

## Comments Form



Cannock Chase District Council is consulting on its Local Plan Review (Preferred Options) document and the Sustainability Appraisal Report. We would like to hear your views on these documents.

You can view the Local Plan Review at [www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy) and evidence base documents via:

<http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base-documents-websites>. We would like to receive your comments by the 4:45pm on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2021

### PRIVACY NOTICE

The comments form is set out in two parts. Please read the information below carefully.

**PART 1:** In order for your comments to be taken into account please provide your contact details on Part 1 of this form. Your address and contact details will not be shared with anyone else and will be protected. You can decide whether to not to be added to our planning policy consultation database (see Question a) on Part 1). By requesting your details to be added to the planning policy consultation database you are providing your consent for us to retain your personal information so we can keep you up to date with progress on the local plan and other planning policy consultations. Our consultation database is held confidentially by the Planning Policy team and is not shared with anyone else. We will retain your details on record until you a) request that we update them b) you unsubscribe or c) we have evidence that the contact is no longer active for example returned letters or email 'bounce-back'. You can update your preferences by emailing [planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk) or writing to Planning Policy at the address on this form.

**PART 2:** Please provide your name and comments on Part 2 of this form (name must be the same as that entered on Part 1). Please note that your views will not be confidential and will be made publicly available. Only your name (or organisation name, if applicable) will be attributable publicly. If you are representing someone else you MUST declare that you have their consent to do so or else we will not be able to count their response as being valid (see Question b) on Part 1). Once processed, your comments will be used to help formulate policy and therefore will not be able to be withdrawn. Any comments received which are considered to be inflammatory, offensive or otherwise inappropriate will be rejected and will not be published.

Cannock Chase Council is the data controller and will only use your personal information for the purposes of informing decisions related to our planning policy work and keeping you up to date on the local plan and other planning policy consultations where you have requested. A copy of our full Privacy Notice is available to view at [www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PrivacyNotice](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PrivacyNotice) or hard copies are available on request to the Planning Policy team (contact details below).

**Please return your completed comments forms by the closing date via email to [planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk) or by post to the following address;**

Planning Policy  
Cannock Chase District Council  
Civic Centre  
PO BOX 28  
Beecroft Road  
Cannock  
Staffordshire  
WS11 1BG

**PART 1**

Please complete the information below:

<b>Name:</b>	Sue Green
<b>Organisation:</b>	Home Builders Federation (HBF)
<b>Address:</b>	c/o 80 Needlers End Lane Balsall Common Warwickshire
<b>Postcode:</b>	CV7 7AB
<b>Email address (please provide if you have one as it is the most efficient way of contacting you):</b>	sue.green@hbf.co.uk

Please place an x in the box that best describes you / your role in responding to this consultation

<b>Resident or Individual</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Local Authority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Public service provider e.g. education establishment, health etc.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developer or Investor</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Public agency /organisation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Landowner</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Statutory Consultee</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Planning Agent or Consultant</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Charity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Land &amp; Property Agent or Surveyor</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Duty to co-operate</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Community or other Organisation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other (please specify).....Trade Organisation.....</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- a) Please state (by placing an x in the correct box) whether you would like to be kept up to date with progress on the Local Plan Review and other planning policy consultations (and therefore added to our consultation database):

Yes, please keep me on your database so that I am kept up to date on the progress of future Cannock Chase District Local Plan and planning policy consultations

No, I do not wish to be added to your database and do not want to be kept up to date on the progress of future Cannock Chase District Local Plan and planning policy consultations

- b) If you have completed this form as an agent or on behalf of another person, please confirm that they have given their consent for you to do so by ticking the box below. Without this consent we will not be able to accept their comments as being valid.

I can confirm that I have received consent from the named person/organisation to complete this representation form on their behalf.

**PART 2**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Sue Green</b>
<b>Organisation (if applicable):</b>	<b>HBF</b>

**This comments form can be used to respond on the following consultation documents**

- Cannock Chase District Local Plan Review (Preferred Options)
- Sustainability Appraisal Report

Please state clearly the document you are commenting on and include page / paragraph number, chapter title or question number you are responding to. You can submit multiple forms if you need to. Please return your comments via email to [planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk) or via post to Planning Policy, Cannock Chase Council Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG.

