

## **CABINET - 17TH OCTOBER 2019**

### **Report of the Head of Planning & Regeneration Lead Member: Councillor Jane Hunt**

#### **Part A**

#### **ITEM 6      DRAFT CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN (2019-36)**

##### Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the publication of the Draft Charnwood Local Plan (2019-36) and its supporting documents for public consultation.

##### Recommendations

1. That the Draft Charnwood Local Plan (2019-36) and Policies Map contained in Appendix A to this report be approved for consultation as the Cabinet's preferred planning strategy for Charnwood 2019-2036.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Members for Planning, Inward Investment and Tourism Strategy and Transformation, to make minor amendments to the final document prior to publication.
3. That the Consultation Plan set out in Appendix B be approved.
4. That the Head of Planning and Regeneration be given delegated authority in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, Inward Investment and Tourism Strategy to revise the proposed dates for consultation set out in the consultation plan in Appendix B.

##### Reasons

1. To ensure that the preferred development strategy, draft policies and policies map are subject to public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
2. To allow minor corrections and amendments to be made in a timely manner prior to publication.
3. To demonstrate compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement.
4. To ensure that any changes required to the proposed dates for consultation are made when specific publicity restrictions on communications activity are in place.

## Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Charnwood Core Strategy was adopted in November 2015 and provides a development strategy to 2028 setting out where and how new development should take place in the Borough. The Council is working with its partners to deliver that plan and, in accordance with the requirement to keep plans up to date and reviewed at least every five years, work has also commenced on the preparation of a new Charnwood Local Plan for a longer period to 2036. This will align the local plan with the recently published Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and take account of changes to planning policy and guidance, including the standard method for assessing local housing need.

The new Charnwood Local Plan, once adopted, will form part of the development plan and provide the basis for determining planning applications in Charnwood. It will replace the Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) and the saved policies from the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004).

The new Charnwood Local Plan will include both strategic and detailed policies and set out a vision and a framework for the future pattern, scale and quality of development in the Borough. It will address needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places that contribute to healthy communities. The Policies Map helps to provide a spatial context to the plan.

The Government's requirements for plan preparation are contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF states that plan should be based on relevant, up-to-date evidence and supported throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal. Plans should provide a positive vision and address housing, economic, social and environmental needs. They should achieve sustainable development; be prepared positively in an aspirational but deliverable way; be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement; be clearly written and unambiguous; accessible; and avoid unnecessary duplication.

The NPPF outlines a presumption in favour of sustainable development which makes it clear that opportunities to meet the Borough's development needs should be positively sought and sets the principle that plans should meet objectively assessed needs as a minimum, unless:

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

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

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

Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities. Broad locations for development should be indicated on a key diagram, and land-use designations and allocations identified on a policies map. There is a requirement to maintain effective cooperation on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries through a duty to cooperate.

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

On the 14th April 2016 Cabinet resolved to approve the Charnwood Local Development Scheme 2016-19, the statutory document which sets out the programme for preparing planning documents for Charnwood (minute 133 15/16 refers). This provided a timetable for producing a new Local Plan to 2036 following changes to the planning system which meant the government expected local planning authorities to prepare a single Local Plan rather than a suite of development plan documents. The most appropriate way forward was therefore considered to be the preparation of a single Charnwood Local Plan document extending the Core Strategy to 2036 and replacing the remaining 'saved' policies from the 2004 Borough of Charnwood Local Plan.

The Local Development Scheme set out a series of steps to be followed to achieve:

- i. Regulation 18 Consultation on the scope of plan
- ii. Issues and Options Consultation
- iii. Preferred Option Consultation
- iv. Pre-Submission Consultation
- v. Submission
- vi. Examination
- vii. Adoption of the Local Plan

The Draft Charnwood Local Plan (2019-36), which is the subject of this report, is in accordance with step (iii) of this process.

On the 14th March 2019 Cabinet considered the current Charnwood Local Development Scheme 2019-22 (minute 100 18/19 refers). This sets out the most up-to-date programme for the next stages in preparing the new Local Plan which sees this consultation on the Draft Local Plan in 2019 and publication of a Pre-Submission Draft Plan and Examination in Public of the plan in 2020.

The development of the Draft Local Plan was scrutinised by the Policy Scrutiny Group on a number of occasions as set out below.

