

Representation Form for Local Plans



Local Plan Publication Stage Representation Form

Ref:

(For official
use only)

**Name of the Local Plan to which
this representation relates:**

Rugby Borough Council Proposed Submission
Local Plan

Please return to Rugby Borough Council by 5:00pm Friday 13th March 2026
By email to: localplan@rugby.gov.uk with **Proposed Submission Consultation in
the subject line, OR by post to:** Development Strategy, Town Hall, Evreux Way,
Rugby, CV21 2RR.

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation
you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes below (if applicable)
but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="Adam"/>	<input type="text" value="Connor"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Renn"/>	<input type="text" value="Shingler"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Mackenzie Miller Homes"/>	<input type="text" value="Nexus Planning"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Interchange Place"/>
Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="151-165 Edmund Street"/>
Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Birmingham"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="B3 2TA"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="c.shingler@nexusplanning.co.uk"/>

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each policy or site you wish to comment on

Name or Organisation:

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Local Plan Paragraph	<input type="text"/>	Local Plan Policy	CL1	Policies Map	<input type="text"/>
Site ID	<input type="text"/>				

4. Do you consider the Local Plan:

(1) is Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	x
(2) is Sound	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	x
(3) complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please refer to Section 5 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy CL1

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please refer to Section 5 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy CL1

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note: In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Mackenzie Miller Homes requests to participate in the Hearing Sessions for the Local Plan Examination. Mackenzie Miller Homes involvement is considered necessary to ensure matters relating to the spatial strategy, distribution of homes and land supply are considered during the hearing sessions.

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

9. If you have used AI to produce or substantially alter your representation, please declare which tool you have used, how it was used, and what checks you have undertaken to ensure the AI-produced material is accurate.

N/A

All representations received will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan and published on the council's website. Personal addresses and email addresses (as distinct from businesses addresses), but not names, will be redacted before representations are published.

The Rugby Borough Council Privacy Notice for Development Strategy is available here:

<https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/privacy#development-strategy>

The Planning Inspectorate's privacy notice can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-privacy-notice>



Land South of Lilbourne Road, Clifton upon Dunsmore
Rugby Borough Council Regulation 19 Representations

On behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes

March 2026

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy	5
3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes	6
4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations	12
5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings	17
6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover	18

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These representations, on behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes (“**MMH**”), are made to the Rugby Borough Local Plan 2025-2042 Proposed Submission Version (“**the Consultation**”) – a key stage to inform the emerging draft Local Plan being prepared by Rugby Borough Council (“**the Council**”).
- 1.2 MMH has an interest in all strategic and non-strategic land informing the draft Local Plan and these representations are made in the context of MMH interests in land south of Lilbourne Road on the eastern edge of Clifton upon Dunsmore (“**the Site**”). The Site has been previously promoted and submitted to the Call for Sites exercise and representations were made the Rugby Borough Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation in October 2023 and Preferred Options Consultation in May 2025.
- 1.3 MMH has submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. The submission demonstrates that the Site is capable of coming forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner, and therefore represents a suitable and sequentially preferable location for allocation within the Local Plan.
- 1.4 A Framework Masterplan outlining the concept of the Site is in **Appendix 1** of these representations.

Approach to Representations

- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, at paragraph 36, the tests of soundness that Local Plans and Spatial Development Strategies are examined against, as follows, with the Consultation Plan being considered in the light of these tests:
- a) **“Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs²⁰; 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 and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant”

1.6 These representations respond to key parts of the Consultation Plan, highlighting the specific policy, paragraph or pages of the Consultation Plan, or supporting evidence document being addressed. They focus primarily on the following policies of the Consultation Plan:

- Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy
- Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes
- Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations
- Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings
- Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.1 Draft Policy S1 sets out how housing and economic development will be distributed across Rugby Borough in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, with the majority of development directed towards the Rugby urban area.
- 2.2 MMH supports Policy S1 as currently drafted. In particular, it is noted that Clifton upon Dunsmore is identified as a Main Rural Settlement and is therefore second only to Rugby Town within the settlement hierarchy. The village is also well related to Rugby both spatially and in terms of accessibility to services and facilities. Whilst not located within the Rugby urban area, Clifton upon Dunsmore benefits from close proximity to the town and is able to readily access employment opportunities, services and community infrastructure, including schools and further education provision.
- 2.3 In light of the above, MMH generally supports the ranking and hierarchy of settlements set out within Draft Policy S1 and considers that, in this respect, the approach is sound.

3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes

Plan Period

- 3.1 The Consultation presents a revised strategy for the delivery of new homes across a 17-year period from 2025 to 2042. MMH is disappointed that the Council has decided to reduce the plan period from 2045 to 2042, which in turn substantially reduces the overall housing requirement from 14,134 to 11,729 homes.
- 3.2 The Council's Local Development Scheme indicates that the draft Local Plan will be submitted in June 2026 with adoption by June 2027. MMH consider this to be an unrealistic timeline. Reference is made to a letter from the Minister of State to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2024¹, highlighting the average length of examinations to be 134 weeks, taking account of the need for modifications, re-consultation and hearing sessions over an extended period, substantially greater than the Council's assumptions.
- 3.3 Therefore, where adoption of the Local Plan is extremely unlikely to be before the end of 2027 at the earliest, relevant strategic policies should look ahead to 2042/43, an additional year beyond the end of the Consultation's current plan period, to ensure a minimum period of 15 years from adoption and accordance with the NPPF.
- 3.4 One effect of increasing the plan period by one year is that the draft Local Plan will need to accommodate a proportionate increase of an additional 636 homes, as part of its housing requirement over that longer period to seek to ensure local housing need is met. Failure to address this in advance of the Regulation 22 stages will inevitably result in the Local Plan Inspector raising concerns related to conflict with paragraph 22 of the Framework thus potentially delaying the Examination Process.
- 3.5 As precedent, the Inspector for the West Berkshire Local Plan examination addressed a similarly deficient plan period through prescribed main modifications, citing reasons expressed above and requiring additional homes to be accommodated / planned for. For context the Examination for that Local Plan took place between May and October 2024 with the agreed Local Plan period up to 2041 (the same as that currently proposed by the Council despite the process in West Berkshire being concluded two years earlier).

¹ [Local Plan examinations: letter to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate \(July 2024\)](#)

- 3.6 It is also notable that the reduction in the overall housing requirement is largely a direct consequence of the shortened plan period. By reducing the end date of the plan from 2045 to 2042, the Council has significantly reduced the number of homes that would otherwise be planned for across the Borough. MMH considers that plan periods should be established primarily to ensure compliance with national policy requirements and to provide a robust long-term spatial strategy, rather than being used in a manner that has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery. Extending the plan period to ensure a full 15 years from adoption would therefore represent a more appropriate and policy-compliant approach in accordance with the NPPF.

Housing Requirement

- 3.7 The Consultation confirms that the draft Local Plan is seeking to meet the Council's standard method local housing need, as it must, in accordance with Framework paragraph 62.
- 3.8 With a housing need of 636 dwellings per annum (dpa) over 17 years, a total of 11,729 new homes must be accommodated across Rugby Borough. However, beyond that figure, key issues of housing affordability and economic factors should be taken into account.

Affordability

- 3.9 Whilst the standard method includes an affordability adjustment, the Planning Practice Guidance ("the PPG") is clear that when applied it only starts to address such issues. It is not a full solution to problems of affordability:

*"The affordability adjustment is applied in order to ensure that the standard method for assessing local housing need responds to price signals and is consistent with the policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The specific adjustment in this guidance is set at a level to ensure that minimum annual housing need starts to address the affordability of homes."*²

- 3.10 Rugby Borough faces great affordability pressures; the the ratio of median house prices to workplace-based earnings has reached a five year average of 7.4 in 2024, a rise of more than 138% from that in 1997.

² Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 2a-006-20241212

3.11 The affordable housing need identified in Table 5.7 of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (September 2025) is 474 dwellings per annum. When compared to the Council's selected local housing need of 636 dwellings per annum, affordable housing need would equate to approximately 75% of the overall housing requirement. This clearly demonstrates that the selected housing requirement will result in a significant level of unmet affordable housing need if the Local Plan Review proceeds in its current form. This is particularly concerning given the Council's recent delivery performance, as evidenced through its Annual Monitoring Reports, which indicates that affordable housing delivery is already falling short of identified need.

3.12 In practice, the most effective way to address affordability pressures and reduce the identified affordable housing need is to plan for the delivery of a greater overall supply of housing across the Borough, which in turn will increase the quantum of affordable housing delivered through policy requirements and planning obligations.

3.13 The declining delivery of affordable housing further reinforces the importance of ensuring that the Local Plan provides for a sufficient quantity and appropriate mix of housing to meet identified needs. The NPPF states at paragraph 63:

"Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies..."

3.14 For these reasons, MMH considers that the Council should take a more proactive approach to addressing the housing crisis within the Borough and plan for a higher level of housing growth than currently proposed. Increasing the overall housing requirement would provide a more effective means of responding to affordability pressures and supporting the delivery of the affordable homes required to meet identified need.

Economic Factors

3.15 The need to boost the supply of homes is also necessary in relation to economic factors: Framework paragraph 85 requires planning policies to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

3.16 The Homes – Jobs Alignment Paper (December 2025) and HEDNA (2024) identifies strong economic performance and a buoyant labour market as key drivers of Rugby Borough's housing market. A growing surplus of workforce workers over resident workers and growth in net commuting into West Northamptonshire from Coventry and West Northamptonshire; and (ii) deteriorating housing affordability from a lack of supply / demand imbalance.

3.17 The HEDNA recognises the strong demand for housing as workers seek to live locally to where they are employed.

- 3.18 If left unaddressed, unaffordable house prices will hold back West Northamptonshire's economic potential – deterring young professionals hoping to live and work in the county and affecting the ability of businesses to recruit staff.
- 3.19 The draft Local Plan should therefore go further than seeking to meet only the minimum level of housing under the standard method. It should take a positive approach to boost the number of homes, beyond the minimum starting point; opportunities for additional growth on the edge of Rugby, which includes Clifton upon Dunsmore, (support its current and expanding economic / employment offer) and other sustainable locations should be identified.

Housing Supply

- 3.20 Draft Policy S2 of the Consultation Plan sets the Council's sources of housing supply for the plan period. These totals include completions up to March 2025, committed developments with planning permission, allocations in neighbourhood plans, allocations in the Consultation Plan, and windfall allowances.

Resilience

- 3.21 The resilience of the proposed housing supply is questioned. Whilst Draft Policy S2 the categories of supply, it does not specify individual sites with planning permission in either the Consultation Plan or supporting documents. This detail is only found in the Housing Land Supply Statements (HLSS), which is assumed to be applicable for the Consultation Plan.
- 3.22 The HLSS suggests that the early years of the plan period will rely on carried-over allocations (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton) and small to medium-scale sites, supplemented by windfall development. Notably, the housing supply is almost dependent on three large strategic sites (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton). This heavy reliance on a few strategic sites raises concerns about the resilience of the Councils housing supply over the entire plan period if one or more of the sites were to suffer any delays in anticipated delivery timescales.

Housing Trajectory

- 3.23 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites.
- 3.24 An overarching housing trajectory for the plan is contained in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan. However, it is unclear how these findings have been calculated as the housing trajectory is not site-specific. Whilst it is appreciated this is not an absolute requirement of the NPPF at a site level, given the importance of strategic allocations to later supply, this is important information to ensure the Consultation Plan is deliverable over the plan period and thus effective.

- 3.25 The only site-specific detail on housing trajectory is contained in the HLSS. However, upon examination, there appears to be a conflict between both the latest housing trajectory in the Consultation Plan and the HLSS. It is unclear how the housing trajectory in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan has been informed. It is therefore considered the Consultation Plan fails to provide an evidenced housing trajectory and is contrary to the requirements of Paragraph 78.

Windfalls

- 3.26 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF sets out that where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply
- 3.27 The windfall allowance over the plan period is 850 dwellings, noting that these figures should only apply for future years of the plan period, as otherwise they would fall into the completion/commitments categories.
- 3.28 The HLSS provides information relating to historic windfall delivery rates but does not consider future trends, as required by the NPPF. Furthermore, it is notable the windfall allowance for each Council is higher on an annualised basis than in the Councils current adopted Local Plan.
- 3.29 Given the above, the windfall allowance within the Consultation Plan is not supported by compelling evidence, meaning it is not consistent with national policy or justified, contrary to the soundness tests outlined at paragraph 36 of the NPPF. To overcome this issue, further evidence should be provided or the windfall allowance removed/significantly reduced.

Overall

- 3.30 For the reasons set out above, MMH considers that the Consultation Plan raises a number of significant concerns in relation to the proposed plan period, housing requirement and the robustness of the Council's housing supply evidence. The proposed plan period is unlikely to provide the required minimum 15-year timeframe from adoption, contrary to paragraph 22 of the NPPF, and has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery planned for across the Borough.
- 3.31 Furthermore, the proposed housing requirement of 636 dwellings per annum represents only the minimum starting point under the standard method and does not adequately respond to the scale of affordability pressures, the substantial identified affordable housing need, or the Borough's economic growth ambitions. Planning for a higher level of housing delivery would provide a more effective means of addressing these issues and supporting the delivery of affordable homes.

- 3.32 In addition, concerns remain regarding the resilience and transparency of the proposed housing supply, including the lack of a clearly evidenced housing trajectory, the significant reliance on a limited number of large strategic sites in the latter part of the plan period, and the reliance on a windfall allowance which is not supported by compelling evidence.
- 3.33 Taken together, these issues raise significant questions regarding whether the Consultation Plan is positively prepared, justified and effective, when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in paragraph 36 of the NPPF. The Council should therefore reconsider the proposed plan period, housing requirement and supporting housing supply evidence prior to submission to ensure that the Local Plan provides a robust and deliverable strategy capable of meeting the Borough's housing needs over the full plan period.

4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations

Distribution of Development

- 4.1 MMH have serious soundness concerns regarding the Council's strategy in distributing residential development across the borough. The Council are currently proposing to allocate a significant amount of land at Main Rural Settlements which would require release of Green Belt land. The NPPF sets out at paragraph 145 that *'...Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced through the preparation or updating of plans.'*
- 4.2 For plan-makers to reach a point where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, paragraph 146 confirms that this can include *'...instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means'.*
- 4.3 And at paragraph 147 *'Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.'*
- 4.4 This assessment of whether all other reasonable options have been examined will need to take account of NPPF paragraph 147:
- a) *"makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
 - b) *optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
 - c) *has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground."*
- 4.5 The NPPF clearly sets out a sequential approach to allocating land for development within the Green Belt – essentially dictating that utilising Green Belt land should be a 'last resort', where there are no other options to accommodate the required growth. MMH consider the sequential approach to be particularly relevant given the availability of land sustainably located land outside the Green Belt, such as in Clifton upon Dunsmore and specifically MMH's Site.

- 4.6 MMH questions whether the Council has sufficiently considered all reasonable options. Clifton upon Dunsmore, unlike other Main Rural Settlements, is not constrained by the Green Belt. By contrast, Wolvey (290 dwellings), Brinklow (325 dwellings) and Long Lawford (650 dwellings) are all within the Green Belt and are planning for higher levels of growth than Clifton upon Dunsmore. There is therefore a clear need for a compelling planning justification explaining why appropriate non-Green Belt sites have been discounted. No such justification is evident within the available evidence base. MMH's Site demonstrates that significant housing can be delivered at a Main Rural Settlement without impacting major constraints, and its location immediately adjacent to Rugby Town represents a highly sustainable option for growth outside of the principal settlement.
- 4.7 It is noted that the Council's spatial strategy for Main Rural Settlements appears to have been influenced by existing primary school capacity, as indicated in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). For Clifton upon Dunsmore, the SA identifies a limit of 150 dwellings, citing the inability of the primary school to expand. However, this single factor should not override the sequential approach, particularly where non-Green Belt land exists and could support additional growth in a sustainable manner.
- 4.8 MMH notes the following points in relation education capacity:
- Current pupil distribution: Approximately 84% of pupils attending Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary School reside within the village. However, a notable proportion of pupils currently travel from outside the village to attend the school. Analysis indicates that many of these pupils could instead attend schools closer to their home locations, suggesting that current travel patterns do not necessarily reflect true local demand for places within Clifton upon Dunsmore itself. In the interests of sustainable development, the Council and Local Education Authority should prioritise enabling local pupils to walk to their nearest school, thereby maximising the efficient use of existing village-based capacity and reducing unnecessary travel.
 - Future capacity: Clifton upon Dunsmore has an ageing population, as evidenced in the Housing Needs Assessment supporting the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan. Although the primary school is currently operating at capacity, many pupils will progress to secondary education in the coming years, creating natural turnover. By 2030/31, when additional housing growth is anticipated to start coming forward, MMH considers that sufficient capacity is likely to arise to accommodate pupils generated by both MMH's Site (180 dwellings) and the draft allocations (150 dwellings). This indicates that further development in the village could be accommodated without exceeding local education capacity, while also supporting sustainable travel patterns for pupils.