<b>Document Title</b>
Cannock Chase Local Plan Review – Preferred Options
<b>Reference details (e.g. page, paragraph, chapter title, question number etc.)</b>
Questions 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 25, 26, 30, 41, 46, 49 & 50.
<b>Please provide your comments here (use further sheets if needed, and if applicable support your comments with references to specific evidence).</b>
<p><b>Question 10. Do you agree that the amount of housing proposed will meet the local needs of Cannock Chase District as required by the standard methodology?</b></p> <p><b>Preferred Policy SO3.1 : Provision for New Homes</b> proposes housing provision for a minimum 5,516 dwellings (276 dwellings per annum) to meet the objectively assessed Local Housing Needs (LHN) of Cannock Chase District between 2018 – 2038.</p> <p>As set out in the 2019 NPPF, strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period (para 65). The determination of the minimum number of homes needed should be informed by LHN assessment using the Government’s standard methodology unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach (para 60). In Cannock Chase, there are no exceptional circumstances to justify an alternative approach.</p> <p>The NPPG sets out the standard methodology for calculating the LHN figure using demographic data (based on 2014 MHCLG Sub National Household Projections (SNHP)) and an affordability adjustment (based on the latest ONS affordability ratios) (ID 2a-004-20201216). Using the standard methodology, the minimum LHN for Cannock Chase is 276</p>

dwellings per annum based on 2014 SNHP, 2020 as the current year and 2019 affordability ratio of 6.73. As set out in the NPPG, the LHN is calculated at the start of the plan-making process but this number should be kept under review and when appropriate revised until the Local Plan is submitted for examination (ID 2a-008-20190220). The minimum LHN for the District may change as inputs are variable. The minimum LHN for Cannock Chase based on 2014 SNHP, 2021 as the current year and 2020 affordability ratio of 6.72 increases to 317 dwellings per annum.

The NPPG clearly states that the standard methodology is the minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed. The NPPG explains that “*circumstances*” may exist to justify a figure higher than the minimum LHN. The “*circumstances*” for increasing the minimum LHN are listed in the NPPG including, but not limited to, situations where increases in housing need are likely to exceed past trends because of growth strategies, strategic infrastructure improvements, agreeing to meet unmet need from neighbouring authorities or previous levels of housing delivery / assessments of need, which are significantly greater than the outcome from the standard methodology. The NPPG indicates that if previous housing delivery has exceeded the minimum LHN, the Council should consider whether this level of delivery is indicative of greater housing need (ID 2a-010-20201216). It is noted that the 2020 Housing Delivery Test (HDT) Results identify housing completions of 930 dwellings in 2019/20, which exceeds the proposed minimum LHN of 276 dwellings per annum and the adopted Local Plan housing requirement of 241 dwellings per annum. The Council should consider if there are “*circumstances*” to justify a housing requirement above the minimum LHN.

The 2019 NPPF seeks to achieve sustainable development by pursuing economic, social and environmental objectives in mutually supportive ways (para 8). The Council should be seeking to support the long-term sustainability of the District by achieving a sustainable balance between employment and housing growth. The Council should also recognise economic benefits of housing development in supporting local communities as highlighted by the HBF’s latest publication Building Communities – Making Place A Home (Autumn 2020). The Housing Calculator (available on the HBF website) based on The Economic Footprint of House Building (July 2018) commissioned by the HBF estimates for every additional house built in Cannock Chase, the benefits for the local community include creation of 3 jobs (direct & indirect employment), financial contributions of £27,754 towards affordable housing, £806 towards education, £297 towards open space / leisure, £1,129 extra in Council tax and £26,339 spent in local shops.

The NPPG states that total affordable housing need should be considered in the context of its likely delivery as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing developments. As set out in the NPPG, an increase in the total housing figures may be considered where it could help deliver affordable housing (ID 2a-024-20190220). The NPPG also sets out that households whose needs are not met by the market, who are eligible for one or more of the types of affordable housing as defined in Annex 2 : Glossary of the 2019 NPPF, should be considered in need of affordable housing (ID 67-005-20190722). The Council’s calculation of affordable housing need may be significant in comparison to the minimum LHN. The HBF acknowledge that the Council may not be able to meet all affordable housing needs but a housing requirement above the minimum LHN will make a greater contribution to delivering more affordable housing.

