believed the plan to be 'sound'. The local plan and the representations received will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.
12. The Pre-Submission Local Plan takes its lead from the Draft Local Plan approved by Cabinet in 2019 and the representations received on it and further evidence gathered since. It sets out the development strategy and planning policies that will be used to guide development and determine planning applications up to 2037. The plan contains policies covering a range of topics to address the plan-making requirements and local priorities. A summary of each policy topic area is provided below:

Vision and Objectives. The plan sets out the Borough's key challenges and priorities and establishes a vision for Charnwood in 2037. The vision sets out an ambition for Charnwood to be one of the most desirable places to live, work and visit in the East Midlands and also local economic, environmental, regeneration, and infrastructure priorities. The objectives set out the actions to be taken to achieve the vision and have informed the preparation of policies in the Local Plan.

Scale and Distribution of Growth – the Development Strategy. The plan establishes a development strategy of urban concentration and intensification with some growth dispersed, with the most environmentally sensitive areas to be protected, such as Green Wedges, Areas of Local Separation and the Countryside. The plan establishes a hierarchy of settlements based on their role, function and capability to support new development. The plan identifies Limits to Development boundaries to support sustainable development within local communities.

In terms of new homes, the plan has a housing requirement of 17,776 new homes up to 2037 and makes provision for at least 19,461 new homes to achieve flexibility in delivery. A topic paper has been prepared to explain how the homes have been distributed through the hierarchy. Housing growth is proposed to be distributed across the borough as follows:

Settlement hierarchy	Number of homes	% of homes
Leicester Urban Area (Birstall, Syston & Thurmaston)	7,358	38%
Loughborough Urban Centre	6,073	31%
Shepshed Urban Area	2,331	12%
Service Centres (Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby)	2,747	14%
Other Settlements	934	5%
Small Villages & Hamlets	18	0%
Total	19,461	100%

Design. The plan includes a policy on high quality design which will ensure that the delivery of growth will respond to local distinctiveness and the principles of good design set out in the policy.

Housing. The plan allocates sites for housing to meet the identified housing need. Policies include requirements for:

- a mix of house types, tenures and sizes based on evidence such as local housing need;
- provision for older and disabled people including requiring 10% of new market homes on major developments to meet wheelchair user optional standards;
- all new dwellings to meet the minimum internal space standards set out in the nationally described space standards;
- 30% affordable housing on greenfield sites and 10% affordable housing on brownfield sites; and the delivery of affordable housing through rural exception sites;
- supporting self-build and custom housebuilding;
- minimising the concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation; and
- supporting purpose-built student accommodation.

Employment. The plan provides for up to 81.8 hectares of employment land up to 2037 and includes existing commitments for 73 hectares of land to support Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park and the associated knowledge-based sector. The plan sets out support for a range of economic sectors to meet the Borough's employment needs and established protective designations for existing employment sites. The plan also supports rural economic development including for business growth, agriculture and tourism.

Town Centres and Community Facilities. The plan sets out a hierarchy of centres commensurate with their role as the social and economic focal points for communities. Policies seek to focus main town centre uses within centres whilst supporting widening local economies, attractive walkable centres and avoiding concentrations of hot food takeaways. The plan makes provision for up to 4,500sqm of comparison retail (non-food) floor space at the Baxter Gate/ Pinfold Gate Opportunity Site, Loughborough. The plan also supports the protection and enhancement of community facilities.

Environment. The plan sets out protective policies to support the Borough's built and natural environment. Policies include requirements for:

- protecting the Borough's distinctive landscape;
- supporting the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and National Forest;
- supporting the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor;
- protecting Green Wedges and Areas of Local Separation from inappropriate development;
- conserving and enhancing designated ecological and geological sites, including a requirement for 10% net gain;
- supporting native tree planting in the Borough;
- conserving, protecting and enhancing historic environment assets;
- thresholds for the provision of different types of open space, sports and recreation facilities and the protection of existing such facilities;
- supporting the provision of indoor sporting facilities; and
- protecting air quality.

Climate Change. The plan sets out support for renewable and low carbon energy installations, subject to environmental impacts being fully addressed, including identifying suitable areas for wind turbine installation on the policies map. The plan sets out support for sustainable construction methods including energy efficiency. It includes water and waste reduction requirements which should be demonstrated as part of all developments. The plan sets out the principles for addressing flood risk and incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems. The plan supports a modal shift in transport use towards active travel and public transport and establishes the requirement for electric vehicle charge points for residential and non-residential sites.