- 4.9 Furthermore, the Council's spatial strategy and the interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) fail to properly account for the strong functional relationship between Clifton upon Dunsmore and Rugby Town. Within 5km of the Site there are six primary schools, all accessible within approximately 10 minutes by car and with capacity to accommodate additional pupils. It would also be reasonable and feasible to enhance public transport options for school travel, thereby reducing reliance on private vehicles. Indeed, it is common practice for pupils living in villages to utilise bus services for journeys to and from school.
- 4.10 Alternatively, the Council could identify additional land for a new primary school as part of a wider village growth strategy, with funding contributions secured through appropriately worded planning policy. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan could be prepared to set out clearly how the school would be delivered and funded, including realistic timelines. While the interim SA assumes that a single large site is required to support additional school provision, it is well-established that a collection of smaller sites, such as those promoted within Clifton upon Dunsmore, could collectively deliver the necessary infrastructure.
- 4.11 MMH reserves the right to submit further evidence on education capacity at Examination.
- 4.12 The Council has not proactively explored this option or worked with site promoters to optimise growth at this non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement. Instead, growth has been discounted based on a technical constraint that is capable of being resolved. In doing so, the Council has prioritised this issue over national planning policy objectives, including the sequential approach to Green Belt release. MMH considers this to be a fundamental flaw in the Council's approach, which seriously threatens the soundness of the Local Plan.

Site Credentials

- 4.13 MMH acknowledges that the Council assessed the Site under Stage 2 of the site selection process (reference 83). However, the reasoning for not progressing the Site is considered flawed, particularly in the context of the sequential approach. The Council's assessment recognises that the Site is accessible, walkable to nearby services and facilities, is free from ecological constraints, and is located outside the Green Belt. The assessment cites concerns regarding heritage and landscape; however, these matters can be appropriately mitigated.
- 4.14 MMH has undertaken technical work to inform the emerging masterplan and has now submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. This demonstrates that the Site can come forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner.
- 4.15 Heritage - The Council's Heritage Assessment acknowledges that impacts could be mitigated through high-quality design. The emerging Concept Plan incorporates the following mitigation measures:
- The existing village green to the west of the Site will be extended to form a communal open space, maintaining the rural backdrop of views from heritage assets and providing an attractive gateway to the village.

- The extended green will transition to the east into a parkland character, restoring elements of historic landscape, including the tree avenue, which will form an important green corridor through the development.
- The northern edge of built development will adopt a gentle building line, softened by additional planting, to ensure a sensitive transition with the Conservation Area and surrounding landscape.

4.16 Landscape – The Site forms a logical “rounding-off” of Clifton upon Dunsmore. The draft allocation at Land North of Lilbourne Road (site reference 129) would significantly alter the existing rural setting. The Dunsmore Plateau Fringe, where the Site is located, is of moderate sensitivity, lower than many other Main Rural Settlements, making it appropriate for development.

4.17 Ecology – The Site is predominantly arable land with native hedgerows along boundaries and scattered mature trees. The majority of trees and hedgerows are to be retained. The Site can be developed while achieving at least 10% biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.

4.18 Sustainability – The Site is well connected to local services and facilities, including education, retail, healthcare, leisure, and food & beverage amenities, all within acceptable walking or cycling distances. Local bus services run via Main Street, Clifton upon Dunsmore, with the nearest stop approximately 380m from the Site (a 5-minute walk). Rugby Station, approximately 2.5km west, provides frequent services to key destinations including Birmingham, London, Milton Keynes, Manchester, and Crewe.

4.19 Flood Risk – The entirety of the Site lies within Flood Zone 1, representing a low probability of flooding, according to Environment Agency data.

4.20 Overall Assessment – In the context of the sequential approach, the Site is preferable to draft allocations at other Main Rural Settlements, which would require the release of Green Belt land. The Concept Masterplan (Appendix 1) demonstrates that development at the Site is sustainable, deliverable, and well-designed. It can accommodate approximately 720 homes, alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, while sensitively addressing heritage, ecological, and landscape considerations.

Overall

4.21 MMH considers that the Council’s approach to distributing housing across Rugby Borough is fundamentally unsound. The plan places significant reliance on Green Belt release at Main Rural Settlements, without demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives outside the Green Belt have been fully considered, as required by NPPF paragraphs 145–147.

4.22 Clifton upon Dunsmore represents a sustainable, non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement capable of accommodating substantial growth. This representation demonstrates that:

- The Site is well-connected to Rugby Town and local services, supporting sustainable travel patterns;
- Primary education capacity is sufficient, and additional infrastructure could be delivered through a co-ordinated approach;
- Heritage, landscape, and ecological constraints can be appropriately mitigated; and
- The Site can deliver approximately 180 homes alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, consistent with the Council's spatial strategy objectives.

4.23 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 36, strategic policies should ensure that housing and other development are distributed effectively across the plan area to meet identified needs. MMH's Site represents a sequentially preferable location for growth, outside the Green Belt, and capable of delivering sustainable development.

4.24 Accordingly, MMH considers that unless the Council gives proper weight to non-Green Belt opportunities such as the Site, the Local Plan will fail the tests of soundness, including justification, effectiveness, and consistency with national policy. Allocation of the Site would address these fundamental concerns and align the plan with national planning policy on the distribution of development.

5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings

- 5.1 MMH recognises the importance of planning for net zero carbon development as part of the wider objective of addressing climate change. However, there are significant concerns regarding the approach set out in Draft Policy CL1, which indicates the potential for the emerging Local Plan to introduce requirements that go beyond the standards set out in Building Regulations.
- 5.2 The Government's position on this matter is clear. A Written Ministerial Statement on Planning – Energy Efficiency Standards for New Homes (13 December 2023) confirms that planning policies should not impose energy performance standards that exceed the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, noting the forthcoming introduction of the Future Homes Standard, expected to be implemented in 2025.
- 5.3 The Written Ministerial Statement states that *“the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations. The proliferation of multiple local standards by local planning authorities can add further costs to building new homes by adding complexity and undermining economies of scale. Any planning policies that propose local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations should be rejected at examination if they do not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale.”*
- 5.4 Requiring development to exceed the requirements of Building Regulations is therefore likely to introduce unnecessary complexity and additional cost burdens for developers. This has the potential to affect development viability and could slow the delivery of new homes and employment development required to meet the needs identified in the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that standards exceeding current or planned Building Regulations are necessary, viable and consistent with national policy, Draft Policy CL1 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the approach may conflict with national policy set out in the NPPF and the Written Ministerial Statement, which make clear that local planning authorities should not set local energy efficiency standards that go beyond current or planned Building Regulations without a robustly evidenced and costed justification. The policy should therefore be amended to ensure alignment with national policy and to avoid placing unnecessary constraints on the delivery and viability of development required to meet the Borough's housing and economic needs.

6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

- 6.1 MMH has concerns regarding the requirement within Policy EN5 for a minimum 20% tree canopy cover to be delivered on all major development outside of Rugby Town Centre. It is understood that this figure appears to have been derived from a 2023 report produced by Friends of the Earth, which estimated that approximately 4.5% of Rugby Borough comprises woodland, placing the Borough within the lowest 20% of English local authorities for woodland coverage. The intention of Policy EN5 is therefore to address this identified shortfall.
- 6.2 Whilst the objective of increasing tree canopy cover is supported in principle, further evidence is required to demonstrate how this requirement can be implemented effectively across a range of development sites. In particular, it is unclear how a blanket 20% canopy coverage requirement can be consistently delivered alongside the range of other policy requirements expected of development proposals.
- 6.3 For example, there is potential for conflict between the objectives of Policy EN5 and the statutory requirement to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain under the Environment Act 2021, particularly on constrained sites. Achieving both requirements simultaneously may not always be feasible once other essential considerations such as layout, drainage infrastructure, open space provision and highways requirements are taken into account.
- 6.4 The policy should therefore adopt a more flexible approach to tree canopy provision, allowing proposals to be assessed on a site-by-site basis having regard to site characteristics, viability and the ability to deliver wider environmental benefits. Without such flexibility, the policy risks creating unnecessary constraints on development and may affect the deliverability of allocated and windfall sites.
- 6.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that a blanket 20% tree canopy coverage requirement is deliverable across all major development sites, Policy EN5 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the policy may not be justified or effective when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, as it has not been demonstrated that the requirement can be delivered alongside other policy obligations, including biodiversity net gain, open space provision, drainage infrastructure and development viability. The policy should therefore be amended to introduce greater flexibility and allow canopy coverage to be considered on a site-specific basis having regard to site characteristics and overall environmental outcomes.

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan



27 SPON STREET, COVENTRY, CV1 3BA
 T: +44 (0)24 7652 7600 E: info@idpgroup.com

© This drawing and the building works depicted are the copyright of IDP and may not be reproduced or amended except by written permission. No liability will be accepted for amendments made by other persons.

All dimensions to be checked on site and architect notified of any discrepancies prior to commencement.

Any and all elements relating to the fire safety of the project will require separate confirmation and approval by a fully accredited fire engineering consultant under separate client appointment.

E	Redline boundary updated	28.01.26 - TJ - BF
D	Landscape updated and internal links improved	30.10.25 - TJ - TJ
C	North eastern footpath connection removed	16.09.25 - TJ - DZ
B	Amended to project team comments	15.09.25 - TJ - DZ
A	Development parcels and road adjustments	20.08.25 - TJ - DZ
Rev:	Comments:	Date-Name-Check:

Drg No: **C6057_001_03 Rev E**

Client: Mackenzie Miller Homes

Project: Clifton on Dunsmore

Title: Illustrative Framework Masterplan

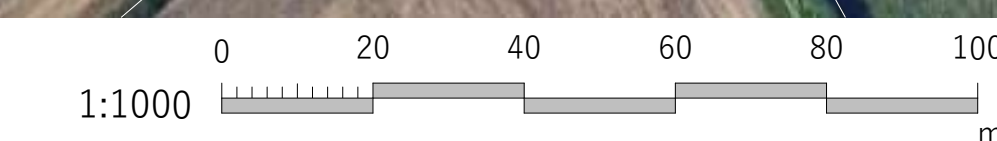
Scale: 1:1000 @ A0 Date: 24.01.25

RIBA: Stage 1 Dm/Ch: TJ/BF

Status: **FEASIBILITY**



Pro. No: **C6057**



Nexus Planning

Suite 2, Apex Plaza
3 Forbury Road,
Reading,
RG1 1AX

nexusplanning.co.uk

Representation Form for Local Plans



Local Plan Publication Stage Representation Form

Ref:

(For official
use only)

**Name of the Local Plan to which
this representation relates:**

Rugby Borough Council Proposed Submission
Local Plan

Please return to Rugby Borough Council by 5:00pm Friday 13th March 2026
By email to: localplan@rugby.gov.uk with **Proposed Submission Consultation in
the subject line, OR by post to:** Development Strategy, Town Hall, Evreux Way,
Rugby, CV21 2RR.

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation
you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes below (if applicable)
but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="Adam"/>	<input type="text" value="Connor"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Renn"/>	<input type="text" value="Shingler"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Mackenzie Miller Homes"/>	<input type="text" value="Nexus Planning"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Interchange Place"/>
Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="151-165 Edmund Street"/>
Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Birmingham"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="B3 2TA"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="c.shingler@nexusplanning.co.uk"/>

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each policy or site you wish to comment on

Name or Organisation:

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Local Plan Paragraph	<input type="text"/>	Local Plan Policy	EN6	Policies Map	<input type="text"/>
Site ID	<input type="text"/>				

4. Do you consider the Local Plan:

(1) is Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) is Sound	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(3) complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please refer to Section 6 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy EN6

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please refer to Section 6 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy EN6

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note: In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Mackenzie Miller Homes requests to participate in the Hearing Sessions for the Local Plan Examination. Mackenzie Miller Homes involvement is considered necessary to ensure matters relating to the spatial strategy, distribution of homes and land supply are considered during the hearing sessions.

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

9. If you have used AI to produce or substantially alter your representation, please declare which tool you have used, how it was used, and what checks you have undertaken to ensure the AI-produced material is accurate.

N/A

All representations received will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan and published on the council's website. Personal addresses and email addresses (as distinct from businesses addresses), but not names, will be redacted before representations are published.

The Rugby Borough Council Privacy Notice for Development Strategy is available here:

<https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/privacy#development-strategy>

The Planning Inspectorate's privacy notice can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-privacy-notice>



Land South of Lilbourne Road, Clifton upon Dunsmore
Rugby Borough Council Regulation 19 Representations

On behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes

March 2026

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy	5
3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes	6
4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations	12
5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings	17
6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover	18

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These representations, on behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes (“**MMH**”), are made to the Rugby Borough Local Plan 2025-2042 Proposed Submission Version (“**the Consultation**”) – a key stage to inform the emerging draft Local Plan being prepared by Rugby Borough Council (“**the Council**”).
- 1.2 MMH has an interest in all strategic and non-strategic land informing the draft Local Plan and these representations are made in the context of MMH interests in land south of Lilbourne Road on the eastern edge of Clifton upon Dunsmore (“**the Site**”). The Site has been previously promoted and submitted to the Call for Sites exercise and representations were made the Rugby Borough Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation in October 2023 and Preferred Options Consultation in May 2025.
- 1.3 MMH has submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. The submission demonstrates that the Site is capable of coming forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner, and therefore represents a suitable and sequentially preferable location for allocation within the Local Plan.
- 1.4 A Framework Masterplan outlining the concept of the Site is in **Appendix 1** of these representations.

Approach to Representations

- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, at paragraph 36, the tests of soundness that Local Plans and Spatial Development Strategies are examined against, as follows, with the Consultation Plan being considered in the light of these tests:
- a) **“Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs²⁰; 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 and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant”

1.6 These representations respond to key parts of the Consultation Plan, highlighting the specific policy, paragraph or pages of the Consultation Plan, or supporting evidence document being addressed. They focus primarily on the following policies of the Consultation Plan:

- Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy
- Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes
- Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations
- Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings
- Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.1 Draft Policy S1 sets out how housing and economic development will be distributed across Rugby Borough in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, with the majority of development directed towards the Rugby urban area.
- 2.2 MMH supports Policy S1 as currently drafted. In particular, it is noted that Clifton upon Dunsmore is identified as a Main Rural Settlement and is therefore second only to Rugby Town within the settlement hierarchy. The village is also well related to Rugby both spatially and in terms of accessibility to services and facilities. Whilst not located within the Rugby urban area, Clifton upon Dunsmore benefits from close proximity to the town and is able to readily access employment opportunities, services and community infrastructure, including schools and further education provision.
- 2.3 In light of the above, MMH generally supports the ranking and hierarchy of settlements set out within Draft Policy S1 and considers that, in this respect, the approach is sound.

3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes

Plan Period

- 3.1 The Consultation presents a revised strategy for the delivery of new homes across a 17-year period from 2025 to 2042. MMH is disappointed that the Council has decided to reduce the plan period from 2045 to 2042, which in turn substantially reduces the overall housing requirement from 14,134 to 11,729 homes.
- 3.2 The Council's Local Development Scheme indicates that the draft Local Plan will be submitted in June 2026 with adoption by June 2027. MMH consider this to be an unrealistic timeline. Reference is made to a letter from the Minister of State to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2024¹, highlighting the average length of examinations to be 134 weeks, taking account of the need for modifications, re-consultation and hearing sessions over an extended period, substantially greater than the Council's assumptions.
- 3.3 Therefore, where adoption of the Local Plan is extremely unlikely to be before the end of 2027 at the earliest, relevant strategic policies should look ahead to 2042/43, an additional year beyond the end of the Consultation's current plan period, to ensure a minimum period of 15 years from adoption and accordance with the NPPF.
- 3.4 One effect of increasing the plan period by one year is that the draft Local Plan will need to accommodate a proportionate increase of an additional 636 homes, as part of its housing requirement over that longer period to seek to ensure local housing need is met. Failure to address this in advance of the Regulation 22 stages will inevitably result in the Local Plan Inspector raising concerns related to conflict with paragraph 22 of the Framework thus potentially delaying the Examination Process.
- 3.5 As precedent, the Inspector for the West Berkshire Local Plan examination addressed a similarly deficient plan period through prescribed main modifications, citing reasons expressed above and requiring additional homes to be accommodated / planned for. For context the Examination for that Local Plan took place between May and October 2024 with the agreed Local Plan period up to 2041 (the same as that currently proposed by the Council despite the process in West Berkshire being concluded two years earlier).

¹ [Local Plan examinations: letter to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate \(July 2024\)](#)

3.6 It is also notable that the reduction in the overall housing requirement is largely a direct consequence of the shortened plan period. By reducing the end date of the plan from 2045 to 2042, the Council has significantly reduced the number of homes that would otherwise be planned for across the Borough. MMH considers that plan periods should be established primarily to ensure compliance with national policy requirements and to provide a robust long-term spatial strategy, rather than being used in a manner that has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery. Extending the plan period to ensure a full 15 years from adoption would therefore represent a more appropriate and policy-compliant approach in accordance with the NPPF.

Housing Requirement

3.7 The Consultation confirms that the draft Local Plan is seeking to meet the Council's standard method local housing need, as it must, in accordance with Framework paragraph 62.

3.8 With a housing need of 636 dwellings per annum (dpa) over 17 years, a total of 11,729 new homes must be accommodated across Rugby Borough. However, beyond that figure, key issues of housing affordability and economic factors should be taken into account.