As set out in the NPPG, the Government is committed to ensuring that more homes are built and supports ambitious Councils wanting to plan for growth (ID 2a-010-20201216). The NPPG states that a higher figure “*can be considered sound*” providing it “*adequately reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals*”. However, the NPPG does not set any limitations on a higher figure, which is a matter of judgement. The Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes set out in the 2019 NPPF remains (para 59). A housing requirement above the minimum LHN would support economic growth, deliver more affordable housing and contribute to any arising unmet housing needs from neighbouring authorities.

**Question 11. Do you agree that provision should be made to meet the unmet needs of neighbouring areas?**

**Preferred Policy SO3.1 : Provision for New Homes** proposes a further housing provision of 500 dwellings (25 dwellings per annum) to meet unmet needs of neighbouring areas.

As set out in the 2019 NPPF, the Council is under a Duty to Co-operate with other Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and prescribed bodies on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries (para 24). To maximise the effectiveness of plan-making and fully meet the legal requirements of the Duty to Co-operate, the Council’s engagement should be constructive, active and on-going. This collaboration should identify the relevant strategic matters to be addressed (para 25). Effective and on-going joint working is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy (para 26). The Council should demonstrate such working by the preparation and maintenance of one or more Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) identifying the cross-boundary matters to be addressed and the progress of co-operation in addressing these matters. Therefore, as set out in the 2019 NPPF, the Local Plan should be positively prepared and provide a strategy, which as a minimum seeks to meet its own LHNs in full and is informed by agreements with other authorities so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated (para 35a).

The Greater Birmingham & Black Country Housing Market Area (GB&BCHMA) Position Statement published in July 2020 seeks to demonstrate that the housing need can be met across the sub-region for the period 2011 - 2031. However, Table 5 : Housing Shortfall for GB&BCHMA 2011 – 2031 is somewhat misleading by showing a housing shortfall of only 2,597 dwellings. Table 5 compares an updated Housing Land Supply (HLS) against a minimum housing requirement of 207,979 dwellings (based on Strategic Growth Study re-based 2014 household projections model plus a contribution to Coventry & Warwickshire HMA) rather than the adopted housing requirements and unmet housing needs set out in Table 2. The minimum housing requirement in Table 5 of 10,399 dwellings per annum is below the housing requirement in Table 2 of 10,961 dwellings per annum (annual housing requirement plus unmet need not provided for). Table 2 is also an under-estimation of housing need because of the exclusion of the identified shortfall in the Black Country of 29,260 dwellings between 2019 – 2038 of which 7,485 dwellings arise by 2031 (see para 4.2). The addition of the Black Country shortfall would increase the housing requirement in Table 2 to 11,585 dwellings per annum. Furthermore, future housing need in Local Plan Reviews will be based on the Government’s revised standard methodology for calculating LHN including Step 4 – Cities & Urban Centres uplift of 35%, which is applicable to in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton (ID 2a-004-20201216).

The estimated HLS in 2019 of 205,382 dwellings set out in Table 3 relies upon unevidenced allowances of 11,413 dwellings from proposed allocations in emerging Local Plans yet to be tested at Examination, an additional urban supply of 19,410 dwellings and windfall development of 14,111 dwellings. It is noted that Table 6 : Changes in Housing Capacity 2017 – 2019 identifies a 27% increase of 13,942 dwellings in Birmingham. The deliverability of residential development in these locations will be dependent upon the viability of previously developed land and the demand for high density city living post Covid-19. The HBF contend that the housing shortfall in the GB&BCHMA is greater than 2,597 dwellings shown in Table 5 of the Position Statement because housing need has been under-estimated and HLS has been over-estimated.

There is a long history of on-going engagement between the GB&BCHMA authorities but to date there is no conclusive outcome from this engagement in relation to the strategic cross-boundary matter of redistribution of unmet housing needs from Birmingham and Black Country authorities, which indicates that this engagement is an unsound basis for plan-making. After four years since the adoption of the Birmingham Development Plan in January 2017, which identified an unmet housing need of 37,900 dwellings, there is no agreement on meeting in full the housing needs of the GB&BCHMA. There is every likelihood that reaching a consensus on this strategic matter will be a lengthy disharmonious process between the GB&BCHMA authorities. The Cannock Chase Local Plan should make provision to meet unmet housing needs of neighbouring areas. However, in the absence of any signed SoCG, there is no real commitment to resolving the redistribution of unmet housing needs. The GB&BCHMA authorities should produce a SoCG setting out where unmet housing need will be met.