- 27th June 2016 – scrutiny of the scope of the Local Plan and its relationship with the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan;
- 26th September 2017 – scrutiny of the forthcoming 'Towards a Local Plan' consultation and relationship between the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans;
- 24th April 2018 – scrutiny of the timetabling changes; and
- 10th July 2018 – scrutiny of 'Towards a Local Plan' consultation and its effectiveness; also considered changes to methods of calculating housing needs.

Under the new scrutiny structure the responsible committee is now the Housing, Planning & Regeneration and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee. It is due to consider the Draft Local Plan in December.

The process of preparing the Local Plan has been guided by the Local Development Framework Project Board. The Board's role is to provide advice and to check and challenge the work presented to Cabinet.

#### Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The Cabinet is asked to consider approving the Draft Charnwood Local Plan (2019-36) and Policies Map for public consultation. The version of the Local Plan set out in Appendix A is a text only version. It will be designed and formatted in a similar way to previous planning policy documents for the public consultation. The responses received to the consultation will be assessed and used to inform the preparation of a Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan. Approval will then be sought from Cabinet for the publication of the pre-submission local plan.

The local plan will subsequently undergo a further round of statutory consultation, in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The local plan and the responses to that consultation will be submitted to the Secretary of State for an examination in public. If the Planning Inspector finds the Plan is sound it will then need to be formally adopted by Council.

#### Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

##### *Financial Implications*

The cost of preparing the Charnwood Local Plan in 2019/20 can be met within budget.

##### *Risk Management*

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

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Delay in publishing the Local Plan could result in developers submitting applications for planning permission without the benefit of an overarching strategy.	Likely (3)	Serious (3)	Moderate (9)	To ensure adequate resources are available to meet the indicative timetable for the Local Plan. To work with members to ensure they understand the implications of growth and are in a position to take difficult decisions at Council.

### *Equality and Diversity*

An Equality Impact Assessment of the Charnwood Draft Local Plan (2019-36) has been prepared and is attached as Appendix C. The Assessment will be revised following the consultation, in light of the responses received, and will help shape the policies in the Pre-Submission Plan.

### *Crime and Disorder*

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

### *Sustainability*

There is a legal requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment during the preparatory stages of a local plan and submit a final report to the Secretary of State when the Plan is formally submitted. These reports are prepared by independent consultants and the Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (October 2019) is available as a background paper to this report.

Key Decision: Yes

Background Papers:

- Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (October 2019)
- Regulation 18 Consultation: Charnwood Local Plan (July 2016)
- Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood (April 2018)
- Charnwood Local Plan evidence base:  
<https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/evidencebase>
- National Planning Policy Framework:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- National Planning Practice Guidance:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Officer(s) to contact:

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

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

## Part B

### Background

1. The Local Plan is an important document which sets out the vision for the future development of the Borough and is the basis against which planning decisions are made. The draft local plan contains the strategic overarching policies for the protection of the environment and long term growth in Charnwood to 2036, along with more detailed non-strategic policies for specific areas or types of development. It has been developed to support and deliver the Council's Corporate Plan and is informed by the Council's vision and other local priorities.
2. The draft local plan reflects the Government's requirements as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It has followed the advice contained in the Government's planning practice guidance during its preparation. This should ensure that the plan will pass the following robust tests of soundness set out in paragraph 35 of the NPPF, that it is:
  - **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
  - **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
  - **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
  - **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.
3. A wide range of evidence base reports have been prepared to assess topic areas such as landscape, transport, ecology, viability, flooding, employment and housing. These have informed the work which has taken place to understand the roles of different settlements, what land is available for development, constraints to development and the options for delivering homes and jobs.
4. A sustainability appraisal has been undertaken in support of the new Local Plan to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the plan from the outset. This is an integral part of the plan making process and will help to ensure that the plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development. An Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report has been prepared in support of the Charnwood Draft Local Plan (2019-36).

### Previous Consultations on Scope and Options

5. The draft local plan has been developed through a staged process. The initial step was to identify what the scope and content of the plan should be, in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning

Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This was carried out to help understand and engage with interested parties on the future for Charnwood, the scope of the plan and what matters it should cover.