Affordability

3.9 Whilst the standard method includes an affordability adjustment, the Planning Practice Guidance ("the PPG") is clear that when applied it only starts to address such issues. It is not a full solution to problems of affordability:

*"The affordability adjustment is applied in order to ensure that the standard method for assessing local housing need responds to price signals and is consistent with the policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The specific adjustment in this guidance is set at a level to ensure that minimum annual housing need starts to address the affordability of homes."*²

3.10 Rugby Borough faces great affordability pressures; the the ratio of median house prices to workplace-based earnings has reached a five year average of 7.4 in 2024, a rise of more than 138% from that in 1997.

² Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 2a-006-20241212

3.11 The affordable housing need identified in Table 5.7 of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (September 2025) is 474 dwellings per annum. When compared to the Council's selected local housing need of 636 dwellings per annum, affordable housing need would equate to approximately 75% of the overall housing requirement. This clearly demonstrates that the selected housing requirement will result in a significant level of unmet affordable housing need if the Local Plan Review proceeds in its current form. This is particularly concerning given the Council's recent delivery performance, as evidenced through its Annual Monitoring Reports, which indicates that affordable housing delivery is already falling short of identified need.

3.12 In practice, the most effective way to address affordability pressures and reduce the identified affordable housing need is to plan for the delivery of a greater overall supply of housing across the Borough, which in turn will increase the quantum of affordable housing delivered through policy requirements and planning obligations.

3.13 The declining delivery of affordable housing further reinforces the importance of ensuring that the Local Plan provides for a sufficient quantity and appropriate mix of housing to meet identified needs. The NPPF states at paragraph 63:

"Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies..."

3.14 For these reasons, MMH considers that the Council should take a more proactive approach to addressing the housing crisis within the Borough and plan for a higher level of housing growth than currently proposed. Increasing the overall housing requirement would provide a more effective means of responding to affordability pressures and supporting the delivery of the affordable homes required to meet identified need.

Economic Factors

3.15 The need to boost the supply of homes is also necessary in relation to economic factors: Framework paragraph 85 requires planning policies to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

3.16 The Homes – Jobs Alignment Paper (December 2025) and HEDNA (2024) identifies strong economic performance and a buoyant labour market as key drivers of Rugby Borough's housing market. A growing surplus of workforce workers over resident workers and growth in net commuting into West Northamptonshire from Coventry and West Northamptonshire; and (ii) deteriorating housing affordability from a lack of supply / demand imbalance.

3.17 The HEDNA recognises the strong demand for housing as workers seek to live locally to where they are employed.

3.18 If left unaddressed, unaffordable house prices will hold back West Northamptonshire's economic potential – deterring young professionals hoping to live and work in the county and affecting the ability of businesses to recruit staff.

3.19 The draft Local Plan should therefore go further than seeking to meet only the minimum level of housing under the standard method. It should take a positive approach to boost the number of homes, beyond the minimum starting point; opportunities for additional growth on the edge of Rugby, which includes Clifton upon Dunsmore, (support its current and expanding economic / employment offer) and other sustainable locations should be identified.

Housing Supply

3.20 Draft Policy S2 of the Consultation Plan sets the Council's sources of housing supply for the plan period. These totals include completions up to March 2025, committed developments with planning permission, allocations in neighbourhood plans, allocations in the Consultation Plan, and windfall allowances.

Resilience

3.21 The resilience of the proposed housing supply is questioned. Whilst Draft Policy S2 the categories of supply, it does not specify individual sites with planning permission in either the Consultation Plan or supporting documents. This detail is only found in the Housing Land Supply Statements (HLSS), which is assumed to be applicable for the Consultation Plan.

3.22 The HLSS suggests that the early years of the plan period will rely on carried-over allocations (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton) and small to medium-scale sites, supplemented by windfall development. Notably, the housing supply is almost dependent on three large strategic sites (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton). This heavy reliance on a few strategic sites raises concerns about the resilience of the Councils housing supply over the entire plan period if one or more of the sites were to suffer any delays in anticipated delivery timescales.

Housing Trajectory

3.23 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites.

3.24 An overarching housing trajectory for the plan is contained in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan. However, it is unclear how these findings have been calculated as the housing trajectory is not site-specific. Whilst it is appreciated this is not an absolute requirement of the NPPF at a site level, given the importance of strategic allocations to later supply, this is important information to ensure the Consultation Plan is deliverable over the plan period and thus effective.

- 3.25 The only site-specific detail on housing trajectory is contained in the HLSS. However, upon examination, there appears to be a conflict between both the latest housing trajectory in the Consultation Plan and the HLSS. It is unclear how the housing trajectory in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan has been informed. It is therefore considered the Consultation Plan fails to provide an evidenced housing trajectory and is contrary to the requirements of Paragraph 78.

Windfalls

- 3.26 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF sets out that where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply
- 3.27 The windfall allowance over the plan period is 850 dwellings, noting that these figures should only apply for future years of the plan period, as otherwise they would fall into the completion/commitments categories.
- 3.28 The HLSS provides information relating to historic windfall delivery rates but does not consider future trends, as required by the NPPF. Furthermore, it is notable the windfall allowance for each Council is higher on an annualised basis than in the Councils current adopted Local Plan.
- 3.29 Given the above, the windfall allowance within the Consultation Plan is not supported by compelling evidence, meaning it is not consistent with national policy or justified, contrary to the soundness tests outlined at paragraph 36 of the NPPF. To overcome this issue, further evidence should be provided or the windfall allowance removed/significantly reduced.

Overall

- 3.30 For the reasons set out above, MMH considers that the Consultation Plan raises a number of significant concerns in relation to the proposed plan period, housing requirement and the robustness of the Council's housing supply evidence. The proposed plan period is unlikely to provide the required minimum 15-year timeframe from adoption, contrary to paragraph 22 of the NPPF, and has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery planned for across the Borough.
- 3.31 Furthermore, the proposed housing requirement of 636 dwellings per annum represents only the minimum starting point under the standard method and does not adequately respond to the scale of affordability pressures, the substantial identified affordable housing need, or the Borough's economic growth ambitions. Planning for a higher level of housing delivery would provide a more effective means of addressing these issues and supporting the delivery of affordable homes.

- 3.32 In addition, concerns remain regarding the resilience and transparency of the proposed housing supply, including the lack of a clearly evidenced housing trajectory, the significant reliance on a limited number of large strategic sites in the latter part of the plan period, and the reliance on a windfall allowance which is not supported by compelling evidence.
- 3.33 Taken together, these issues raise significant questions regarding whether the Consultation Plan is positively prepared, justified and effective, when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in paragraph 36 of the NPPF. The Council should therefore reconsider the proposed plan period, housing requirement and supporting housing supply evidence prior to submission to ensure that the Local Plan provides a robust and deliverable strategy capable of meeting the Borough's housing needs over the full plan period.

4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations

Distribution of Development

- 4.1 MMH have serious soundness concerns regarding the Council's strategy in distributing residential development across the borough. The Council are currently proposing to allocate a significant amount of land at Main Rural Settlements which would require release of Green Belt land. The NPPF sets out at paragraph 145 that *'...Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced through the preparation or updating of plans.'*
- 4.2 For plan-makers to reach a point where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, paragraph 146 confirms that this can include *'...instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means'.*
- 4.3 And at paragraph 147 *'Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.'*
- 4.4 This assessment of whether all other reasonable options have been examined will need to take account of NPPF paragraph 147:
- a) *"makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
 - b) *optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
 - c) *has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground."*
- 4.5 The NPPF clearly sets out a sequential approach to allocating land for development within the Green Belt – essentially dictating that utilising Green Belt land should be a 'last resort', where there are no other options to accommodate the required growth. MMH consider the sequential approach to be particularly relevant given the availability of land sustainably located land outside the Green Belt, such as in Clifton upon Dunsmore and specifically MMH's Site.

- 4.6 MMH questions whether the Council has sufficiently considered all reasonable options. Clifton upon Dunsmore, unlike other Main Rural Settlements, is not constrained by the Green Belt. By contrast, Wolvey (290 dwellings), Brinklow (325 dwellings) and Long Lawford (650 dwellings) are all within the Green Belt and are planning for higher levels of growth than Clifton upon Dunsmore. There is therefore a clear need for a compelling planning justification explaining why appropriate non-Green Belt sites have been discounted. No such justification is evident within the available evidence base. MMH's Site demonstrates that significant housing can be delivered at a Main Rural Settlement without impacting major constraints, and its location immediately adjacent to Rugby Town represents a highly sustainable option for growth outside of the principal settlement.
- 4.7 It is noted that the Council's spatial strategy for Main Rural Settlements appears to have been influenced by existing primary school capacity, as indicated in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). For Clifton upon Dunsmore, the SA identifies a limit of 150 dwellings, citing the inability of the primary school to expand. However, this single factor should not override the sequential approach, particularly where non-Green Belt land exists and could support additional growth in a sustainable manner.
- 4.8 MMH notes the following points in relation education capacity:
- Current pupil distribution: Approximately 84% of pupils attending Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary School reside within the village. However, a notable proportion of pupils currently travel from outside the village to attend the school. Analysis indicates that many of these pupils could instead attend schools closer to their home locations, suggesting that current travel patterns do not necessarily reflect true local demand for places within Clifton upon Dunsmore itself. In the interests of sustainable development, the Council and Local Education Authority should prioritise enabling local pupils to walk to their nearest school, thereby maximising the efficient use of existing village-based capacity and reducing unnecessary travel.
 - Future capacity: Clifton upon Dunsmore has an ageing population, as evidenced in the Housing Needs Assessment supporting the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan. Although the primary school is currently operating at capacity, many pupils will progress to secondary education in the coming years, creating natural turnover. By 2030/31, when additional housing growth is anticipated to start coming forward, MMH considers that sufficient capacity is likely to arise to accommodate pupils generated by both MMH's Site (180 dwellings) and the draft allocations (150 dwellings). This indicates that further development in the village could be accommodated without exceeding local education capacity, while also supporting sustainable travel patterns for pupils.

- 4.9 Furthermore, the Council's spatial strategy and the interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) fail to properly account for the strong functional relationship between Clifton upon Dunsmore and Rugby Town. Within 5km of the Site there are six primary schools, all accessible within approximately 10 minutes by car and with capacity to accommodate additional pupils. It would also be reasonable and feasible to enhance public transport options for school travel, thereby reducing reliance on private vehicles. Indeed, it is common practice for pupils living in villages to utilise bus services for journeys to and from school.
- 4.10 Alternatively, the Council could identify additional land for a new primary school as part of a wider village growth strategy, with funding contributions secured through appropriately worded planning policy. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan could be prepared to set out clearly how the school would be delivered and funded, including realistic timelines. While the interim SA assumes that a single large site is required to support additional school provision, it is well-established that a collection of smaller sites, such as those promoted within Clifton upon Dunsmore, could collectively deliver the necessary infrastructure.
- 4.11 MMH reserves the right to submit further evidence on education capacity at Examination.
- 4.12 The Council has not proactively explored this option or worked with site promoters to optimise growth at this non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement. Instead, growth has been discounted based on a technical constraint that is capable of being resolved. In doing so, the Council has prioritised this issue over national planning policy objectives, including the sequential approach to Green Belt release. MMH considers this to be a fundamental flaw in the Council's approach, which seriously threatens the soundness of the Local Plan.

Site Credentials

- 4.13 MMH acknowledges that the Council assessed the Site under Stage 2 of the site selection process (reference 83). However, the reasoning for not progressing the Site is considered flawed, particularly in the context of the sequential approach. The Council's assessment recognises that the Site is accessible, walkable to nearby services and facilities, is free from ecological constraints, and is located outside the Green Belt. The assessment cites concerns regarding heritage and landscape; however, these matters can be appropriately mitigated.
- 4.14 MMH has undertaken technical work to inform the emerging masterplan and has now submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. This demonstrates that the Site can come forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner.
- 4.15 Heritage - The Council's Heritage Assessment acknowledges that impacts could be mitigated through high-quality design. The emerging Concept Plan incorporates the following mitigation measures:
- The existing village green to the west of the Site will be extended to form a communal open space, maintaining the rural backdrop of views from heritage assets and providing an attractive gateway to the village.

- The extended green will transition to the east into a parkland character, restoring elements of historic landscape, including the tree avenue, which will form an important green corridor through the development.
- The northern edge of built development will adopt a gentle building line, softened by additional planting, to ensure a sensitive transition with the Conservation Area and surrounding landscape.

4.16 Landscape – The Site forms a logical “rounding-off” of Clifton upon Dunsmore. The draft allocation at Land North of Lilbourne Road (site reference 129) would significantly alter the existing rural setting. The Dunsmore Plateau Fringe, where the Site is located, is of moderate sensitivity, lower than many other Main Rural Settlements, making it appropriate for development.

4.17 Ecology – The Site is predominantly arable land with native hedgerows along boundaries and scattered mature trees. The majority of trees and hedgerows are to be retained. The Site can be developed while achieving at least 10% biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.

4.18 Sustainability – The Site is well connected to local services and facilities, including education, retail, healthcare, leisure, and food & beverage amenities, all within acceptable walking or cycling distances. Local bus services run via Main Street, Clifton upon Dunsmore, with the nearest stop approximately 380m from the Site (a 5-minute walk). Rugby Station, approximately 2.5km west, provides frequent services to key destinations including Birmingham, London, Milton Keynes, Manchester, and Crewe.

4.19 Flood Risk – The entirety of the Site lies within Flood Zone 1, representing a low probability of flooding, according to Environment Agency data.

4.20 Overall Assessment – In the context of the sequential approach, the Site is preferable to draft allocations at other Main Rural Settlements, which would require the release of Green Belt land. The Concept Masterplan (Appendix 1) demonstrates that development at the Site is sustainable, deliverable, and well-designed. It can accommodate approximately 720 homes, alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, while sensitively addressing heritage, ecological, and landscape considerations.

Overall

4.21 MMH considers that the Council’s approach to distributing housing across Rugby Borough is fundamentally unsound. The plan places significant reliance on Green Belt release at Main Rural Settlements, without demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives outside the Green Belt have been fully considered, as required by NPPF paragraphs 145–147.

4.22 Clifton upon Dunsmore represents a sustainable, non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement capable of accommodating substantial growth. This representation demonstrates that:

- The Site is well-connected to Rugby Town and local services, supporting sustainable travel patterns;
- Primary education capacity is sufficient, and additional infrastructure could be delivered through a co-ordinated approach;
- Heritage, landscape, and ecological constraints can be appropriately mitigated; and
- The Site can deliver approximately 180 homes alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, consistent with the Council's spatial strategy objectives.

4.23 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 36, strategic policies should ensure that housing and other development are distributed effectively across the plan area to meet identified needs. MMH's Site represents a sequentially preferable location for growth, outside the Green Belt, and capable of delivering sustainable development.

4.24 Accordingly, MMH considers that unless the Council gives proper weight to non-Green Belt opportunities such as the Site, the Local Plan will fail the tests of soundness, including justification, effectiveness, and consistency with national policy. Allocation of the Site would address these fundamental concerns and align the plan with national planning policy on the distribution of development.

5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings

- 5.1 MMH recognises the importance of planning for net zero carbon development as part of the wider objective of addressing climate change. However, there are significant concerns regarding the approach set out in Draft Policy CL1, which indicates the potential for the emerging Local Plan to introduce requirements that go beyond the standards set out in Building Regulations.
- 5.2 The Government's position on this matter is clear. A Written Ministerial Statement on Planning – Energy Efficiency Standards for New Homes (13 December 2023) confirms that planning policies should not impose energy performance standards that exceed the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, noting the forthcoming introduction of the Future Homes Standard, expected to be implemented in 2025.
- 5.3 The Written Ministerial Statement states that *“the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations. The proliferation of multiple local standards by local planning authorities can add further costs to building new homes by adding complexity and undermining economies of scale. Any planning policies that propose local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations should be rejected at examination if they do not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale.”*
- 5.4 Requiring development to exceed the requirements of Building Regulations is therefore likely to introduce unnecessary complexity and additional cost burdens for developers. This has the potential to affect development viability and could slow the delivery of new homes and employment development required to meet the needs identified in the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that standards exceeding current or planned Building Regulations are necessary, viable and consistent with national policy, Draft Policy CL1 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the approach may conflict with national policy set out in the NPPF and the Written Ministerial Statement, which make clear that local planning authorities should not set local energy efficiency standards that go beyond current or planned Building Regulations without a robustly evidenced and costed justification. The policy should therefore be amended to ensure alignment with national policy and to avoid placing unnecessary constraints on the delivery and viability of development required to meet the Borough's housing and economic needs.