**Question 13. Do you support the proposed allocations of the sites listed in Tables B and C?**

**Preferred Policy SO3.1 : Provision for New Homes** allocates new housing sites within the existing urban areas and as sustainable urban expansions. There are 5 strategic housing allocations (SH1- SH5) for approximately 1,538 dwellings. Table B – Proposed Allocations with planning permission / resolution to grant or allocated in the adopted Local Plan comprises of 12 sites for circa 1,432 dwellings. Table C – Proposed Allocations from Development Capacity Study comprises of 27 sites for circa 1,007 dwellings.

The HBF have no comments on individual sites proposed for allocation but an accurate assessment of availability, suitability, deliverability, developability and viability should be undertaken. It is critical that the Council's assumptions on lead in times and delivery rates are correct and realistic, which should be supported by parties responsible for the delivery of housing on allocated sites.

The Council's HLS should provide a sufficient supply of land to meet the housing requirement, to ensure the maintenance of a 5 Year Housing Land Supply (YHLS) and to achieve HDT performance measurements. The 2019 NPPF sets out that strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period and if appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites (para 73). Housing delivery is optimised by the widest possible range of housing site sizes and market locations, which provides suitable land buying opportunities for small, medium and large housebuilding companies. There should be a short and long-term

supply of sites on brownfield and greenfield land. The widest mix of sites provides choice for consumers, allows places to grow in sustainable ways, creates opportunities to diversify the construction sector, responds to changing circumstances, treats the housing requirement as a minimum rather than a maximum and provides competition in the land market. A diversified portfolio of housing sites also offers the widest possible range of products to households to access different types of dwellings to meet their housing needs. As set out in the 2019 NPPF at least 10% of the housing requirement should be accommodated on sites no larger than one hectare or else demonstrate strong reasons for not achieving this target (para 68a). For Cannock Chase, 10% of the housing requirement is approximately 600 dwellings. The Council should confirm that this national policy requirement will be achieved.

**Question 15. Do you support the level of provision of affordable dwellings?**

The Council's preferred policy approach on sites of 10 or more dwellings is for at least 20% of dwellings to be affordable housing, with 80% for rent and 20% for intermediate housing or other routes to affordable home ownership.

The Council should viability test the proposed provision of at least 20% affordable housing. At Examination, viability will be a key issue in determining the soundness of the Local Plan. In plan-making, viability is inseparable from the deliverability of development. Therefore, the viability of individual developments and plan policies should be tested at the plan making stage. Without a robust approach to viability assessment, land will be withheld from the market and housing delivery will be threatened. Viability assessment should not be conducted on the margins of viability.

The Council's proposed affordable housing tenure mix is inconsistent with national policy. The 2019 NPPF promotes affordable home ownership by requiring at least 10% of new dwellings built to be available for this tenure leaving only the remainder for other affordable housing tenures (para 64). The Government's Changes to the Current Planning System (ended on 1st October 2020) and The Government's consultation on Draft Revisions to the NPPF (ended on 27th March 2021) also propose further changes to facilitate the delivery of First Homes. The Council's proposed affordable housing tenure mix should be amended to accord with national policy.

**Question 16. Do you support the approach to encouraging home working?**

The Council's preferred policy approach proposes that on sites of 15 or more dwellings, housing mix will be specified in the site allocation policy or where not specified will be in accordance with Table D - Housing Mix or its subsequent revisions. Where market housing is supported by connection to superfast broadband, a flexibility of 4% will be permitted across the dwelling sizes to facilitate homeworking.

All households should have access to different types of dwellings to meet their housing needs. As set out in 2019 NPPF, the housing needs for different groups should be assessed to justify any policies on the size, type and tenure of housing including a need for affordable housing (paras 61 & 62). All policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence which should be adequate, proportionate and focussed tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned (para 31). The Council should recognise that market signals are important in determining the size and type of housing needed.

An overly prescriptive policy approach on housing mix is inappropriate. The Council should focus on ensuring that there are appropriate sites allocated to meet the needs of specifically identified groups of households rather than prescribing specific housing mixes for individual sites. The Local Plan should ensure that suitable sites are available for a wide range of different types of development across a wide choice of appropriate locations. The Council should consider allocating sites for older persons and other specialist housing subject to criteria such as the proximity of sites public transport, local amenities, health services and town centres. If Table D is retained, additional flexibility should be provided by setting out ranges of percentages.