6. The consultation responses showed that similar issues to those addressed by the Core Strategy were considered likely to remain to 2036, with matters such as climate change, increased traffic, reduced services and the need for housing likely to be increasingly a problem. It was recognised that a good evidence base was needed to inform the plan and a careful assessment of settlements was required to determine the spatial strategy.
7. The next step in the development of the draft local plan was the production of a discussion paper entitled “Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood”, which was published for consultation between 26th April to the 7th June 2018. This identified a range of key issues which would need to be considered when making decisions about the development strategy and meeting the Borough’s housing and employment needs. These included the balance of homes and jobs; availability of land and opportunities for new supply; housing mix; transport; environmental constraints; access to services and facilities; the need for infrastructure; deliverability and viability.
8. A number of reasonable broad development strategy options were identified which responded to these key issues, constraints and opportunities. The reasonable options for the spatial distribution of housing development tested different proportions of development distributed through the settlement hierarchy. The options ranged from a concentration of development at the larger, more sustainable settlements (urban concentration) through to a dispersed pattern of development as well as considering the potential for new settlements.
9. In terms of the needs for employment development a number of options that could meet the needs to 2036 were identified. These included relying on existing employment allocations already identified in the current development plan; identifying new employment land to facilitate regeneration; releasing poorer quality employment sites for alternative uses; and identifying new employment land to respond to demand for large warehousing.
10. The responses to the ‘Towards a Local Plan’ discussion paper came from a range of respondents including members of the public, planning agents and developers and various organisations and bodies including infrastructure providers, community action groups and schools. Concerns were raised about the need and capacity for more housing developments in the Borough, highlighting traffic issues and the availability and capacity of community infrastructure, as well as the impact on agricultural land, ecology, heritage, air quality, flooding and the character and separation of villages. Respondents highlighted the importance of the Strategic Growth Plan and the need for joint working across boundaries with other local authorities.
11. In terms of the development strategy, there was no overall preference for one of the strategies. Respondents supported urban concentration

principles which maximise existing infrastructure and minimise the need to travel, but there were concerns over focusing development in too few areas or too few sites thus creating pressure on existing infrastructure. Respondents supported a new settlement to take the pressure off existing infrastructure but concerns were raised about the uncertainty in delivering new settlements. There was support for more dispersed development to create choice and flexibility, but there was concern about the ability to provide appropriate infrastructure for this pattern of development.

12. The representations received to this consultation have informed the draft local plan presented, along with the evidence base that has been prepared to understand the roles of different settlements, what land is available for development, the constraints to development and the options for delivering homes and jobs.

#### Preparation of the Draft Local Plan

13. The draft plan identifies a preferred option for the development strategy for Charnwood taking account of the reasonable alternatives and proposes a range of draft policies to deliver that strategy.
14. The development strategy options consulted on in 2018 in the 'Towards a Local Plan' discussion paper have been refined, assessed and appraised in the sustainability appraisal. This included a transport assessment of the options and engagement with infrastructure providers.
15. Four alternative options were tested under a high growth scenario and a low growth scenario. The first two options proposed an urban concentration approach to future growth, one strongly concentrated development towards the urban areas of Loughborough and the edge of Leicester at Birstall, Syston and Thurmaston and the other focused development away from Loughborough and towards Shepshed and the Service Centres of Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley and Sileby. The third option dispersed development in line with the assessed sustainability of settlements and included significant development in Service Centres and smaller settlements. The fourth option included a new settlement at Cotes with the remaining growth concentrated in the urban areas.
16. The sustainability appraisal found that the low growth options that concentrate growth at the edge of Leicester and Loughborough or Shepshed have similar sustainability effects in terms of their impacts, with a marginally better performance for the option which focuses growth at Shepshed (slightly less likely to cause negative effects regarding flood risk, air quality and the historic environment and potentially more positive in terms of housing delivery and access improvements).
17. A low growth dispersed strategy was found to be less negative with regards to landscape and biodiversity but have less positive impacts for economy, healthy lifestyles and deprivation. The low growth option for urban concentration with a new settlement at Cotes was considered to have the potential to generate negative effects in terms of flood risk and

could have significant negative effects on the historic environment and landscape character. A low growth option including a new settlement was found to have less positive impacts for economy, healthy lifestyles and deprivation.

