



Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

3rd Floor, South East Fry Building

2 Marsham Street

LONDON

SW1P 4DF

Dear Sir or Madam,

Changes to the current planning system: consultation response by Hungarton Parish Council

Hungarton Parish Council has reviewed the consultation on changes to planning policy and regulations. We lack the expertise to comment on the more technical aspects of the consultation but we have significant concerns about the impact on our community should the changes be implemented.

Hungarton is a parish in the district of Market Harborough in Leicestershire. Our Neighbourhood Plan was formally “made” in 2017 after due process.

The standard method for assessing housing numbers in strategic plans

The Government’s continued commitment to achieving a headline total of 300,000 new houses per annum, seems to be more of a political aspiration than the result of validated analysis, exceeding as it does the housing need given in with latest Office for National Statistics predictions. Furthermore, the algorithm behind the New Standard Method (NSM) uses a questionable set of criteria, which has a very concerning effect on the district of Market Harborough.

Para 3.6 states that “the methodology pushes the highest rates of growth to where existing demand is highest”. Examination of the results of applying the algorithm places considerable doubt on this statement. For example, the algorithm throws up the anomaly of moving growth in Leicestershire out of the city of Leicester and into the countryside. Harborough District, in particular, is a prime example of the application of this questionable algorithm; the NSM sets an annual requirement of 1228 homes compared with 550 under the current standard method in Harborough District, while in the case of Leicester there is a significant reduction to 1120 homes p.a. from 1734 under the current standard method. Similar trends of increase are also seen in other Leicestershire districts, of which Blaby, North West Leicestershire, Charnwood and Hinckley and Bosworth are the most affected. The number of homes in Harborough proposed by the NSM represent 3-4% of the existing stock, an impact shared only with some London boroughs. We are understandably concerned that significant

areas of the countryside so valued by local people will be lost to the building of houses that are not needed.

We are also concerned about the impacts on the viability of the city of Leicester. Moving growth out of the city and into the countryside would imply a move from promoting brownfield development to greenfield sites. This would run the risk of “hollowing out” the city centre. At a time when town and city centres are probably going to see a reduction in demand for office/workspace and arguably an increase in potential for residential development this seems to be a mistake.

Delivering First Homes

Hungarton’s Neighbourhood Plan includes a Starter Home for a local young person (policy H2 [https://www.hungartonparishcouncil.org.uk/uploads/hungarton-ndp-referendum-version-final-may17-\(1\)-10.pdf](https://www.hungartonparishcouncil.org.uk/uploads/hungarton-ndp-referendum-version-final-may17-(1)-10.pdf)) and since the Starter Home scheme was scrapped in February we are revising the plan and may find the First Homes scheme to be a suitable replacement.

However we consider that it is important to meet the need for other forms of affordable housing. We are concerned that the proposed measures could curtail even further the availability of affordable housing, especially in rural areas, and that the First Homes scheme is prioritised over all the other forms of affordable housing in the proposed changes to the current planning system.

Yours faithfully

Caroline Pick

Vice chair Hungarton Parish Council