**QUESTION 17. Do you support the preferred policy direction for delivering high quality housing?**

**Preferred Policy SO3.3 : Delivering High Quality Housing** requires new dwellings to meet Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

If the Council wishes to apply the optional NDSS to new homes, then this should only be done in accordance with the 2019 NPPF (para 127f & Footnote 46). Footnote 46 states that *“policies may also make use of the NDSS where the need for an internal space standard can be justified”*. As set out in the 2019 NPPF, all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence, which should be adequate, proportionate and focussed tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned (para 31). The NPPG sets out that *“where a need for internal space standards is identified, the authority should provide justification for requiring internal space policies. Authorities should take account of the following areas need, viability and timing”* (ID 56-020-20150327). Before adopting the NDSS, the Council should provide a local assessment evidencing the case for Cannock Chase.

The NDSS should only be introduced on a “need to have” rather than a “nice to have” basis. Need is generally defined as *“requiring something because it is essential or very important rather than just desirable”*. If it had been the Government’s intention that generic statements simply stating in some cases the NDSS had not been met justified adoption of the NDSS then the standard would have been incorporated as mandatory in Building Regulations, which is not the case.

There is a direct relationship between unit size, cost per square metre, selling price per metre and affordability. The Council’s policy approach should not compromise the viability of development. NDSS compliant house typologies should be tested in the Council’s viability assessment.

The Council should recognise that customers have different budgets and aspirations. The introduction of the NDSS for all new homes may lead to customers purchasing larger homes in floorspace but with bedrooms less suited to their housing needs causing the unintended consequence of potentially increasing overcrowding and reducing the quality of their living environment. Smaller dwellings may be required to ensure that those on lower incomes can afford a property, which meets their bedroom requirements.

An inflexible policy approach to NDSS for new homes may also impact on affordability and effect customer choice for First Homes and other affordable homeownership products, which may affect delivery rates of sites included in the housing trajectory. The



delivery rates on many sites will be determined by market affordability at relevant price points of dwellings and maximising absorption rates. A worsening of affordability may translate into reduced or slower delivery rates.

If the proposed requirement for NDSS is carried forward, the Council should put forward proposals for transitional arrangements. Land deals underpinning residential sites may have been secured prior to any proposed introduction of the NDSS. These sites should be allowed to move through the planning system before any proposed policy requirements are enforced. The NDSS should not be applied to any reserved matters applications or any outline or detailed approval prior to a specified date.

Furthermore, under **Preferred Policy SO3.3**, developments providing a minimum of 60% of dwellings as suitable for households with health problems or disabilities will be supported. This provision could be provided as bungalows and ground floor flats or dwellings, which comply with Part M(2) or Part M(3) of the current Building Regulations (as a minimum) or can be easily adapted to meet these standards.

As set out in the 2019 NPPF for effectiveness, a policy should be clearly written and unambiguous (para 16d). The Council's preferred policy approach should be clearer so both applicants and decision makers know what is required. However, if the Government implements proposed changes to Part M of the Building Regulations as set out in the "Raising Accessibility Standards for New Homes" consultation, which closed on 1 December 2020, the Council's proposed policy approach will be unnecessary.

In the meantime, if the Council wishes to adopt the optional standards for accessible & adaptable dwellings, then this should only be done in accordance with the 2019 NPPF (para 127f & Footnote 46) and the NPPG. Footnote 46 states "that planning policies for housing should make use of the Government's optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable housing where this would address an identified need for such properties". As set out in the 2019 NPPF, all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence which should be adequate, proportionate and focus focussed tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned (para 31). Therefore, a policy requirement for M4(2) dwellings must be justified by credible and robust evidence. The NPPG sets out the evidence necessary to justify a policy requirement for optional standards. The Council should apply the criteria set out in the NPPG (ID 56-005-20150327 to 56-011-20150327).