6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

- 6.1 MMH has concerns regarding the requirement within Policy EN5 for a minimum 20% tree canopy cover to be delivered on all major development outside of Rugby Town Centre. It is understood that this figure appears to have been derived from a 2023 report produced by Friends of the Earth, which estimated that approximately 4.5% of Rugby Borough comprises woodland, placing the Borough within the lowest 20% of English local authorities for woodland coverage. The intention of Policy EN5 is therefore to address this identified shortfall.
- 6.2 Whilst the objective of increasing tree canopy cover is supported in principle, further evidence is required to demonstrate how this requirement can be implemented effectively across a range of development sites. In particular, it is unclear how a blanket 20% canopy coverage requirement can be consistently delivered alongside the range of other policy requirements expected of development proposals.
- 6.3 For example, there is potential for conflict between the objectives of Policy EN5 and the statutory requirement to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain under the Environment Act 2021, particularly on constrained sites. Achieving both requirements simultaneously may not always be feasible once other essential considerations such as layout, drainage infrastructure, open space provision and highways requirements are taken into account.
- 6.4 The policy should therefore adopt a more flexible approach to tree canopy provision, allowing proposals to be assessed on a site-by-site basis having regard to site characteristics, viability and the ability to deliver wider environmental benefits. Without such flexibility, the policy risks creating unnecessary constraints on development and may affect the deliverability of allocated and windfall sites.
- 6.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that a blanket 20% tree canopy coverage requirement is deliverable across all major development sites, Policy EN5 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the policy may not be justified or effective when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, as it has not been demonstrated that the requirement can be delivered alongside other policy obligations, including biodiversity net gain, open space provision, drainage infrastructure and development viability. The policy should therefore be amended to introduce greater flexibility and allow canopy coverage to be considered on a site-specific basis having regard to site characteristics and overall environmental outcomes.

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan



27 SPON STREET, COVENTRY, CV1 3BA
 T: +44 (0)24 7652 7600 E: info@idpgroup.com

© This drawing and the building works depicted are the copyright of IDP and may not be reproduced or amended except by written permission. No liability will be accepted for amendments made by other persons.

All dimensions to be checked on site and architect notified of any discrepancies prior to commencement.

Any and all elements relating to the fire safety of the project will require separate confirmation and approval by a fully accredited fire engineering consultant under separate client appointment.

E	Redline boundary updated	28.01.26 - TJ - BF
D	Landscape updated and internal links improved	30.10.25 - TJ - TJ
C	North eastern footpath connection removed	16.09.25 - TJ - DZ
B	Amended to project team comments	15.09.25 - TJ - DZ
A	Development parcels and road adjustments	20.08.25 - TJ - DZ
Rev:	Comments:	Date-Name-Check:

Dwg No: **C6057_001_03 Rev E**

Client: Mackenzie Miller Homes

Project: Clifton on Dunsmore

Title: Illustrative Framework Masterplan

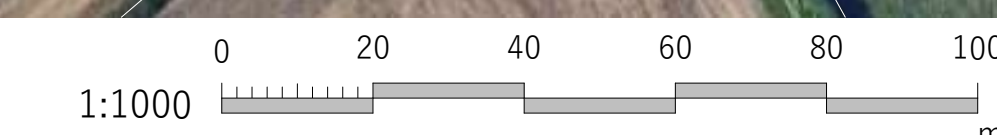
Scale: 1:1000 @ A0 Date: 24.01.25

RIBA: Stage 1 Dm/Ch: TJ/BF

Status: **FEASIBILITY**



Pro. No: **C6057**



[Nexus Planning](#)

Suite 2, Apex Plaza
3 Forbury Road,
Reading,
RG1 1AX

nexusplanning.co.uk

Representation Form for Local Plans



Local Plan Publication Stage Representation Form

Ref:

(For official
use only)

**Name of the Local Plan to which
this representation relates:**

Rugby Borough Council Proposed Submission
Local Plan

Please return to Rugby Borough Council by 5:00pm Friday 13th March 2026
By email to: localplan@rugby.gov.uk with **Proposed Submission Consultation in
the subject line, OR by post to:** Development Strategy, Town Hall, Evreux Way,
Rugby, CV21 2RR.

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation
you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes below (if applicable)
but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="Adam"/>	<input type="text" value="Connor"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Renn"/>	<input type="text" value="Shingler"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Mackenzie Miller Homes"/>	<input type="text" value="Nexus Planning"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Interchange Place"/>
Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="151-165 Edmund Street"/>
Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Birmingham"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="B3 2TA"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="c.shingler@nexusplanning.co.uk"/>

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each policy or site you wish to comment on

Name or Organisation:

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Local Plan Paragraph	<input type="text"/>	Local Plan Policy	<input type="text" value="Policy S1"/>	Policies Map	<input type="text"/>
Site ID	<input type="text"/>				

4. Do you consider the Local Plan:

(1) is Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text" value="x"/>
(2) is Sound	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text" value="x"/>
(3) complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please refer to Section 2 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy S1

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please refer to Section 2 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy S1

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note: In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Mackenzie Miller Homes requests to participate in the Hearing Sessions for the Local Plan Examination. Mackenzie Miller Homes involvement is considered necessary to ensure matters relating to the spatial strategy, distribution of homes and land supply are considered during the hearing sessions.

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

9. If you have used AI to produce or substantially alter your representation, please declare which tool you have used, how it was used, and what checks you have undertaken to ensure the AI-produced material is accurate.

N/A

All representations received will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan and published on the council's website. Personal addresses and email addresses (as distinct from businesses addresses), but not names, will be redacted before representations are published.

The Rugby Borough Council Privacy Notice for Development Strategy is available here:

<https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/privacy#development-strategy>

The Planning Inspectorate's privacy notice can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-privacy-notice>



Land South of Lilbourne Road, Clifton upon Dunsmore
Rugby Borough Council Regulation 19 Representations

On behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes

March 2026

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy	5
3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes	6
4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations	12
5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings	17
6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover	18

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These representations, on behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes (“**MMH**”), are made to the Rugby Borough Local Plan 2025-2042 Proposed Submission Version (“**the Consultation**”) – a key stage to inform the emerging draft Local Plan being prepared by Rugby Borough Council (“**the Council**”).
- 1.2 MMH has an interest in all strategic and non-strategic land informing the draft Local Plan and these representations are made in the context of MMH interests in land south of Lilbourne Road on the eastern edge of Clifton upon Dunsmore (“**the Site**”). The Site has been previously promoted and submitted to the Call for Sites exercise and representations were made the Rugby Borough Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation in October 2023 and Preferred Options Consultation in May 2025.
- 1.3 MMH has submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. The submission demonstrates that the Site is capable of coming forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner, and therefore represents a suitable and sequentially preferable location for allocation within the Local Plan.
- 1.4 A Framework Masterplan outlining the concept of the Site is in **Appendix 1** of these representations.

Approach to Representations

- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, at paragraph 36, the tests of soundness that Local Plans and Spatial Development Strategies are examined against, as follows, with the Consultation Plan being considered in the light of these tests:
- a) **“Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs²⁰; 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 and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant”

1.6 These representations respond to key parts of the Consultation Plan, highlighting the specific policy, paragraph or pages of the Consultation Plan, or supporting evidence document being addressed. They focus primarily on the following policies of the Consultation Plan:

- Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy
- Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes
- Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations
- Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings
- Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.1 Draft Policy S1 sets out how housing and economic development will be distributed across Rugby Borough in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, with the majority of development directed towards the Rugby urban area.
- 2.2 MMH supports Policy S1 as currently drafted. In particular, it is noted that Clifton upon Dunsmore is identified as a Main Rural Settlement and is therefore second only to Rugby Town within the settlement hierarchy. The village is also well related to Rugby both spatially and in terms of accessibility to services and facilities. Whilst not located within the Rugby urban area, Clifton upon Dunsmore benefits from close proximity to the town and is able to readily access employment opportunities, services and community infrastructure, including schools and further education provision.
- 2.3 In light of the above, MMH generally supports the ranking and hierarchy of settlements set out within Draft Policy S1 and considers that, in this respect, the approach is sound.

3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes

Plan Period

- 3.1 The Consultation presents a revised strategy for the delivery of new homes across a 17-year period from 2025 to 2042. MMH is disappointed that the Council has decided to reduce the plan period from 2045 to 2042, which in turn substantially reduces the overall housing requirement from 14,134 to 11,729 homes.
- 3.2 The Council's Local Development Scheme indicates that the draft Local Plan will be submitted in June 2026 with adoption by June 2027. MMH consider this to be an unrealistic timeline. Reference is made to a letter from the Minister of State to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2024¹, highlighting the average length of examinations to be 134 weeks, taking account of the need for modifications, re-consultation and hearing sessions over an extended period, substantially greater than the Council's assumptions.
- 3.3 Therefore, where adoption of the Local Plan is extremely unlikely to be before the end of 2027 at the earliest, relevant strategic policies should look ahead to 2042/43, an additional year beyond the end of the Consultation's current plan period, to ensure a minimum period of 15 years from adoption and accordance with the NPPF.
- 3.4 One effect of increasing the plan period by one year is that the draft Local Plan will need to accommodate a proportionate increase of an additional 636 homes, as part of its housing requirement over that longer period to seek to ensure local housing need is met. Failure to address this in advance of the Regulation 22 stages will inevitably result in the Local Plan Inspector raising concerns related to conflict with paragraph 22 of the Framework thus potentially delaying the Examination Process.
- 3.5 As precedent, the Inspector for the West Berkshire Local Plan examination addressed a similarly deficient plan period through prescribed main modifications, citing reasons expressed above and requiring additional homes to be accommodated / planned for. For context the Examination for that Local Plan took place between May and October 2024 with the agreed Local Plan period up to 2041 (the same as that currently proposed by the Council despite the process in West Berkshire being concluded two years earlier).

¹ [Local Plan examinations: letter to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate \(July 2024\)](#)

- 3.6 It is also notable that the reduction in the overall housing requirement is largely a direct consequence of the shortened plan period. By reducing the end date of the plan from 2045 to 2042, the Council has significantly reduced the number of homes that would otherwise be planned for across the Borough. MMH considers that plan periods should be established primarily to ensure compliance with national policy requirements and to provide a robust long-term spatial strategy, rather than being used in a manner that has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery. Extending the plan period to ensure a full 15 years from adoption would therefore represent a more appropriate and policy-compliant approach in accordance with the NPPF.

Housing Requirement

- 3.7 The Consultation confirms that the draft Local Plan is seeking to meet the Council's standard method local housing need, as it must, in accordance with Framework paragraph 62.
- 3.8 With a housing need of 636 dwellings per annum (dpa) over 17 years, a total of 11,729 new homes must be accommodated across Rugby Borough. However, beyond that figure, key issues of housing affordability and economic factors should be taken into account.

Affordability

- 3.9 Whilst the standard method includes an affordability adjustment, the Planning Practice Guidance ("the PPG") is clear that when applied it only starts to address such issues. It is not a full solution to problems of affordability:

*"The affordability adjustment is applied in order to ensure that the standard method for assessing local housing need responds to price signals and is consistent with the policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The specific adjustment in this guidance is set at a level to ensure that minimum annual housing need starts to address the affordability of homes."*²

- 3.10 Rugby Borough faces great affordability pressures; the the ratio of median house prices to workplace-based earnings has reached a five year average of 7.4 in 2024, a rise of more than 138% from that in 1997.

² Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 2a-006-20241212

3.11 The affordable housing need identified in Table 5.7 of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (September 2025) is 474 dwellings per annum. When compared to the Council's selected local housing need of 636 dwellings per annum, affordable housing need would equate to approximately 75% of the overall housing requirement. This clearly demonstrates that the selected housing requirement will result in a significant level of unmet affordable housing need if the Local Plan Review proceeds in its current form. This is particularly concerning given the Council's recent delivery performance, as evidenced through its Annual Monitoring Reports, which indicates that affordable housing delivery is already falling short of identified need.

3.12 In practice, the most effective way to address affordability pressures and reduce the identified affordable housing need is to plan for the delivery of a greater overall supply of housing across the Borough, which in turn will increase the quantum of affordable housing delivered through policy requirements and planning obligations.

3.13 The declining delivery of affordable housing further reinforces the importance of ensuring that the Local Plan provides for a sufficient quantity and appropriate mix of housing to meet identified needs. The NPPF states at paragraph 63:

"Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies..."

3.14 For these reasons, MMH considers that the Council should take a more proactive approach to addressing the housing crisis within the Borough and plan for a higher level of housing growth than currently proposed. Increasing the overall housing requirement would provide a more effective means of responding to affordability pressures and supporting the delivery of the affordable homes required to meet identified need.

Economic Factors

3.15 The need to boost the supply of homes is also necessary in relation to economic factors: Framework paragraph 85 requires planning policies to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

3.16 The Homes – Jobs Alignment Paper (December 2025) and HEDNA (2024) identifies strong economic performance and a buoyant labour market as key drivers of Rugby Borough's housing market. A growing surplus of workforce workers over resident workers and growth in net commuting into West Northamptonshire from Coventry and West Northamptonshire; and (ii) deteriorating housing affordability from a lack of supply / demand imbalance.

3.17 The HEDNA recognises the strong demand for housing as workers seek to live locally to where they are employed.

- 3.18 If left unaddressed, unaffordable house prices will hold back West Northamptonshire's economic potential – deterring young professionals hoping to live and work in the county and affecting the ability of businesses to recruit staff.
- 3.19 The draft Local Plan should therefore go further than seeking to meet only the minimum level of housing under the standard method. It should take a positive approach to boost the number of homes, beyond the minimum starting point; opportunities for additional growth on the edge of Rugby, which includes Clifton upon Dunsmore, (support its current and expanding economic / employment offer) and other sustainable locations should be identified.

Housing Supply

- 3.20 Draft Policy S2 of the Consultation Plan sets the Council's sources of housing supply for the plan period. These totals include completions up to March 2025, committed developments with planning permission, allocations in neighbourhood plans, allocations in the Consultation Plan, and windfall allowances.

Resilience

- 3.21 The resilience of the proposed housing supply is questioned. Whilst Draft Policy S2 the categories of supply, it does not specify individual sites with planning permission in either the Consultation Plan or supporting documents. This detail is only found in the Housing Land Supply Statements (HLSS), which is assumed to be applicable for the Consultation Plan.
- 3.22 The HLSS suggests that the early years of the plan period will rely on carried-over allocations (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton) and small to medium-scale sites, supplemented by windfall development. Notably, the housing supply is almost dependent on three large strategic sites (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton). This heavy reliance on a few strategic sites raises concerns about the resilience of the Councils housing supply over the entire plan period if one or more of the sites were to suffer any delays in anticipated delivery timescales.

Housing Trajectory

- 3.23 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites.
- 3.24 An overarching housing trajectory for the plan is contained in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan. However, it is unclear how these findings have been calculated as the housing trajectory is not site-specific. Whilst it is appreciated this is not an absolute requirement of the NPPF at a site level, given the importance of strategic allocations to later supply, this is important information to ensure the Consultation Plan is deliverable over the plan period and thus effective.

- 3.25 The only site-specific detail on housing trajectory is contained in the HLSS. However, upon examination, there appears to be a conflict between both the latest housing trajectory in the Consultation Plan and the HLSS. It is unclear how the housing trajectory in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan has been informed. It is therefore considered the Consultation Plan fails to provide an evidenced housing trajectory and is contrary to the requirements of Paragraph 78.

Windfalls

- 3.26 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF sets out that where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply
- 3.27 The windfall allowance over the plan period is 850 dwellings, noting that these figures should only apply for future years of the plan period, as otherwise they would fall into the completion/commitments categories.
- 3.28 The HLSS provides information relating to historic windfall delivery rates but does not consider future trends, as required by the NPPF. Furthermore, it is notable the windfall allowance for each Council is higher on an annualised basis than in the Councils current adopted Local Plan.
- 3.29 Given the above, the windfall allowance within the Consultation Plan is not supported by compelling evidence, meaning it is not consistent with national policy or justified, contrary to the soundness tests outlined at paragraph 36 of the NPPF. To overcome this issue, further evidence should be provided or the windfall allowance removed/significantly reduced.

Overall

- 3.30 For the reasons set out above, MMH considers that the Consultation Plan raises a number of significant concerns in relation to the proposed plan period, housing requirement and the robustness of the Council's housing supply evidence. The proposed plan period is unlikely to provide the required minimum 15-year timeframe from adoption, contrary to paragraph 22 of the NPPF, and has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery planned for across the Borough.
- 3.31 Furthermore, the proposed housing requirement of 636 dwellings per annum represents only the minimum starting point under the standard method and does not adequately respond to the scale of affordability pressures, the substantial identified affordable housing need, or the Borough's economic growth ambitions. Planning for a higher level of housing delivery would provide a more effective means of addressing these issues and supporting the delivery of affordable homes.

- 3.32 In addition, concerns remain regarding the resilience and transparency of the proposed housing supply, including the lack of a clearly evidenced housing trajectory, the significant reliance on a limited number of large strategic sites in the latter part of the plan period, and the reliance on a windfall allowance which is not supported by compelling evidence.
- 3.33 Taken together, these issues raise significant questions regarding whether the Consultation Plan is positively prepared, justified and effective, when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in paragraph 36 of the NPPF. The Council should therefore reconsider the proposed plan period, housing requirement and supporting housing supply evidence prior to submission to ensure that the Local Plan provides a robust and deliverable strategy capable of meeting the Borough's housing needs over the full plan period.