Infrastructure. The plan sets out requirements for the provision of infrastructure to support development, including making provision for five new primary schools ; ensuring development is supported by appropriate transport mitigation; establishing car parking standards in accordance with Highways Authority standards and ensuring development provides for improvements to health care capacity .

Place Based Policies. The plan sets out policies for individual localities, in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, to ensure that development takes account of specific local priorities. This includes policies to specifically guide development in the Leicester Urban Area; Loughborough; Shepshed; Service Centres; Other Settlements and the Countryside. Each of the three Sustainable Urban Extensions have a dedicated policy that establish detailed development requirements, as does the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park.

13. The Local Plan contained in Appendix A is considered the most appropriate strategy for Charnwood in light of the evidence.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule

14. Appendix E contains the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule. We have worked closely with those public and private sector partners who have responsibilities for infrastructure delivery to prepare the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Schedule sets out the key infrastructure that will be required to deliver the local plan and the expected costs. The Council will need to continue developing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and keep it updated.

The Duty to Co-operate

15. The Duty to Cooperate requires local authorities to work with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies in preparing their local plans it requires 'effective and ongoing joint working' to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.
16. Attached in Appendix F is a report setting out the measures taken to ensure we have cooperated with other strategic policy making authorities including Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and other Leicestershire councils. A Statement of Common Ground has been prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities, guided by the Strategic Planning Group and Member Advisory Group to support the Charnwood Local Plan process.

Consultation

17. The Cabinet approved a revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in November 2020 (minute 55 2020/21 refers). This explains what is required in terms of consultation at this stage in the local plan's preparation. Following the requirement of the SCI a consultation plan has been prepared and is attached as Appendix G.

Next Steps

18. Cabinet is being asked to recommend to Council that the local plan and its supporting documents be published for consultation and then submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination. If members are minded to approve the recommendations, a six-week public consultation will be undertaken on the Pre-Submission Local Plan, as set out in Appendix G, which is in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Responses made to the consultation will be summarised and submitted along with the local plan to the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulations 20 and 22.
19. Once the plan has been submitted, the examination will formally commence. A Programme Officer will need to be appointed before the submission of the Local Plan to manage the examination process and the Planning Inspectorate will contact the Council to confirm the Planning Inspector who has been appointed to the Charnwood Local Plan.
20. The Inspector will do preliminary assessment of the plan to see if there are any fundamental flaws in respect of soundness or legal compliance and may write to the local planning authority if there are any major concerns. A failure under the Duty to Cooperate at this stage cannot be retrospectively addressed and would require the council to halt the examination process and go back a stage.
21. The following programme is taken from the Planning Inspectorate's examination procedure guide (February 2021), which is available on their website here: http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/pins/dpd_procedure_guide.pdf

- A pre hearing meeting will be held within 8 weeks of submission (and at least 6 weeks before hearing sessions start)
- Hearing sessions will commence from week 14 after submission.

22. Officers will respond to requests for information from the Inspector throughout the examination process and will also be invited by the Inspector to accept main modifications to make the plan sound under s20(7C) of the Act. These are changes that materially affect the policies and are required to make the plan sound and legally compliant. Officers are also able to put forward modifications to assist the Inspector during the examination hearings. The Inspector will require the local planning authority to consult on all proposed main modifications and any consequential changes to the Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment. The Inspector's report will only be issued once the consultation on the main modifications is complete and the Inspector has considered the representations received on these.

23. The hearing sessions may take between 12 - 18 working days depending on the matters the Inspector wishes to examine. After the hearing sessions the Inspector will retire to write the Report. The examination formally closes upon the issuing of a report to the Council. If Council are minded to approve the modified Local Plan then it will become part of the Development Plan replacing the Core Strategy and the saved policies of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan. If the Council do not to approve the recommendations in the Inspector's report then the plan must be returned to the Draft Local Plan stage.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan (2021-2037) and Policies Map
- Appendix B – Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment
- Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix D – Statement of Consultation
- Appendix E – Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule
- Appendix F – Duty to Cooperate Topic Paper
- Appendix G – Consultation Plan