The Council's policy approach should not compromise the viability of development. Therefore, additional costs associated with M4(2) and M4(3) compliant dwellings should be included in the Council's viability assessment. The Government's consultation "Raising Accessibility Standards for New Homes" (ended on 1st December 2020) estimates the additional cost per new dwelling is approximately £1,400 for dwellings, which would not already meet M4(2). The extra costs for M4(3) are much higher. In September 2014 during the Government's Housing Standards Review, EC Harris estimated the cost impact of M4(3) per dwelling as £15,691 for apartments and £26,816 for houses. These costs should be applied plus inflationary cost increases since 2014. M4(2) and M4(3) compliant dwellings are also larger than NDSS (see DCLG Housing Standards Review Illustrative Technical Standards Developed by the Working Groups August 2013), therefore larger sizes should be used when calculating additional build costs for M4(2) and M4(3) and any other input based on square meterage. Moreover, these enlarged sizes are unlikely to generate

additional value.

**QUESTION 25. Do you support the preferred policy direction to improve communications technologies?**

Under **Preferred Policy SO5.2 : Communication Technologies**, all major development proposals will demonstrate delivery of digital connectivity by supporting the installation of new communications infrastructure that is required to serve the development at the point of first occupation and future proofing the infrastructure that is required to enable access to high quality resilient digital connectivity.

The Council should not impose new electronic communications requirements beyond the provision of infrastructure as set out in statutory Building Regulations. In the March 2020 Budget, the Government confirmed future legislation to ensure that new build homes are built with gigabit-capable broadband. The Government proposes to amend Part R “Physical Infrastructure for High-Speed Electronic Communications Networks” of the Building Regulations to place obligations on housing developers to work with network operators to install gigabit broadband, where this can be done within a commercial cost cap. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has outlined its intentions on the practical workings of this policy, which will apply to all to new builds. Any type of technology may be used, which is able to provide speeds of over 1000 Mbps. All new build developments will be equipped with the physical infrastructure to support gigabit-capable connections from more than one network operator. Furthermore, the delivery of broadband service connections is reliant on a third-party contractor over which a developer is unlikely to have any control.

**QUESTION 26. Do you support the preferred policy direction to deliver low and zero carbon transport?**

Under **Preferred Policy SO5.3 : Low & Zero Carbon Transport**, all major development proposals will contribute to the reduction of the reliance on carbon-intensive modes of transport by supporting the take-up of ultra-low emission vehicles and developing electric vehicle charging networks. All major developments will include the provision of electric vehicle charge points (EVCPs) and other infrastructure required for alternative low & zero carbon transport options and designate parking spaces for low emission vehicles.

Please refer to the HBF answer to Question 30 below.

**QUESTION 30. Do you support the preferred policy direction for parking provision?**

Under **Preferred Policy SO5.7 : Parking Provision**, all major development proposals will make appropriate off-street parking in accordance with the relevant Local Design Code and an assessment of the provision that will be made for private and public EVCPs.

The HBF recognise that electric vehicles will be part of the solution to transitioning to a low carbon future. As set out in the 2019 NPPF for effectiveness, a policy should be clearly written and unambiguous so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals (para 16d). The Council’s policy approach to the provision of EVCPs should be clear. The Council should specify if provision means a cable and duct approach or installation of active EVCPs. The Council should also clarify the requirement

for the provision of public and private EVCPs and off-street as opposed to within the curtilage of individual dwellings.

The HBF consider that the physical installation of active EVCPs is unnecessary. The evolution of automotive technology is moving quickly therefore a passive cable and duct approach is a more sensible and future proofed solution, which negates the potential for obsolete technology being experienced by householders. A passive cable and duct approach means that the householder can later arrange and install a physical EVCP suitable for their vehicle and in line with the latest technologies.

The Council should also acknowledge that this policy approach may be superseded by the Government's proposals to change Building Regulations. The Department of Transport consultation on Electric Vehicle Charging in Residential & Non-Residential Buildings (ended on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019) set out the Government's preferred option to introduce a new requirement for EVCPs under Part S of the Building Regulations. The inclusion of EVCP requirements within the Building Regulations will introduce a standardised consistent approach to EVCPs in new buildings across the country.