4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations

Distribution of Development

- 4.1 MMH have serious soundness concerns regarding the Council's strategy in distributing residential development across the borough. The Council are currently proposing to allocate a significant amount of land at Main Rural Settlements which would require release of Green Belt land. The NPPF sets out at paragraph 145 that *'...Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced through the preparation or updating of plans.'*
- 4.2 For plan-makers to reach a point where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, paragraph 146 confirms that this can include *'...instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means'*.
- 4.3 And at paragraph 147 *'Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.'*
- 4.4 This assessment of whether all other reasonable options have been examined will need to take account of NPPF paragraph 147:
- a) *"makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
 - b) *optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
 - c) *has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground."*
- 4.5 The NPPF clearly sets out a sequential approach to allocating land for development within the Green Belt – essentially dictating that utilising Green Belt land should be a 'last resort', where there are no other options to accommodate the required growth. MMH consider the sequential approach to be particularly relevant given the availability of land sustainably located land outside the Green Belt, such as in Clifton upon Dunsmore and specifically MMH's Site.

- 4.6 MMH questions whether the Council has sufficiently considered all reasonable options. Clifton upon Dunsmore, unlike other Main Rural Settlements, is not constrained by the Green Belt. By contrast, Wolvey (290 dwellings), Brinklow (325 dwellings) and Long Lawford (650 dwellings) are all within the Green Belt and are planning for higher levels of growth than Clifton upon Dunsmore. There is therefore a clear need for a compelling planning justification explaining why appropriate non-Green Belt sites have been discounted. No such justification is evident within the available evidence base. MMH's Site demonstrates that significant housing can be delivered at a Main Rural Settlement without impacting major constraints, and its location immediately adjacent to Rugby Town represents a highly sustainable option for growth outside of the principal settlement.
- 4.7 It is noted that the Council's spatial strategy for Main Rural Settlements appears to have been influenced by existing primary school capacity, as indicated in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). For Clifton upon Dunsmore, the SA identifies a limit of 150 dwellings, citing the inability of the primary school to expand. However, this single factor should not override the sequential approach, particularly where non-Green Belt land exists and could support additional growth in a sustainable manner.
- 4.8 MMH notes the following points in relation education capacity:
- Current pupil distribution: Approximately 84% of pupils attending Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary School reside within the village. However, a notable proportion of pupils currently travel from outside the village to attend the school. Analysis indicates that many of these pupils could instead attend schools closer to their home locations, suggesting that current travel patterns do not necessarily reflect true local demand for places within Clifton upon Dunsmore itself. In the interests of sustainable development, the Council and Local Education Authority should prioritise enabling local pupils to walk to their nearest school, thereby maximising the efficient use of existing village-based capacity and reducing unnecessary travel.
 - Future capacity: Clifton upon Dunsmore has an ageing population, as evidenced in the Housing Needs Assessment supporting the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan. Although the primary school is currently operating at capacity, many pupils will progress to secondary education in the coming years, creating natural turnover. By 2030/31, when additional housing growth is anticipated to start coming forward, MMH considers that sufficient capacity is likely to arise to accommodate pupils generated by both MMH's Site (180 dwellings) and the draft allocations (150 dwellings). This indicates that further development in the village could be accommodated without exceeding local education capacity, while also supporting sustainable travel patterns for pupils.

- 4.9 Furthermore, the Council's spatial strategy and the interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) fail to properly account for the strong functional relationship between Clifton upon Dunsmore and Rugby Town. Within 5km of the Site there are six primary schools, all accessible within approximately 10 minutes by car and with capacity to accommodate additional pupils. It would also be reasonable and feasible to enhance public transport options for school travel, thereby reducing reliance on private vehicles. Indeed, it is common practice for pupils living in villages to utilise bus services for journeys to and from school.
- 4.10 Alternatively, the Council could identify additional land for a new primary school as part of a wider village growth strategy, with funding contributions secured through appropriately worded planning policy. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan could be prepared to set out clearly how the school would be delivered and funded, including realistic timelines. While the interim SA assumes that a single large site is required to support additional school provision, it is well-established that a collection of smaller sites, such as those promoted within Clifton upon Dunsmore, could collectively deliver the necessary infrastructure.
- 4.11 MMH reserves the right to submit further evidence on education capacity at Examination.
- 4.12 The Council has not proactively explored this option or worked with site promoters to optimise growth at this non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement. Instead, growth has been discounted based on a technical constraint that is capable of being resolved. In doing so, the Council has prioritised this issue over national planning policy objectives, including the sequential approach to Green Belt release. MMH considers this to be a fundamental flaw in the Council's approach, which seriously threatens the soundness of the Local Plan.

Site Credentials

- 4.13 MMH acknowledges that the Council assessed the Site under Stage 2 of the site selection process (reference 83). However, the reasoning for not progressing the Site is considered flawed, particularly in the context of the sequential approach. The Council's assessment recognises that the Site is accessible, walkable to nearby services and facilities, is free from ecological constraints, and is located outside the Green Belt. The assessment cites concerns regarding heritage and landscape; however, these matters can be appropriately mitigated.
- 4.14 MMH has undertaken technical work to inform the emerging masterplan and has now submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. This demonstrates that the Site can come forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner.
- 4.15 Heritage - The Council's Heritage Assessment acknowledges that impacts could be mitigated through high-quality design. The emerging Concept Plan incorporates the following mitigation measures:
- The existing village green to the west of the Site will be extended to form a communal open space, maintaining the rural backdrop of views from heritage assets and providing an attractive gateway to the village.

- The extended green will transition to the east into a parkland character, restoring elements of historic landscape, including the tree avenue, which will form an important green corridor through the development.
- The northern edge of built development will adopt a gentle building line, softened by additional planting, to ensure a sensitive transition with the Conservation Area and surrounding landscape.

4.16 Landscape – The Site forms a logical “rounding-off” of Clifton upon Dunsmore. The draft allocation at Land North of Lilbourne Road (site reference 129) would significantly alter the existing rural setting. The Dunsmore Plateau Fringe, where the Site is located, is of moderate sensitivity, lower than many other Main Rural Settlements, making it appropriate for development.

4.17 Ecology – The Site is predominantly arable land with native hedgerows along boundaries and scattered mature trees. The majority of trees and hedgerows are to be retained. The Site can be developed while achieving at least 10% biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.

4.18 Sustainability – The Site is well connected to local services and facilities, including education, retail, healthcare, leisure, and food & beverage amenities, all within acceptable walking or cycling distances. Local bus services run via Main Street, Clifton upon Dunsmore, with the nearest stop approximately 380m from the Site (a 5-minute walk). Rugby Station, approximately 2.5km west, provides frequent services to key destinations including Birmingham, London, Milton Keynes, Manchester, and Crewe.

4.19 Flood Risk – The entirety of the Site lies within Flood Zone 1, representing a low probability of flooding, according to Environment Agency data.

4.20 Overall Assessment – In the context of the sequential approach, the Site is preferable to draft allocations at other Main Rural Settlements, which would require the release of Green Belt land. The Concept Masterplan (Appendix 1) demonstrates that development at the Site is sustainable, deliverable, and well-designed. It can accommodate approximately 720 homes, alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, while sensitively addressing heritage, ecological, and landscape considerations.

Overall

4.21 MMH considers that the Council’s approach to distributing housing across Rugby Borough is fundamentally unsound. The plan places significant reliance on Green Belt release at Main Rural Settlements, without demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives outside the Green Belt have been fully considered, as required by NPPF paragraphs 145–147.

4.22 Clifton upon Dunsmore represents a sustainable, non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement capable of accommodating substantial growth. This representation demonstrates that:

- The Site is well-connected to Rugby Town and local services, supporting sustainable travel patterns;
- Primary education capacity is sufficient, and additional infrastructure could be delivered through a co-ordinated approach;
- Heritage, landscape, and ecological constraints can be appropriately mitigated; and
- The Site can deliver approximately 180 homes alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, consistent with the Council's spatial strategy objectives.

4.23 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 36, strategic policies should ensure that housing and other development are distributed effectively across the plan area to meet identified needs. MMH's Site represents a sequentially preferable location for growth, outside the Green Belt, and capable of delivering sustainable development.

4.24 Accordingly, MMH considers that unless the Council gives proper weight to non-Green Belt opportunities such as the Site, the Local Plan will fail the tests of soundness, including justification, effectiveness, and consistency with national policy. Allocation of the Site would address these fundamental concerns and align the plan with national planning policy on the distribution of development.

5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings

- 5.1 MMH recognises the importance of planning for net zero carbon development as part of the wider objective of addressing climate change. However, there are significant concerns regarding the approach set out in Draft Policy CL1, which indicates the potential for the emerging Local Plan to introduce requirements that go beyond the standards set out in Building Regulations.
- 5.2 The Government's position on this matter is clear. A Written Ministerial Statement on Planning – Energy Efficiency Standards for New Homes (13 December 2023) confirms that planning policies should not impose energy performance standards that exceed the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, noting the forthcoming introduction of the Future Homes Standard, expected to be implemented in 2025.
- 5.3 The Written Ministerial Statement states that *“the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations. The proliferation of multiple local standards by local planning authorities can add further costs to building new homes by adding complexity and undermining economies of scale. Any planning policies that propose local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations should be rejected at examination if they do not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale.”*
- 5.4 Requiring development to exceed the requirements of Building Regulations is therefore likely to introduce unnecessary complexity and additional cost burdens for developers. This has the potential to affect development viability and could slow the delivery of new homes and employment development required to meet the needs identified in the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that standards exceeding current or planned Building Regulations are necessary, viable and consistent with national policy, Draft Policy CL1 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the approach may conflict with national policy set out in the NPPF and the Written Ministerial Statement, which make clear that local planning authorities should not set local energy efficiency standards that go beyond current or planned Building Regulations without a robustly evidenced and costed justification. The policy should therefore be amended to ensure alignment with national policy and to avoid placing unnecessary constraints on the delivery and viability of development required to meet the Borough's housing and economic needs.

6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

- 6.1 MMH has concerns regarding the requirement within Policy EN5 for a minimum 20% tree canopy cover to be delivered on all major development outside of Rugby Town Centre. It is understood that this figure appears to have been derived from a 2023 report produced by Friends of the Earth, which estimated that approximately 4.5% of Rugby Borough comprises woodland, placing the Borough within the lowest 20% of English local authorities for woodland coverage. The intention of Policy EN5 is therefore to address this identified shortfall.
- 6.2 Whilst the objective of increasing tree canopy cover is supported in principle, further evidence is required to demonstrate how this requirement can be implemented effectively across a range of development sites. In particular, it is unclear how a blanket 20% canopy coverage requirement can be consistently delivered alongside the range of other policy requirements expected of development proposals.
- 6.3 For example, there is potential for conflict between the objectives of Policy EN5 and the statutory requirement to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain under the Environment Act 2021, particularly on constrained sites. Achieving both requirements simultaneously may not always be feasible once other essential considerations such as layout, drainage infrastructure, open space provision and highways requirements are taken into account.
- 6.4 The policy should therefore adopt a more flexible approach to tree canopy provision, allowing proposals to be assessed on a site-by-site basis having regard to site characteristics, viability and the ability to deliver wider environmental benefits. Without such flexibility, the policy risks creating unnecessary constraints on development and may affect the deliverability of allocated and windfall sites.
- 6.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that a blanket 20% tree canopy coverage requirement is deliverable across all major development sites, Policy EN5 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the policy may not be justified or effective when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, as it has not been demonstrated that the requirement can be delivered alongside other policy obligations, including biodiversity net gain, open space provision, drainage infrastructure and development viability. The policy should therefore be amended to introduce greater flexibility and allow canopy coverage to be considered on a site-specific basis having regard to site characteristics and overall environmental outcomes.

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan



27 SPON STREET, COVENTRY, CV1 3BA
 T: +44 (0)24 7652 7600 E: info@idpgroup.com

© This drawing and the building works depicted are the copyright of IDP and may not be reproduced or amended except by written permission. No liability will be accepted for amendments made by other persons.

All dimensions to be checked on site and architect notified of any discrepancies prior to commencement.

Any and all elements relating to the fire safety of the project will require separate confirmation and approval by a fully accredited fire engineering consultant under separate client appointment.

E	Redline boundary updated	28.01.26 - TJ - BF
D	Landscape updated and internal links improved	30.10.25 - TJ - TJ
C	North eastern footpath connection removed	16.09.25 - TJ - DZ
B	Amended to project team comments	15.09.25 - TJ - DZ
A	Development parcels and road adjustments	20.08.25 - TJ - DZ
Rev:	Comments:	Date-Name-Check:

Drg No: **C6057_001_03 Rev E**

Client: **Mackenzie Miller Homes**

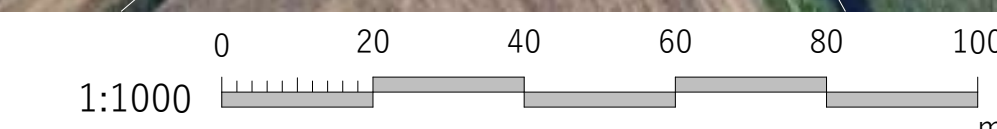
Project: **Clifton on Dunsmore**

Title: **Illustrative Framework Masterplan**

Scale: **1:1000 @ A0** Date: **24.01.25**

RIBA: **Stage 1** Dm/Ch: **TJ/BF**

Status: **FEASIBILITY** Pro. No: **C6057**



Nexus Planning

Suite 2, Apex Plaza
3 Forbury Road,
Reading,
RG1 1AX

nexusplanning.co.uk

Representation Form for Local Plans



Local Plan Publication Stage Representation Form

Ref:

(For official
use only)

**Name of the Local Plan to which
this representation relates:**

Rugby Borough Council Proposed Submission
Local Plan

Please return to Rugby Borough Council by 5:00pm Friday 13th March 2026
By email to: localplan@rugby.gov.uk with **Proposed Submission Consultation in
the subject line, OR by post to:** Development Strategy, Town Hall, Evreux Way,
Rugby, CV21 2RR.

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation
you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes below (if applicable)
but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="Adam"/>	<input type="text" value="Connor"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Renn"/>	<input type="text" value="Shingler"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Mackenzie Miller Homes"/>	<input type="text" value="Nexus Planning"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Interchange Place"/>
Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="151-165 Edmund Street"/>
Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Birmingham"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="B3 2TA"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="c.shingler@nexusplanning.co.uk"/>

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each policy or site you wish to comment on

Name or Organisation:

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Local Plan Paragraph	<input type="text"/>	Local Plan Policy	S2 <input type="text"/>	Policies Map	<input type="text"/>
Site ID	<input type="text"/>				

4. Do you consider the Local Plan:

(1) is Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) is Sound	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(3) complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please refer to Section 3 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy S2

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please refer to Section 3 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy S2

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note: In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Mackenzie Miller Homes requests to participate in the Hearing Sessions for the Local Plan Examination. Mackenzie Miller Homes involvement is considered necessary to ensure matters relating to the spatial strategy, distribution of homes and land supply are considered during the hearing sessions.

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

9. If you have used AI to produce or substantially alter your representation, please declare which tool you have used, how it was used, and what checks you have undertaken to ensure the AI-produced material is accurate.

N/A

All representations received will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan and published on the council's website. Personal addresses and email addresses (as distinct from businesses addresses), but not names, will be redacted before representations are published.

The Rugby Borough Council Privacy Notice for Development Strategy is available here:

<https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/privacy#development-strategy>

The Planning Inspectorate's privacy notice can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-privacy-notice>



Land South of Lilbourne Road, Clifton upon Dunsmore
Rugby Borough Council Regulation 19 Representations

On behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes

March 2026

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy	5
3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes	6
4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations	12
5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings	17
6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover	18

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These representations, on behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes (“**MMH**”), are made to the Rugby Borough Local Plan 2025-2042 Proposed Submission Version (“**the Consultation**”) – a key stage to inform the emerging draft Local Plan being prepared by Rugby Borough Council (“**the Council**”).
- 1.2 MMH has an interest in all strategic and non-strategic land informing the draft Local Plan and these representations are made in the context of MMH interests in land south of Lilbourne Road on the eastern edge of Clifton upon Dunsmore (“**the Site**”). The Site has been previously promoted and submitted to the Call for Sites exercise and representations were made the Rugby Borough Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation in October 2023 and Preferred Options Consultation in May 2025.
- 1.3 MMH has submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. The submission demonstrates that the Site is capable of coming forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner, and therefore represents a suitable and sequentially preferable location for allocation within the Local Plan.
- 1.4 A Framework Masterplan outlining the concept of the Site is in **Appendix 1** of these representations.

Approach to Representations

- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, at paragraph 36, the tests of soundness that Local Plans and Spatial Development Strategies are examined against, as follows, with the Consultation Plan being considered in the light of these tests:
- a) **“Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs²⁰; 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 and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant”

1.6 These representations respond to key parts of the Consultation Plan, highlighting the specific policy, paragraph or pages of the Consultation Plan, or supporting evidence document being addressed. They focus primarily on the following policies of the Consultation Plan:

- Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy
- Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes
- Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations
- Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings
- Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.1 Draft Policy S1 sets out how housing and economic development will be distributed across Rugby Borough in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, with the majority of development directed towards the Rugby urban area.
- 2.2 MMH supports Policy S1 as currently drafted. In particular, it is noted that Clifton upon Dunsmore is identified as a Main Rural Settlement and is therefore second only to Rugby Town within the settlement hierarchy. The village is also well related to Rugby both spatially and in terms of accessibility to services and facilities. Whilst not located within the Rugby urban area, Clifton upon Dunsmore benefits from close proximity to the town and is able to readily access employment opportunities, services and community infrastructure, including schools and further education provision.
- 2.3 In light of the above, MMH generally supports the ranking and hierarchy of settlements set out within Draft Policy S1 and considers that, in this respect, the approach is sound.