18. A low growth dispersed development strategy was also found to have the most positive effect on housing delivery; although, it also performed least well of the low growth options in terms of healthy lifestyles, accessibility and climate change.
19. The high growth scenarios were found to have greater impacts on the environment generally (landscape, biodiversity, air quality, climate change and historic environment) but a mixed contribution to deprivation, healthy lifestyles, housing and local economy.
20. The evidence highlighted both positive and negative impacts for each of the options and it was recognised that a further option could be developed which would minimise adverse impacts whilst maximising benefits. Taking account of the Council's vision, local priorities and the Strategic Growth Plan, a hybrid option was therefore developed which was separately appraised in the sustainability appraisal. This was found to successfully combine the key advantages of the alternative options assessed whilst reducing the negative impacts.
21. The hybrid strategy is a low growth strategy with a degree of flexibility to support the Council in maintaining a five year supply of deliverable sites over the lifetime of the Plan. It is an urban concentration and intensification strategy which looks to maximise opportunities with the urban areas and support the town centres with some growth dispersed to Service Centres and other settlements to support delivery.
22. The selection of sites to deliver the preferred hybrid development strategy has been informed by detailed site assessments. The Council followed the approach prescribed in the NPPF that plans should avoid significant adverse impacts and where such impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed. Where this is not possible off-site compensatory measures should be considered to offset impacts.
23. The Council applied a series of criteria to each site to place sites in one of three scenarios which reflected the above NPPF approach:
  - Scenario A included sites which individually **avoided** significant adverse impacts on key environmental factors and also sought to locate development close to services such as a very good public transport service, to schools and to a large food store.
  - Scenario B included sites which had significant adverse impacts where **mitigation** was possible, for example where they were large enough to masterplan the built form away from sensitive environmental areas.
  - Scenario C included sites which are less accessibility but still had access to at least a 30 minute bus service and where it may be possible to mitigate impacts with **compensatory** measures.

24. The draft local plan has been informed by findings of the interim Sustainability Appraisal report, through its preparation and in response to an appraisal of the plan as a whole. Policies in the draft local plan have been changed in response to the findings of the appraisal including that further policy requirements to mitigate the potential for significant adverse impacts upon biodiversity from the combinations of sites around the west of Shepshed.

### Draft Charnwood Local Plan

25. The draft local plan sets out the development strategy and the strategic and detailed policies to deliver the strategy to 2036. The key policies are set out below with changes to the existing policy framework highlighted. The full plan is included in Appendix A.

#### *Scale of Growth*

26. The local housing need for Charnwood is calculated using the national standard methodology and identifies a need for 1,082 homes a year, a total of 18,394 between 2019 and 2036. The draft plan identifies a preference for lower growth strategy with a degree of flexibility and makes provision for 7,317 homes in addition to those identified in the Core Strategy.

#### *Distribution of Growth*

27. The draft local plan proposes a preferred development strategy of urban concentration and intensification with some growth dispersed to other areas of the Borough. It focuses housing and employment at the edge of Leicester, proposes managed growth at Loughborough, and directs growth to Shepshed with a smaller scale growth to the Service Centres and Other Settlements. A list and map of the allocations of land that are proposed to deliver this strategy are set out in the draft local plan in Appendix A.

#### *Housing*

28. The draft local plan seeks 30% affordable homes on all housing developments of 10 houses or more. It also seeks a mix of house types, tenures and sizes and at least 5% of new homes that meet standards for being wheelchair accessible or adaptable. New policies are proposed on space standards for the internal dimensions of homes and requirements for plots for self-build/custom-build on developments of 20 or more dwellings.
29. There is an expanded policy proposed on Houses in Multiple Occupation which lowers the threshold currently set out in guidance and seeks to avoid new HMOs in areas with a 10% or more concentration of HMOs. A draft policy is also included for Campus and Purpose Built Student Accommodation supporting new purpose built student accommodation on the University and College campuses or in locations that are easily accessible from the campuses.

30. The draft local plan proposes a policy for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, which updates the Core Strategy policy and sets out how applications for sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople will be considered.

#### *Employment and Regeneration*

31. The draft local plan identifies the land that is available for employment over the plan period to 2036. There are no new allocations of land required as sufficient allocations were made in the Core Strategy. The draft policies also confirm support for the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park.
32. A new draft policy is included on protecting our existing good quality employment sites and supporting appropriate economic development in rural areas, such as small scale expansion and farm diversification. Draft policies also continue the support for the regeneration of Loughborough and Shepshed and appropriate developments in town centres and other shopping areas. This includes support for a mixed use development at Baxter Gate/Pinfold Gate. There is also a new draft policy that seeks to prevent an overconcentration of hot food takeaways in town centres.

#### *Environment*

33. The draft local plan includes a range of policies on the environment including draft policies that seek to protect the countryside, identify areas of local separation and green wedge and set out specific approaches to development in the Charnwood Forest, National Forest, River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor.
34. Draft policies also seek to conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment, including achieving a net gain in biodiversity from development. A new draft policy seeks to maintain and extend tree cover in the Borough.
35. The draft local plan also seeks to protect existing facilities and require new facilities to be provided from developments of 10 dwellings or more. It also confirms the allocation of land at Nanpantan for additional burial space.