The Council's preferred policy approach should not compromise the viability of development. The HBF and its Members have serious concerns about the capacity of the existing electrical network in the UK. The supply from the power grid is already constrained in many areas across the country. Major network reinforcement will be required across the power network to facilitate the introduction of EVCPs and the move from gas to electric heating as proposed under the Future Homes Standard (see HBF answer to Question 49 below). These costs can be substantial and can drastically affect the viability of developments. If developers are funding the potential future reinforcement of the National Grid network at significant cost, this will have a significant impact on their businesses and potentially jeopardise future housing delivery. The Department for Transport - Electric Vehicle Charging in Residential & Non-Residential Buildings consultation estimated an installation cost of approximately £976 per EVCP plus any costs for upgrading local electricity networks, which under the Government's proposal automatically levies a capped figure of £3,600 on developers. These costs should be included in the Council's viability assessment.

**QUESTION 41. Do you support the preferred policy direction to achieve net gains in biodiversity through development?**

Under **Preferred Policy SO7.2 : Biodiversity Net Gain**, major development proposals will provide a net gain in biodiversity. The delivery of net gains in biodiversity will be designed to support the delivery of a District-wide biodiversity network based on the designated biodiversity sites. The level of biodiversity net gain required will be proportionate to the type, scale and impact of development. Major development schemes will provide for the long-term management of biodiversity features retained and enhanced within the development site and of those features created off site to compensate for development impacts.

The Council's policy approach to biodiversity net gain should not deviate from the Government's proposals as set out in the Environment Bill including transitional arrangements. The Government intends to make provision for a transition period of two years. The Government will work with stakeholders on the specifics of this transition

period, including accounting for sites with outline planning permission, and will provide clear and timely guidance on understanding what will be required and when.

Furthermore, the Council's preferred policy approach should not compromise viability. There are significant additional costs associated with biodiversity gain, which should be fully accounted for in the Council's viability assessment. The Government has confirmed that more work needs to be undertaken to address viability concerns raised by the housebuilding industry in order that biodiversity net gain does not prevent, delay or reduce housing delivery. The DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain & Local Nature Recovery Strategies : Impact Assessment Table 14 : Net Gain Delivery Costs (Residential) sets out regional costs (based on 2017 prices) in West Midlands of £18,527 per hectare of development based on a central estimate but there are significant increases in costs to £63,725 per hectare for off-site delivery under Scenario C. There may also be an impact on the ratio of gross to net site acreage, which should be considered by the Council.

**QUESTION 46. Do you support the preferred policy direction to amendments to the Green Belt?**

The HBF agree that as set out in **Preferred Policy SO7.7 : Amendments to the Green Belt**, there is a need to amend Green Belt boundaries to accommodate growth in the District. As set out in 2019 NPPF, where fully evidenced and justified Green Belt boundaries can be altered in "*exceptional circumstances*" through the preparation or updating of Local Plans (para 136 & 137). The HBF would not wish to comment on the 7 sites selected for release from the Green Belt.

The preferred policy approach does not demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period by the identification of areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period as set out in the 2019 NPPF (para 139c & 139e). The Council proposes that if required, further changes to the Green Belt boundary will be made through a formal review of the Local Plan policies, or through a Neighbourhood Plan, which potentially undermines the permanence of these boundaries in the long-term contrary to national policy.

**QUESTION 49. Do you support the preferred policy direction to achieve net-zero carbon development?**

Under **Preferred Policy SO8.2 : Achieving Net Zero Carbon Development**, all development proposals should strive to achieve the highest level of building performance standards for energy use and achieve the lowest carbon emissions that can practically and viably be achieved. All major development proposals will deliver, in priority order :-

- zero carbon emission development ;
- low carbon emission development with on-site mitigation to achieve net-zero carbon emissions ;
- low carbon emission development with off-site mitigation to achieve net-zero carbon emissions ;
- low carbon emission development with compensatory contributions to an appropriate carbon offsetting fund to achieve net-zero carbon emissions.

All major development proposals will include evidence in a Sustainability Statement (part of the Design and Access Statement) that the development has achieved the lowest carbon emissions that can practically and viably be achieved.

Today's new homes are already very energy efficient with lower heating bills for residents in comparison to older existing homes. Energy performance data has shown that 8 out of 10 new build dwellings have an A or B energy efficiency rating, compared to only 3% of existing properties. An HBF report published in November 2019 found that, as a result, the average new build buyer in England and Wales saves £442.32 every year on heating costs compared to owners of existing dwellings.