3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes

Plan Period

- 3.1 The Consultation presents a revised strategy for the delivery of new homes across a 17-year period from 2025 to 2042. MMH is disappointed that the Council has decided to reduce the plan period from 2045 to 2042, which in turn substantially reduces the overall housing requirement from 14,134 to 11,729 homes.
- 3.2 The Council's Local Development Scheme indicates that the draft Local Plan will be submitted in June 2026 with adoption by June 2027. MMH consider this to be an unrealistic timeline. Reference is made to a letter from the Minister of State to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2024¹, highlighting the average length of examinations to be 134 weeks, taking account of the need for modifications, re-consultation and hearing sessions over an extended period, substantially greater than the Council's assumptions.
- 3.3 Therefore, where adoption of the Local Plan is extremely unlikely to be before the end of 2027 at the earliest, relevant strategic policies should look ahead to 2042/43, an additional year beyond the end of the Consultation's current plan period, to ensure a minimum period of 15 years from adoption and accordance with the NPPF.
- 3.4 One effect of increasing the plan period by one year is that the draft Local Plan will need to accommodate a proportionate increase of an additional 636 homes, as part of its housing requirement over that longer period to seek to ensure local housing need is met. Failure to address this in advance of the Regulation 22 stages will inevitably result in the Local Plan Inspector raising concerns related to conflict with paragraph 22 of the Framework thus potentially delaying the Examination Process.
- 3.5 As precedent, the Inspector for the West Berkshire Local Plan examination addressed a similarly deficient plan period through prescribed main modifications, citing reasons expressed above and requiring additional homes to be accommodated / planned for. For context the Examination for that Local Plan took place between May and October 2024 with the agreed Local Plan period up to 2041 (the same as that currently proposed by the Council despite the process in West Berkshire being concluded two years earlier).

¹ [Local Plan examinations: letter to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate \(July 2024\)](#)

- 3.6 It is also notable that the reduction in the overall housing requirement is largely a direct consequence of the shortened plan period. By reducing the end date of the plan from 2045 to 2042, the Council has significantly reduced the number of homes that would otherwise be planned for across the Borough. MMH considers that plan periods should be established primarily to ensure compliance with national policy requirements and to provide a robust long-term spatial strategy, rather than being used in a manner that has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery. Extending the plan period to ensure a full 15 years from adoption would therefore represent a more appropriate and policy-compliant approach in accordance with the NPPF.

Housing Requirement

- 3.7 The Consultation confirms that the draft Local Plan is seeking to meet the Council's standard method local housing need, as it must, in accordance with Framework paragraph 62.
- 3.8 With a housing need of 636 dwellings per annum (dpa) over 17 years, a total of 11,729 new homes must be accommodated across Rugby Borough. However, beyond that figure, key issues of housing affordability and economic factors should be taken into account.

Affordability

- 3.9 Whilst the standard method includes an affordability adjustment, the Planning Practice Guidance ("the PPG") is clear that when applied it only starts to address such issues. It is not a full solution to problems of affordability:

*"The affordability adjustment is applied in order to ensure that the standard method for assessing local housing need responds to price signals and is consistent with the policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The specific adjustment in this guidance is set at a level to ensure that minimum annual housing need starts to address the affordability of homes."*²

- 3.10 Rugby Borough faces great affordability pressures; the the ratio of median house prices to workplace-based earnings has reached a five year average of 7.4 in 2024, a rise of more than 138% from that in 1997.

² Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 2a-006-20241212

3.11 The affordable housing need identified in Table 5.7 of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (September 2025) is 474 dwellings per annum. When compared to the Council's selected local housing need of 636 dwellings per annum, affordable housing need would equate to approximately 75% of the overall housing requirement. This clearly demonstrates that the selected housing requirement will result in a significant level of unmet affordable housing need if the Local Plan Review proceeds in its current form. This is particularly concerning given the Council's recent delivery performance, as evidenced through its Annual Monitoring Reports, which indicates that affordable housing delivery is already falling short of identified need.

3.12 In practice, the most effective way to address affordability pressures and reduce the identified affordable housing need is to plan for the delivery of a greater overall supply of housing across the Borough, which in turn will increase the quantum of affordable housing delivered through policy requirements and planning obligations.

3.13 The declining delivery of affordable housing further reinforces the importance of ensuring that the Local Plan provides for a sufficient quantity and appropriate mix of housing to meet identified needs. The NPPF states at paragraph 63:

"Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies..."

3.14 For these reasons, MMH considers that the Council should take a more proactive approach to addressing the housing crisis within the Borough and plan for a higher level of housing growth than currently proposed. Increasing the overall housing requirement would provide a more effective means of responding to affordability pressures and supporting the delivery of the affordable homes required to meet identified need.

Economic Factors

3.15 The need to boost the supply of homes is also necessary in relation to economic factors: Framework paragraph 85 requires planning policies to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

3.16 The Homes – Jobs Alignment Paper (December 2025) and HEDNA (2024) identifies strong economic performance and a buoyant labour market as key drivers of Rugby Borough's housing market. A growing surplus of workforce workers over resident workers and growth in net commuting into West Northamptonshire from Coventry and West Northamptonshire; and (ii) deteriorating housing affordability from a lack of supply / demand imbalance.

3.17 The HEDNA recognises the strong demand for housing as workers seek to live locally to where they are employed.

- 3.18 If left unaddressed, unaffordable house prices will hold back West Northamptonshire's economic potential – deterring young professionals hoping to live and work in the county and affecting the ability of businesses to recruit staff.
- 3.19 The draft Local Plan should therefore go further than seeking to meet only the minimum level of housing under the standard method. It should take a positive approach to boost the number of homes, beyond the minimum starting point; opportunities for additional growth on the edge of Rugby, which includes Clifton upon Dunsmore, (support its current and expanding economic / employment offer) and other sustainable locations should be identified.

Housing Supply

- 3.20 Draft Policy S2 of the Consultation Plan sets the Council's sources of housing supply for the plan period. These totals include completions up to March 2025, committed developments with planning permission, allocations in neighbourhood plans, allocations in the Consultation Plan, and windfall allowances.

Resilience

- 3.21 The resilience of the proposed housing supply is questioned. Whilst Draft Policy S2 the categories of supply, it does not specify individual sites with planning permission in either the Consultation Plan or supporting documents. This detail is only found in the Housing Land Supply Statements (HLSS), which is assumed to be applicable for the Consultation Plan.
- 3.22 The HLSS suggests that the early years of the plan period will rely on carried-over allocations (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton) and small to medium-scale sites, supplemented by windfall development. Notably, the housing supply is almost dependent on three large strategic sites (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton). This heavy reliance on a few strategic sites raises concerns about the resilience of the Councils housing supply over the entire plan period if one or more of the sites were to suffer any delays in anticipated delivery timescales.

Housing Trajectory

- 3.23 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites.
- 3.24 An overarching housing trajectory for the plan is contained in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan. However, it is unclear how these findings have been calculated as the housing trajectory is not site-specific. Whilst it is appreciated this is not an absolute requirement of the NPPF at a site level, given the importance of strategic allocations to later supply, this is important information to ensure the Consultation Plan is deliverable over the plan period and thus effective.

- 3.25 The only site-specific detail on housing trajectory is contained in the HLSS. However, upon examination, there appears to be a conflict between both the latest housing trajectory in the Consultation Plan and the HLSS. It is unclear how the housing trajectory in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan has been informed. It is therefore considered the Consultation Plan fails to provide an evidenced housing trajectory and is contrary to the requirements of Paragraph 78.

Windfalls

- 3.26 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF sets out that where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply
- 3.27 The windfall allowance over the plan period is 850 dwellings, noting that these figures should only apply for future years of the plan period, as otherwise they would fall into the completion/commitments categories.
- 3.28 The HLSS provides information relating to historic windfall delivery rates but does not consider future trends, as required by the NPPF. Furthermore, it is notable the windfall allowance for each Council is higher on an annualised basis than in the Councils current adopted Local Plan.
- 3.29 Given the above, the windfall allowance within the Consultation Plan is not supported by compelling evidence, meaning it is not consistent with national policy or justified, contrary to the soundness tests outlined at paragraph 36 of the NPPF. To overcome this issue, further evidence should be provided or the windfall allowance removed/significantly reduced.

Overall

- 3.30 For the reasons set out above, MMH considers that the Consultation Plan raises a number of significant concerns in relation to the proposed plan period, housing requirement and the robustness of the Council's housing supply evidence. The proposed plan period is unlikely to provide the required minimum 15-year timeframe from adoption, contrary to paragraph 22 of the NPPF, and has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery planned for across the Borough.
- 3.31 Furthermore, the proposed housing requirement of 636 dwellings per annum represents only the minimum starting point under the standard method and does not adequately respond to the scale of affordability pressures, the substantial identified affordable housing need, or the Borough's economic growth ambitions. Planning for a higher level of housing delivery would provide a more effective means of addressing these issues and supporting the delivery of affordable homes.

- 3.32 In addition, concerns remain regarding the resilience and transparency of the proposed housing supply, including the lack of a clearly evidenced housing trajectory, the significant reliance on a limited number of large strategic sites in the latter part of the plan period, and the reliance on a windfall allowance which is not supported by compelling evidence.
- 3.33 Taken together, these issues raise significant questions regarding whether the Consultation Plan is positively prepared, justified and effective, when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in paragraph 36 of the NPPF. The Council should therefore reconsider the proposed plan period, housing requirement and supporting housing supply evidence prior to submission to ensure that the Local Plan provides a robust and deliverable strategy capable of meeting the Borough's housing needs over the full plan period.

4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations

Distribution of Development

- 4.1 MMH have serious soundness concerns regarding the Council's strategy in distributing residential development across the borough. The Council are currently proposing to allocate a significant amount of land at Main Rural Settlements which would require release of Green Belt land. The NPPF sets out at paragraph 145 that *'...Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced through the preparation or updating of plans.'*
- 4.2 For plan-makers to reach a point where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, paragraph 146 confirms that this can include *'...instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means'.*
- 4.3 And at paragraph 147 *'Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.'*
- 4.4 This assessment of whether all other reasonable options have been examined will need to take account of NPPF paragraph 147:
- a) *"makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
 - b) *optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
 - c) *has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground."*
- 4.5 The NPPF clearly sets out a sequential approach to allocating land for development within the Green Belt – essentially dictating that utilising Green Belt land should be a 'last resort', where there are no other options to accommodate the required growth. MMH consider the sequential approach to be particularly relevant given the availability of land sustainably located land outside the Green Belt, such as in Clifton upon Dunsmore and specifically MMH's Site.

- 4.6 MMH questions whether the Council has sufficiently considered all reasonable options. Clifton upon Dunsmore, unlike other Main Rural Settlements, is not constrained by the Green Belt. By contrast, Wolvey (290 dwellings), Brinklow (325 dwellings) and Long Lawford (650 dwellings) are all within the Green Belt and are planning for higher levels of growth than Clifton upon Dunsmore. There is therefore a clear need for a compelling planning justification explaining why appropriate non-Green Belt sites have been discounted. No such justification is evident within the available evidence base. MMH's Site demonstrates that significant housing can be delivered at a Main Rural Settlement without impacting major constraints, and its location immediately adjacent to Rugby Town represents a highly sustainable option for growth outside of the principal settlement.
- 4.7 It is noted that the Council's spatial strategy for Main Rural Settlements appears to have been influenced by existing primary school capacity, as indicated in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). For Clifton upon Dunsmore, the SA identifies a limit of 150 dwellings, citing the inability of the primary school to expand. However, this single factor should not override the sequential approach, particularly where non-Green Belt land exists and could support additional growth in a sustainable manner.
- 4.8 MMH notes the following points in relation education capacity:
- Current pupil distribution: Approximately 84% of pupils attending Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary School reside within the village. However, a notable proportion of pupils currently travel from outside the village to attend the school. Analysis indicates that many of these pupils could instead attend schools closer to their home locations, suggesting that current travel patterns do not necessarily reflect true local demand for places within Clifton upon Dunsmore itself. In the interests of sustainable development, the Council and Local Education Authority should prioritise enabling local pupils to walk to their nearest school, thereby maximising the efficient use of existing village-based capacity and reducing unnecessary travel.
 - Future capacity: Clifton upon Dunsmore has an ageing population, as evidenced in the Housing Needs Assessment supporting the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan. Although the primary school is currently operating at capacity, many pupils will progress to secondary education in the coming years, creating natural turnover. By 2030/31, when additional housing growth is anticipated to start coming forward, MMH considers that sufficient capacity is likely to arise to accommodate pupils generated by both MMH's Site (180 dwellings) and the draft allocations (150 dwellings). This indicates that further development in the village could be accommodated without exceeding local education capacity, while also supporting sustainable travel patterns for pupils.

- 4.9 Furthermore, the Council's spatial strategy and the interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) fail to properly account for the strong functional relationship between Clifton upon Dunsmore and Rugby Town. Within 5km of the Site there are six primary schools, all accessible within approximately 10 minutes by car and with capacity to accommodate additional pupils. It would also be reasonable and feasible to enhance public transport options for school travel, thereby reducing reliance on private vehicles. Indeed, it is common practice for pupils living in villages to utilise bus services for journeys to and from school.
- 4.10 Alternatively, the Council could identify additional land for a new primary school as part of a wider village growth strategy, with funding contributions secured through appropriately worded planning policy. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan could be prepared to set out clearly how the school would be delivered and funded, including realistic timelines. While the interim SA assumes that a single large site is required to support additional school provision, it is well-established that a collection of smaller sites, such as those promoted within Clifton upon Dunsmore, could collectively deliver the necessary infrastructure.
- 4.11 MMH reserves the right to submit further evidence on education capacity at Examination.
- 4.12 The Council has not proactively explored this option or worked with site promoters to optimise growth at this non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement. Instead, growth has been discounted based on a technical constraint that is capable of being resolved. In doing so, the Council has prioritised this issue over national planning policy objectives, including the sequential approach to Green Belt release. MMH considers this to be a fundamental flaw in the Council's approach, which seriously threatens the soundness of the Local Plan.

Site Credentials

- 4.13 MMH acknowledges that the Council assessed the Site under Stage 2 of the site selection process (reference 83). However, the reasoning for not progressing the Site is considered flawed, particularly in the context of the sequential approach. The Council's assessment recognises that the Site is accessible, walkable to nearby services and facilities, is free from ecological constraints, and is located outside the Green Belt. The assessment cites concerns regarding heritage and landscape; however, these matters can be appropriately mitigated.
- 4.14 MMH has undertaken technical work to inform the emerging masterplan and has now submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. This demonstrates that the Site can come forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner.
- 4.15 Heritage - The Council's Heritage Assessment acknowledges that impacts could be mitigated through high-quality design. The emerging Concept Plan incorporates the following mitigation measures:
- The existing village green to the west of the Site will be extended to form a communal open space, maintaining the rural backdrop of views from heritage assets and providing an attractive gateway to the village.

- The extended green will transition to the east into a parkland character, restoring elements of historic landscape, including the tree avenue, which will form an important green corridor through the development.
- The northern edge of built development will adopt a gentle building line, softened by additional planting, to ensure a sensitive transition with the Conservation Area and surrounding landscape.

4.16 Landscape – The Site forms a logical “rounding-off” of Clifton upon Dunsmore. The draft allocation at Land North of Lilbourne Road (site reference 129) would significantly alter the existing rural setting. The Dunsmore Plateau Fringe, where the Site is located, is of moderate sensitivity, lower than many other Main Rural Settlements, making it appropriate for development.

4.17 Ecology – The Site is predominantly arable land with native hedgerows along boundaries and scattered mature trees. The majority of trees and hedgerows are to be retained. The Site can be developed while achieving at least 10% biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.

4.18 Sustainability – The Site is well connected to local services and facilities, including education, retail, healthcare, leisure, and food & beverage amenities, all within acceptable walking or cycling distances. Local bus services run via Main Street, Clifton upon Dunsmore, with the nearest stop approximately 380m from the Site (a 5-minute walk). Rugby Station, approximately 2.5km west, provides frequent services to key destinations including Birmingham, London, Milton Keynes, Manchester, and Crewe.

4.19 Flood Risk – The entirety of the Site lies within Flood Zone 1, representing a low probability of flooding, according to Environment Agency data.

4.20 Overall Assessment – In the context of the sequential approach, the Site is preferable to draft allocations at other Main Rural Settlements, which would require the release of Green Belt land. The Concept Masterplan (Appendix 1) demonstrates that development at the Site is sustainable, deliverable, and well-designed. It can accommodate approximately 720 homes, alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, while sensitively addressing heritage, ecological, and landscape considerations.

Overall

4.21 MMH considers that the Council’s approach to distributing housing across Rugby Borough is fundamentally unsound. The plan places significant reliance on Green Belt release at Main Rural Settlements, without demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives outside the Green Belt have been fully considered, as required by NPPF paragraphs 145–147.

4.22 Clifton upon Dunsmore represents a sustainable, non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement capable of accommodating substantial growth. This representation demonstrates that:

- The Site is well-connected to Rugby Town and local services, supporting sustainable travel patterns;
- Primary education capacity is sufficient, and additional infrastructure could be delivered through a co-ordinated approach;
- Heritage, landscape, and ecological constraints can be appropriately mitigated; and
- The Site can deliver approximately 180 homes alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, consistent with the Council's spatial strategy objectives.

4.23 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 36, strategic policies should ensure that housing and other development are distributed effectively across the plan area to meet identified needs. MMH's Site represents a sequentially preferable location for growth, outside the Green Belt, and capable of delivering sustainable development.

4.24 Accordingly, MMH considers that unless the Council gives proper weight to non-Green Belt opportunities such as the Site, the Local Plan will fail the tests of soundness, including justification, effectiveness, and consistency with national policy. Allocation of the Site would address these fundamental concerns and align the plan with national planning policy on the distribution of development.

5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings

- 5.1 MMH recognises the importance of planning for net zero carbon development as part of the wider objective of addressing climate change. However, there are significant concerns regarding the approach set out in Draft Policy CL1, which indicates the potential for the emerging Local Plan to introduce requirements that go beyond the standards set out in Building Regulations.
- 5.2 The Government's position on this matter is clear. A Written Ministerial Statement on Planning – Energy Efficiency Standards for New Homes (13 December 2023) confirms that planning policies should not impose energy performance standards that exceed the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, noting the forthcoming introduction of the Future Homes Standard, expected to be implemented in 2025.
- 5.3 The Written Ministerial Statement states that *“the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations. The proliferation of multiple local standards by local planning authorities can add further costs to building new homes by adding complexity and undermining economies of scale. Any planning policies that propose local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations should be rejected at examination if they do not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale.”*
- 5.4 Requiring development to exceed the requirements of Building Regulations is therefore likely to introduce unnecessary complexity and additional cost burdens for developers. This has the potential to affect development viability and could slow the delivery of new homes and employment development required to meet the needs identified in the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that standards exceeding current or planned Building Regulations are necessary, viable and consistent with national policy, Draft Policy CL1 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the approach may conflict with national policy set out in the NPPF and the Written Ministerial Statement, which make clear that local planning authorities should not set local energy efficiency standards that go beyond current or planned Building Regulations without a robustly evidenced and costed justification. The policy should therefore be amended to ensure alignment with national policy and to avoid placing unnecessary constraints on the delivery and viability of development required to meet the Borough's housing and economic needs.

6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

- 6.1 MMH has concerns regarding the requirement within Policy EN5 for a minimum 20% tree canopy cover to be delivered on all major development outside of Rugby Town Centre. It is understood that this figure appears to have been derived from a 2023 report produced by Friends of the Earth, which estimated that approximately 4.5% of Rugby Borough comprises woodland, placing the Borough within the lowest 20% of English local authorities for woodland coverage. The intention of Policy EN5 is therefore to address this identified shortfall.
- 6.2 Whilst the objective of increasing tree canopy cover is supported in principle, further evidence is required to demonstrate how this requirement can be implemented effectively across a range of development sites. In particular, it is unclear how a blanket 20% canopy coverage requirement can be consistently delivered alongside the range of other policy requirements expected of development proposals.
- 6.3 For example, there is potential for conflict between the objectives of Policy EN5 and the statutory requirement to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain under the Environment Act 2021, particularly on constrained sites. Achieving both requirements simultaneously may not always be feasible once other essential considerations such as layout, drainage infrastructure, open space provision and highways requirements are taken into account.
- 6.4 The policy should therefore adopt a more flexible approach to tree canopy provision, allowing proposals to be assessed on a site-by-site basis having regard to site characteristics, viability and the ability to deliver wider environmental benefits. Without such flexibility, the policy risks creating unnecessary constraints on development and may affect the deliverability of allocated and windfall sites.
- 6.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that a blanket 20% tree canopy coverage requirement is deliverable across all major development sites, Policy EN5 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the policy may not be justified or effective when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, as it has not been demonstrated that the requirement can be delivered alongside other policy obligations, including biodiversity net gain, open space provision, drainage infrastructure and development viability. The policy should therefore be amended to introduce greater flexibility and allow canopy coverage to be considered on a site-specific basis having regard to site characteristics and overall environmental outcomes.

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan



27 SPON STREET, COVENTRY, CV1 3BA
 T: +44 (0)24 7652 7600 E: info@idpgroup.com

© This drawing and the building works depicted are the copyright of IDP and may not be reproduced or amended except by written permission. No liability will be accepted for amendments made by other persons.

All dimensions to be checked on site and architect notified of any discrepancies prior to commencement.

Any and all elements relating to the fire safety of the project will require separate confirmation and approval by a fully accredited fire engineering consultant under separate client appointment.

E	Redline boundary updated	28.01.26 - TJ - BF
D	Landscape updated and internal links improved	30.10.25 - TJ - TJ
C	North eastern footpath connection removed	16.09.25 - TJ - DZ
B	Amended to project team comments	15.09.25 - TJ - DZ
A	Development parcels and road adjustments	20.08.25 - TJ - DZ
Rev:	Comments:	Date-Name-Check:

Dwg No: **C6057_001_03 Rev E**

Client: Mackenzie Miller Homes

Project: Clifton on Dunsmore

Title: Illustrative Framework Masterplan

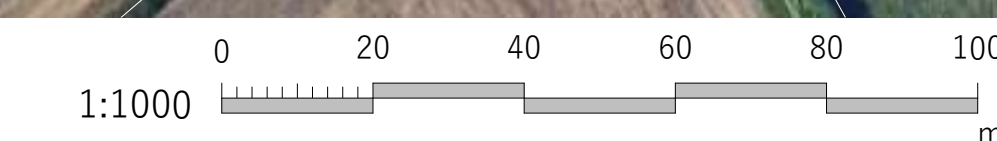
Scale: 1:1000 @ A0 Date: 24.01.25

RIBA: Stage 1 Dm/Ch: TJ/BF

Status: **FEASIBILITY**



Pro. No: **C6057**



Nexus Planning

Suite 2, Apex Plaza
3 Forbury Road,
Reading,
RG1 1AX

nexusplanning.co.uk

Representation Form for Local Plans



Local Plan Publication Stage Representation Form

Ref:

(For official
use only)

**Name of the Local Plan to which
this representation relates:**

Rugby Borough Council Proposed Submission
Local Plan

Please return to Rugby Borough Council by 5:00pm Friday 13th March 2026
By email to: localplan@rugby.gov.uk with **Proposed Submission Consultation in
the subject line, OR by post to:** Development Strategy, Town Hall, Evreux Way,
Rugby, CV21 2RR.

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation
you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes below (if applicable)
but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>	<input type="text" value="Mr"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="Adam"/>	<input type="text" value="Connor"/>
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Renn"/>	<input type="text" value="Shingler"/>
Job Title (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation (where relevant)	<input type="text" value="Mackenzie Miller Homes"/>	<input type="text" value="Nexus Planning"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Interchange Place"/>
Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="151-165 Edmund Street"/>
Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Birmingham"/>
Line 4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Post Code	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="B3 2TA"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address (where relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="c.shingler@nexusplanning.co.uk"/>

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each policy or site you wish to comment on

Name or Organisation:

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Local Plan Paragraph	<input type="text"/>	Local Plan Policy	S6	Policies Map	<input type="text"/>
Site ID	<input type="text"/>				

4. Do you consider the Local Plan:

(1) is Legally compliant	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) is Sound	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(3) complies with the Duty to co-operate	Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please refer to Section 4 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy S6

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above. (Please note that non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please refer to Section 4 of the accompanying supporting statement for our representations on Policy S6

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Please note: In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

After this stage, further submissions may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies for examination.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Mackenzie Miller Homes requests to participate in the Hearing Sessions for the Local Plan Examination. Mackenzie Miller Homes involvement is considered necessary to ensure matters relating to the spatial strategy, distribution of homes and land supply are considered during the hearing sessions.

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

9. If you have used AI to produce or substantially alter your representation, please declare which tool you have used, how it was used, and what checks you have undertaken to ensure the AI-produced material is accurate.

N/A

All representations received will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan and published on the council's website. Personal addresses and email addresses (as distinct from businesses addresses), but not names, will be redacted before representations are published.

The Rugby Borough Council Privacy Notice for Development Strategy is available here:

<https://www.rugby.gov.uk/w/privacy#development-strategy>

The Planning Inspectorate's privacy notice can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-inspectorate-privacy-notice>



Land South of Lilbourne Road, Clifton upon Dunsmore
Rugby Borough Council Regulation 19 Representations

On behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes

March 2026

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy	5
3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes	6
4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations	12
5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings	17
6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover	18

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These representations, on behalf of Mackenzie Miller Homes (“**MMH**”), are made to the Rugby Borough Local Plan 2025-2042 Proposed Submission Version (“**the Consultation**”) – a key stage to inform the emerging draft Local Plan being prepared by Rugby Borough Council (“**the Council**”).
- 1.2 MMH has an interest in all strategic and non-strategic land informing the draft Local Plan and these representations are made in the context of MMH interests in land south of Lilbourne Road on the eastern edge of Clifton upon Dunsmore (“**the Site**”). The Site has been previously promoted and submitted to the Call for Sites exercise and representations were made the Rugby Borough Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation in October 2023 and Preferred Options Consultation in May 2025.
- 1.3 MMH has submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. The submission demonstrates that the Site is capable of coming forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner, and therefore represents a suitable and sequentially preferable location for allocation within the Local Plan.
- 1.4 A Framework Masterplan outlining the concept of the Site is in **Appendix 1** of these representations.

Approach to Representations

- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, at paragraph 36, the tests of soundness that Local Plans and Spatial Development Strategies are examined against, as follows, with the Consultation Plan being considered in the light of these tests:
- a) **“Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs²⁰; 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 and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant”

1.6 These representations respond to key parts of the Consultation Plan, highlighting the specific policy, paragraph or pages of the Consultation Plan, or supporting evidence document being addressed. They focus primarily on the following policies of the Consultation Plan:

- Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy
- Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes
- Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations
- Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings
- Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

2. Draft Policy S1 Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.1 Draft Policy S1 sets out how housing and economic development will be distributed across Rugby Borough in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, with the majority of development directed towards the Rugby urban area.
- 2.2 MMH supports Policy S1 as currently drafted. In particular, it is noted that Clifton upon Dunsmore is identified as a Main Rural Settlement and is therefore second only to Rugby Town within the settlement hierarchy. The village is also well related to Rugby both spatially and in terms of accessibility to services and facilities. Whilst not located within the Rugby urban area, Clifton upon Dunsmore benefits from close proximity to the town and is able to readily access employment opportunities, services and community infrastructure, including schools and further education provision.
- 2.3 In light of the above, MMH generally supports the ranking and hierarchy of settlements set out within Draft Policy S1 and considers that, in this respect, the approach is sound.

3. Draft Policy S2 Strategy for Homes

Plan Period

- 3.1 The Consultation presents a revised strategy for the delivery of new homes across a 17-year period from 2025 to 2042. MMH is disappointed that the Council has decided to reduce the plan period from 2045 to 2042, which in turn substantially reduces the overall housing requirement from 14,134 to 11,729 homes.
- 3.2 The Council's Local Development Scheme indicates that the draft Local Plan will be submitted in June 2026 with adoption by June 2027. MMH consider this to be an unrealistic timeline. Reference is made to a letter from the Minister of State to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2024¹, highlighting the average length of examinations to be 134 weeks, taking account of the need for modifications, re-consultation and hearing sessions over an extended period, substantially greater than the Council's assumptions.
- 3.3 Therefore, where adoption of the Local Plan is extremely unlikely to be before the end of 2027 at the earliest, relevant strategic policies should look ahead to 2042/43, an additional year beyond the end of the Consultation's current plan period, to ensure a minimum period of 15 years from adoption and accordance with the NPPF.
- 3.4 One effect of increasing the plan period by one year is that the draft Local Plan will need to accommodate a proportionate increase of an additional 636 homes, as part of its housing requirement over that longer period to seek to ensure local housing need is met. Failure to address this in advance of the Regulation 22 stages will inevitably result in the Local Plan Inspector raising concerns related to conflict with paragraph 22 of the Framework thus potentially delaying the Examination Process.
- 3.5 As precedent, the Inspector for the West Berkshire Local Plan examination addressed a similarly deficient plan period through prescribed main modifications, citing reasons expressed above and requiring additional homes to be accommodated / planned for. For context the Examination for that Local Plan took place between May and October 2024 with the agreed Local Plan period up to 2041 (the same as that currently proposed by the Council despite the process in West Berkshire being concluded two years earlier).

¹ [Local Plan examinations: letter to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate \(July 2024\)](#)

- 3.6 It is also notable that the reduction in the overall housing requirement is largely a direct consequence of the shortened plan period. By reducing the end date of the plan from 2045 to 2042, the Council has significantly reduced the number of homes that would otherwise be planned for across the Borough. MMH considers that plan periods should be established primarily to ensure compliance with national policy requirements and to provide a robust long-term spatial strategy, rather than being used in a manner that has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery. Extending the plan period to ensure a full 15 years from adoption would therefore represent a more appropriate and policy-compliant approach in accordance with the NPPF.

Housing Requirement

- 3.7 The Consultation confirms that the draft Local Plan is seeking to meet the Council's standard method local housing need, as it must, in accordance with Framework paragraph 62.
- 3.8 With a housing need of 636 dwellings per annum (dpa) over 17 years, a total of 11,729 new homes must be accommodated across Rugby Borough. However, beyond that figure, key issues of housing affordability and economic factors should be taken into account.

Affordability

- 3.9 Whilst the standard method includes an affordability adjustment, the Planning Practice Guidance ("the PPG") is clear that when applied it only starts to address such issues. It is not a full solution to problems of affordability:

*"The affordability adjustment is applied in order to ensure that the standard method for assessing local housing need responds to price signals and is consistent with the policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The specific adjustment in this guidance is set at a level to ensure that minimum annual housing need starts to address the affordability of homes."*²

- 3.10 Rugby Borough faces great affordability pressures; the the ratio of median house prices to workplace-based earnings has reached a five year average of 7.4 in 2024, a rise of more than 138% from that in 1997.

² Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 2a-006-20241212

3.11 The affordable housing need identified in Table 5.7 of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (September 2025) is 474 dwellings per annum. When compared to the Council's selected local housing need of 636 dwellings per annum, affordable housing need would equate to approximately 75% of the overall housing requirement. This clearly demonstrates that the selected housing requirement will result in a significant level of unmet affordable housing need if the Local Plan Review proceeds in its current form. This is particularly concerning given the Council's recent delivery performance, as evidenced through its Annual Monitoring Reports, which indicates that affordable housing delivery is already falling short of identified need.

3.12 In practice, the most effective way to address affordability pressures and reduce the identified affordable housing need is to plan for the delivery of a greater overall supply of housing across the Borough, which in turn will increase the quantum of affordable housing delivered through policy requirements and planning obligations.

3.13 The declining delivery of affordable housing further reinforces the importance of ensuring that the Local Plan provides for a sufficient quantity and appropriate mix of housing to meet identified needs. The NPPF states at paragraph 63:

"Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies..."

3.14 For these reasons, MMH considers that the Council should take a more proactive approach to addressing the housing crisis within the Borough and plan for a higher level of housing growth than currently proposed. Increasing the overall housing requirement would provide a more effective means of responding to affordability pressures and supporting the delivery of the affordable homes required to meet identified need.

Economic Factors

3.15 The need to boost the supply of homes is also necessary in relation to economic factors: Framework paragraph 85 requires planning policies to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

3.16 The Homes – Jobs Alignment Paper (December 2025) and HEDNA (2024) identifies strong economic performance and a buoyant labour market as key drivers of Rugby Borough's housing market. A growing surplus of workforce workers over resident workers and growth in net commuting into West Northamptonshire from Coventry and West Northamptonshire; and (ii) deteriorating housing affordability from a lack of supply / demand imbalance.

3.17 The HEDNA recognises the strong demand for housing as workers seek to live locally to where they are employed.

- 3.18 If left unaddressed, unaffordable house prices will hold back West Northamptonshire's economic potential – deterring young professionals hoping to live and work in the county and affecting the ability of businesses to recruit staff.
- 3.19 The draft Local Plan should therefore go further than seeking to meet only the minimum level of housing under the standard method. It should take a positive approach to boost the number of homes, beyond the minimum starting point; opportunities for additional growth on the edge of Rugby, which includes Clifton upon Dunsmore, (support its current and expanding economic / employment offer) and other sustainable locations should be identified.

Housing Supply

- 3.20 Draft Policy S2 of the Consultation Plan sets the Council's sources of housing supply for the plan period. These totals include completions up to March 2025, committed developments with planning permission, allocations in neighbourhood plans, allocations in the Consultation Plan, and windfall allowances.

Resilience

- 3.21 The resilience of the proposed housing supply is questioned. Whilst Draft Policy S2 the categories of supply, it does not specify individual sites with planning permission in either the Consultation Plan or supporting documents. This detail is only found in the Housing Land Supply Statements (HLSS), which is assumed to be applicable for the Consultation Plan.
- 3.22 The HLSS suggests that the early years of the plan period will rely on carried-over allocations (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton) and small to medium-scale sites, supplemented by windfall development. Notably, the housing supply is almost dependent on three large strategic sites (South West Rugby, Eden Park and Houlton). This heavy reliance on a few strategic sites raises concerns about the resilience of the Councils housing supply over the entire plan period if one or more of the sites were to suffer any delays in anticipated delivery timescales.