Nevertheless, the HBF recognise the need to move towards greater energy efficiency via a nationally consistent set of standards and timetable, which is universally understood and technically implementable. The Government Response to The Future Homes Standard : 2019 Consultation on changes to Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations for new dwellings dated January 2021 provides an implementation roadmap, the Government's aim is for the interim Part L (Conservation of fuel and power), Part F (Ventilation) & Overheating Regulations to be regulated for in late 2021 and to come into effect in 2022. The 2021 interim uplift will deliver homes that are expected to produce 31% less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to current standards. To ensure as many homes as possible are built in line with new energy efficiency standards, transitional arrangements will apply to individual homes rather than an entire development and the transitional period will be one year. This approach will support successful implementation of the 2021 interim uplift and the wider implementation timeline for the Future Homes Standard from 2025. The Future Homes Standard will ensure that new homes will produce at least 75% lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than one built to current energy efficiency requirements. By delivering carbon reductions through the fabric and building services in a home rather than relying on wider carbon offsetting, the Future Homes Standard will ensure new homes have a smaller carbon footprint than any previous Government policy. In addition, this footprint will continue to reduce over time as the electricity grid decarbonises.

The HBF support the Government's approach to the Future Homes Standard but there are difficulties and risks to housing delivery given the immaturity of the supply chain for the production / installation of heat pumps and the additional load that would be placed on local electricity networks in combination with Government proposals for the installation of EVCPs in new homes (see HBF answer to Question 30 above). In autumn 2020, the HBF established a Future Homes Task Force to develop workable solutions for the delivery of the home building industry's contribution to meeting national environmental targets and objectives on Net Zero. Early collaborative work is focussed on tackling the challenges of implementing the 2021 and 2025 changes to Building Regulations successfully and as cost-effectively as possible, in particular providing information, advice and support for SME developers and putting the customer at the centre of our thinking.

The HBF note that for the moment in its Response to the Future Homes Standard consultation, the Government has confirmed that the Planning and Energy Act 2008 will not be amended, therefore the Council will retain powers to set local energy efficiency standards for new homes. However, the Government's Planning for the Future White Paper sets out that a simpler planning process improves certainty. The Government acknowledge the need to clarify the role of LPAs in setting energy efficiency requirements

for new homes that go beyond the mandatory standards set out in the Building Regulations. The Housing, Communities & Local Government Committee have opened a new inquiry into Local Government and the path to net zero. The aim of the inquiry is to scrutinise the Government's plans to make all new homes "zero carbon ready" by 2025, through the introduction of the Future Homes Standard, and to explore how Local Government can help the UK to reduce its carbon emissions to "net zero" by 2050. This inquiry is currently accepting evidence on what role should LPAs play in determining local energy efficiency standards? The deadline for submissions is the 30th April 2021.

The HBF consider that the Council should comply with the Government's intention of setting standards for energy efficiency through the Building Regulations. The key to success is standardisation and avoidance of individual Council's specifying their own policy approach to energy efficiency, which undermines economies of scale for product manufacturers, suppliers and developers. The Council should not need to set local energy efficiency standards in order to achieve the shared net zero goal because of the higher levels of energy efficiency standards for new homes proposed in the 2021 Part L uplift and the Future Homes Standard 2025.

There are significant additional costs associated with the Council's preferred policy approach, which should be fully accounted for in the Council's viability assessment. Government's estimated cost of £4,847 per dwelling set out in The Future Homes Standard : 2019 Consultation on changes to Part L (conservation of fuel and power) and Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations for new dwellings. The Council's preferred policy approach will have higher additional costs, which should be viability tested.

**QUESTION 50. Do you support the preferred policy direction to secure Sustainable Design Development?**

The HBF do not support the preferred policy direction set out in **Preferred Policy SO8.3 : Sustainable Design** (see HBF answers to Questions 26, 30 and 49 above).

Moreover, the Council should not require all residential development proposals to meet or exceed the standards set out by the Home Quality Mark, or equivalent. The Home Quality Mark has no status other than as an example of a best practice guide. The HBF is supportive of the use of best practice guidance however, the use of such guidance should remain voluntary rather than becoming a mandatory policy requirement, which would oblige developers to use this tool as a pre-condition for support from the Council. The reference to the Home Quality Mark in policy wording should not convey development plan status to a document, which has not been subject to the same process of preparation, consultation and Examination as the Local Plan. It is not reasonable or justified for residential development proposals to be required to meet or exceed these standards.

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