Housing Trajectory

- 3.23 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites.
- 3.24 An overarching housing trajectory for the plan is contained in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan. However, it is unclear how these findings have been calculated as the housing trajectory is not site-specific. Whilst it is appreciated this is not an absolute requirement of the NPPF at a site level, given the importance of strategic allocations to later supply, this is important information to ensure the Consultation Plan is deliverable over the plan period and thus effective.

- 3.25 The only site-specific detail on housing trajectory is contained in the HLSS. However, upon examination, there appears to be a conflict between both the latest housing trajectory in the Consultation Plan and the HLSS. It is unclear how the housing trajectory in Appendix 1 of the Consultation Plan has been informed. It is therefore considered the Consultation Plan fails to provide an evidenced housing trajectory and is contrary to the requirements of Paragraph 78.

Windfalls

- 3.26 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF sets out that where an allowance is to be made for windfall sites as part of anticipated supply, there should be compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply
- 3.27 The windfall allowance over the plan period is 850 dwellings, noting that these figures should only apply for future years of the plan period, as otherwise they would fall into the completion/commitments categories.
- 3.28 The HLSS provides information relating to historic windfall delivery rates but does not consider future trends, as required by the NPPF. Furthermore, it is notable the windfall allowance for each Council is higher on an annualised basis than in the Councils current adopted Local Plan.
- 3.29 Given the above, the windfall allowance within the Consultation Plan is not supported by compelling evidence, meaning it is not consistent with national policy or justified, contrary to the soundness tests outlined at paragraph 36 of the NPPF. To overcome this issue, further evidence should be provided or the windfall allowance removed/significantly reduced.

Overall

- 3.30 For the reasons set out above, MMH considers that the Consultation Plan raises a number of significant concerns in relation to the proposed plan period, housing requirement and the robustness of the Council's housing supply evidence. The proposed plan period is unlikely to provide the required minimum 15-year timeframe from adoption, contrary to paragraph 22 of the NPPF, and has the effect of materially reducing the scale of housing delivery planned for across the Borough.
- 3.31 Furthermore, the proposed housing requirement of 636 dwellings per annum represents only the minimum starting point under the standard method and does not adequately respond to the scale of affordability pressures, the substantial identified affordable housing need, or the Borough's economic growth ambitions. Planning for a higher level of housing delivery would provide a more effective means of addressing these issues and supporting the delivery of affordable homes.

- 3.32 In addition, concerns remain regarding the resilience and transparency of the proposed housing supply, including the lack of a clearly evidenced housing trajectory, the significant reliance on a limited number of large strategic sites in the latter part of the plan period, and the reliance on a windfall allowance which is not supported by compelling evidence.
- 3.33 Taken together, these issues raise significant questions regarding whether the Consultation Plan is positively prepared, justified and effective, when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in paragraph 36 of the NPPF. The Council should therefore reconsider the proposed plan period, housing requirement and supporting housing supply evidence prior to submission to ensure that the Local Plan provides a robust and deliverable strategy capable of meeting the Borough's housing needs over the full plan period.

4. Draft Policy S6 Residential Allocations

Distribution of Development

- 4.1 MMH have serious soundness concerns regarding the Council's strategy in distributing residential development across the borough. The Council are currently proposing to allocate a significant amount of land at Main Rural Settlements which would require release of Green Belt land. The NPPF sets out at paragraph 145 that *'...Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced through the preparation or updating of plans.'*
- 4.2 For plan-makers to reach a point where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, paragraph 146 confirms that this can include *'...instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means'.*
- 4.3 And at paragraph 147 *'Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.'*
- 4.4 This assessment of whether all other reasonable options have been examined will need to take account of NPPF paragraph 147:
- a) *"makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
 - b) *optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
 - c) *has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground."*
- 4.5 The NPPF clearly sets out a sequential approach to allocating land for development within the Green Belt – essentially dictating that utilising Green Belt land should be a 'last resort', where there are no other options to accommodate the required growth. MMH consider the sequential approach to be particularly relevant given the availability of land sustainably located land outside the Green Belt, such as in Clifton upon Dunsmore and specifically MMH's Site.

- 4.6 MMH questions whether the Council has sufficiently considered all reasonable options. Clifton upon Dunsmore, unlike other Main Rural Settlements, is not constrained by the Green Belt. By contrast, Wolvey (290 dwellings), Brinklow (325 dwellings) and Long Lawford (650 dwellings) are all within the Green Belt and are planning for higher levels of growth than Clifton upon Dunsmore. There is therefore a clear need for a compelling planning justification explaining why appropriate non-Green Belt sites have been discounted. No such justification is evident within the available evidence base. MMH's Site demonstrates that significant housing can be delivered at a Main Rural Settlement without impacting major constraints, and its location immediately adjacent to Rugby Town represents a highly sustainable option for growth outside of the principal settlement.
- 4.7 It is noted that the Council's spatial strategy for Main Rural Settlements appears to have been influenced by existing primary school capacity, as indicated in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). For Clifton upon Dunsmore, the SA identifies a limit of 150 dwellings, citing the inability of the primary school to expand. However, this single factor should not override the sequential approach, particularly where non-Green Belt land exists and could support additional growth in a sustainable manner.
- 4.8 MMH notes the following points in relation education capacity:
- Current pupil distribution: Approximately 84% of pupils attending Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary School reside within the village. However, a notable proportion of pupils currently travel from outside the village to attend the school. Analysis indicates that many of these pupils could instead attend schools closer to their home locations, suggesting that current travel patterns do not necessarily reflect true local demand for places within Clifton upon Dunsmore itself. In the interests of sustainable development, the Council and Local Education Authority should prioritise enabling local pupils to walk to their nearest school, thereby maximising the efficient use of existing village-based capacity and reducing unnecessary travel.
 - Future capacity: Clifton upon Dunsmore has an ageing population, as evidenced in the Housing Needs Assessment supporting the Clifton upon Dunsmore Neighbourhood Plan. Although the primary school is currently operating at capacity, many pupils will progress to secondary education in the coming years, creating natural turnover. By 2030/31, when additional housing growth is anticipated to start coming forward, MMH considers that sufficient capacity is likely to arise to accommodate pupils generated by both MMH's Site (180 dwellings) and the draft allocations (150 dwellings). This indicates that further development in the village could be accommodated without exceeding local education capacity, while also supporting sustainable travel patterns for pupils.

- 4.9 Furthermore, the Council's spatial strategy and the interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) fail to properly account for the strong functional relationship between Clifton upon Dunsmore and Rugby Town. Within 5km of the Site there are six primary schools, all accessible within approximately 10 minutes by car and with capacity to accommodate additional pupils. It would also be reasonable and feasible to enhance public transport options for school travel, thereby reducing reliance on private vehicles. Indeed, it is common practice for pupils living in villages to utilise bus services for journeys to and from school.
- 4.10 Alternatively, the Council could identify additional land for a new primary school as part of a wider village growth strategy, with funding contributions secured through appropriately worded planning policy. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan could be prepared to set out clearly how the school would be delivered and funded, including realistic timelines. While the interim SA assumes that a single large site is required to support additional school provision, it is well-established that a collection of smaller sites, such as those promoted within Clifton upon Dunsmore, could collectively deliver the necessary infrastructure.
- 4.11 MMH reserves the right to submit further evidence on education capacity at Examination.
- 4.12 The Council has not proactively explored this option or worked with site promoters to optimise growth at this non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement. Instead, growth has been discounted based on a technical constraint that is capable of being resolved. In doing so, the Council has prioritised this issue over national planning policy objectives, including the sequential approach to Green Belt release. MMH considers this to be a fundamental flaw in the Council's approach, which seriously threatens the soundness of the Local Plan.

Site Credentials

- 4.13 MMH acknowledges that the Council assessed the Site under Stage 2 of the site selection process (reference 83). However, the reasoning for not progressing the Site is considered flawed, particularly in the context of the sequential approach. The Council's assessment recognises that the Site is accessible, walkable to nearby services and facilities, is free from ecological constraints, and is located outside the Green Belt. The assessment cites concerns regarding heritage and landscape; however, these matters can be appropriately mitigated.
- 4.14 MMH has undertaken technical work to inform the emerging masterplan and has now submitted an outline planning application (ref: R26/0117), which is currently under determination. This demonstrates that the Site can come forward in a sustainable, deliverable, and sensitive manner.
- 4.15 Heritage - The Council's Heritage Assessment acknowledges that impacts could be mitigated through high-quality design. The emerging Concept Plan incorporates the following mitigation measures:
- The existing village green to the west of the Site will be extended to form a communal open space, maintaining the rural backdrop of views from heritage assets and providing an attractive gateway to the village.

- The extended green will transition to the east into a parkland character, restoring elements of historic landscape, including the tree avenue, which will form an important green corridor through the development.
- The northern edge of built development will adopt a gentle building line, softened by additional planting, to ensure a sensitive transition with the Conservation Area and surrounding landscape.

4.16 Landscape – The Site forms a logical “rounding-off” of Clifton upon Dunsmore. The draft allocation at Land North of Lilbourne Road (site reference 129) would significantly alter the existing rural setting. The Dunsmore Plateau Fringe, where the Site is located, is of moderate sensitivity, lower than many other Main Rural Settlements, making it appropriate for development.

4.17 Ecology – The Site is predominantly arable land with native hedgerows along boundaries and scattered mature trees. The majority of trees and hedgerows are to be retained. The Site can be developed while achieving at least 10% biodiversity net gain in accordance with the Environment Act 2021.

4.18 Sustainability – The Site is well connected to local services and facilities, including education, retail, healthcare, leisure, and food & beverage amenities, all within acceptable walking or cycling distances. Local bus services run via Main Street, Clifton upon Dunsmore, with the nearest stop approximately 380m from the Site (a 5-minute walk). Rugby Station, approximately 2.5km west, provides frequent services to key destinations including Birmingham, London, Milton Keynes, Manchester, and Crewe.

4.19 Flood Risk – The entirety of the Site lies within Flood Zone 1, representing a low probability of flooding, according to Environment Agency data.

4.20 Overall Assessment – In the context of the sequential approach, the Site is preferable to draft allocations at other Main Rural Settlements, which would require the release of Green Belt land. The Concept Masterplan (Appendix 1) demonstrates that development at the Site is sustainable, deliverable, and well-designed. It can accommodate approximately 720 homes, alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, while sensitively addressing heritage, ecological, and landscape considerations.

Overall

4.21 MMH considers that the Council’s approach to distributing housing across Rugby Borough is fundamentally unsound. The plan places significant reliance on Green Belt release at Main Rural Settlements, without demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives outside the Green Belt have been fully considered, as required by NPPF paragraphs 145–147.

4.22 Clifton upon Dunsmore represents a sustainable, non-Green Belt Main Rural Settlement capable of accommodating substantial growth. This representation demonstrates that:

- The Site is well-connected to Rugby Town and local services, supporting sustainable travel patterns;
- Primary education capacity is sufficient, and additional infrastructure could be delivered through a co-ordinated approach;
- Heritage, landscape, and ecological constraints can be appropriately mitigated; and
- The Site can deliver approximately 180 homes alongside significant areas of green infrastructure, consistent with the Council's spatial strategy objectives.

4.23 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 36, strategic policies should ensure that housing and other development are distributed effectively across the plan area to meet identified needs. MMH's Site represents a sequentially preferable location for growth, outside the Green Belt, and capable of delivering sustainable development.

4.24 Accordingly, MMH considers that unless the Council gives proper weight to non-Green Belt opportunities such as the Site, the Local Plan will fail the tests of soundness, including justification, effectiveness, and consistency with national policy. Allocation of the Site would address these fundamental concerns and align the plan with national planning policy on the distribution of development.

5. Draft Policy CL1 Net Zero Buildings

- 5.1 MMH recognises the importance of planning for net zero carbon development as part of the wider objective of addressing climate change. However, there are significant concerns regarding the approach set out in Draft Policy CL1, which indicates the potential for the emerging Local Plan to introduce requirements that go beyond the standards set out in Building Regulations.
- 5.2 The Government's position on this matter is clear. A Written Ministerial Statement on Planning – Energy Efficiency Standards for New Homes (13 December 2023) confirms that planning policies should not impose energy performance standards that exceed the equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, noting the forthcoming introduction of the Future Homes Standard, expected to be implemented in 2025.
- 5.3 The Written Ministerial Statement states that *“the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations. The proliferation of multiple local standards by local planning authorities can add further costs to building new homes by adding complexity and undermining economies of scale. Any planning policies that propose local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations should be rejected at examination if they do not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale.”*
- 5.4 Requiring development to exceed the requirements of Building Regulations is therefore likely to introduce unnecessary complexity and additional cost burdens for developers. This has the potential to affect development viability and could slow the delivery of new homes and employment development required to meet the needs identified in the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that standards exceeding current or planned Building Regulations are necessary, viable and consistent with national policy, Draft Policy CL1 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the approach may conflict with national policy set out in the NPPF and the Written Ministerial Statement, which make clear that local planning authorities should not set local energy efficiency standards that go beyond current or planned Building Regulations without a robustly evidenced and costed justification. The policy should therefore be amended to ensure alignment with national policy and to avoid placing unnecessary constraints on the delivery and viability of development required to meet the Borough's housing and economic needs.

6. Draft Policy EN6 Canopy Cover

- 6.1 MMH has concerns regarding the requirement within Policy EN5 for a minimum 20% tree canopy cover to be delivered on all major development outside of Rugby Town Centre. It is understood that this figure appears to have been derived from a 2023 report produced by Friends of the Earth, which estimated that approximately 4.5% of Rugby Borough comprises woodland, placing the Borough within the lowest 20% of English local authorities for woodland coverage. The intention of Policy EN5 is therefore to address this identified shortfall.
- 6.2 Whilst the objective of increasing tree canopy cover is supported in principle, further evidence is required to demonstrate how this requirement can be implemented effectively across a range of development sites. In particular, it is unclear how a blanket 20% canopy coverage requirement can be consistently delivered alongside the range of other policy requirements expected of development proposals.
- 6.3 For example, there is potential for conflict between the objectives of Policy EN5 and the statutory requirement to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain under the Environment Act 2021, particularly on constrained sites. Achieving both requirements simultaneously may not always be feasible once other essential considerations such as layout, drainage infrastructure, open space provision and highways requirements are taken into account.
- 6.4 The policy should therefore adopt a more flexible approach to tree canopy provision, allowing proposals to be assessed on a site-by-site basis having regard to site characteristics, viability and the ability to deliver wider environmental benefits. Without such flexibility, the policy risks creating unnecessary constraints on development and may affect the deliverability of allocated and windfall sites.
- 6.5 In the absence of clear and robust evidence demonstrating that a blanket 20% tree canopy coverage requirement is deliverable across all major development sites, Policy EN5 risks being found unsound at examination. In particular, the policy may not be justified or effective when assessed against the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, as it has not been demonstrated that the requirement can be delivered alongside other policy obligations, including biodiversity net gain, open space provision, drainage infrastructure and development viability. The policy should therefore be amended to introduce greater flexibility and allow canopy coverage to be considered on a site-specific basis having regard to site characteristics and overall environmental outcomes.

Appendix 1 – Framework Masterplan



27 SPON STREET, COVENTRY, CV1 3BA
 T: +44 (0)24 7652 7600 E: info@idpgroup.com

© This drawing and the building works depicted are the copyright of IDP and may not be reproduced or amended except by written permission. No liability will be accepted for amendments made by other persons.

All dimensions to be checked on site and architect notified of any discrepancies prior to commencement.

Any and all elements relating to the fire safety of the project will require separate confirmation and approval by a fully accredited fire engineering consultant under separate client appointment.

E	Redline boundary updated	28.01.26 - TJ - BF
D	Landscape updated and internal links improved	30.10.25 - TJ - TJ
C	North eastern footpath connection removed	16.09.25 - TJ - DZ
B	Amended to project team comments	15.09.25 - TJ - DZ
A	Development parcels and road adjustments	20.08.25 - TJ - DZ
Rev:	Comments:	Date-Name-Check:

Drg No: **C6057_001_03 Rev E**

Client: **Mackenzie Miller Homes**

Project: **Clifton on Dunsmore**

Title: **Illustrative Framework Masterplan**

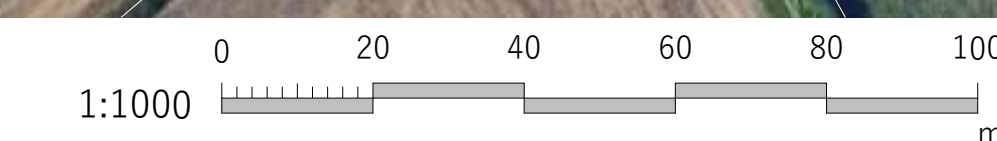
Scale: **1:1000 @ A0** Date: **24.01.25**

RIBA: **Stage 1** Dm/Ch: **TJ/BF**

Status: **FEASIBILITY**



Pro. No: **C6057**



Nexus Planning

Suite 2, Apex Plaza
3 Forbury Road,
Reading,
RG1 1AX

nexusplanning.co.uk