#### *Climate Change*

36. The draft plan includes new and updated policies on renewable and low carbon energy which identifies opportunity areas; sustainable construction; managing flood risk and sustainable travel.

#### *Infrastructure and Delivery*

37. The draft local plan seeks to ensure development is supported by the necessary infrastructure and commits to working with infrastructure providers to ensure infrastructure needs are met.
38. The draft local plan states that the Council will prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and whole plan viability assessment.

## Next Steps

39. A six week public consultation will be undertaken on the Draft Charnwood Local Plan (2019-36), if approved. The Council will seek views on the proposed approach to future development in the Borough. Exhibitions will be undertaken in Loughborough, Syston and Shepshed and a range of press and online publicity will be used to raise awareness of the consultation. The responses to the consultation will be considered and will inform the further evidence work necessary to produce a Pre-Submission version of the Charnwood Local Plan.
40. The Pre-Submission Charnwood Local Plan, and the policies it contains, will then be considered by Cabinet before being tested through further consultation. Full Council would then be asked to submit the Local Plan for an Examination in Public which would need to find the Plan to be sound before it could become part of the development plan for Charnwood.

## Appendices

- Appendix A: Charnwood Draft Local Plan (2019-36): Preferred Option
- Appendix B: Consultation Plan
- Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment

# **Draft Charnwood Local Plan (2019-36)**

Preferred Options Consultation

October 2019

# Foreword

Welcome to the draft Charnwood local plan to 2036. This consultation document has been prepared specifically to seek views on the preferred options for the future development of the Borough and the policies that will influence how new homes and jobs are delivered.

We are very fortunate to live and work in a place as beautiful as Charnwood. We have great towns and attractive villages, nestled in and around the Charnwood Forest, the river valleys of the Soar and Wreake and in the Wolds, places as full of wildlife and history as they are prized for their beauty. We are all also the custodians of our Borough for future generations.

However, our location in the heart of the three cities of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham brings with it great pressure for development. The latest figures suggest we need a minimum of 1082 new homes a year up to 2036. Planning to meet this need, as we are required to do by national planning policy, is very difficult given our precious environment and shared desire to protect it, and we have therefore tried to minimise the impact that development will have.

We have already planned for much of the development we need through the Charnwood Core Strategy 2011-2028 but our new plan will need to extend across a longer period to 2036. In this draft plan we consider the amount of development that is needed, the relationship between development and the environment and set out our preferred options, based on the evidence, for a development strategy for Charnwood to 2036.

There is no shortage of landowners and developers wishing to see their land chosen and this document explains how sites have been assessed and the preferred locations for growth identified. I would stress that we have made no final decisions about any of the sites at this stage. This consultation document has been prepared to continue the discussion, recognising that there will be different views when it comes to the balance between homes, jobs and the environment.

There are difficult decisions to make and if you have a view I would encourage you to tell us so we can take it into account as we prepare our final proposals for further consultation ahead of Examination in Public by an independent inspector.

Whilst we do not have an entirely free hand we have thought very carefully about our vision for Charnwood and will enhance that vision with the comments and suggestions we receive. This is your opportunity to tell us what you think and we will consider those views when it is time to make those decisions. I would encourage anybody who has a view to read this document and take the time to share their thoughts with us.

*Cllr Jane Hunt  
Lead Member for Planning, Inward Investment and Tourism Strategy  
Charnwood Borough Council*

# Contents

Chapter		Page
1	<b>Introduction</b>	
2	<b>Profile of Charnwood</b>	
3	<b>Vision and Objectives</b>	
4	<b>Development Strategy</b> A Strategy for Charnwood's Future Development Amount of Development Needed Location of Development Design of Development	
5	<b>Housing</b> Meeting Our Housing Needs Affordable Housing Housing Mix Space Standards Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Houses in Multiple Occupation Campus and Purpose Built Student Accommodation Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	
6	<b>Employment and Regeneration</b> Economic Development Protecting Our Existing Employment Sites Regeneration Strategy Our Rural Economy Town Centres and Shopping	
7	<b>Environment</b> Countryside and Landscape Biodiversity and Geodiversity Tree Planting Heritage Healthy Communities, Open Space, Sport and Recreation	
8	<b>Climate Change</b> Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Sustainable Construction Managing Flood Risk Sustainable Travel	
9	<b>Infrastructure and Delivery</b> Road Transport Education and Health Delivery and Viability	
10	<b>Allocation Policies</b> North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension Watermead Regeneration Corridor	
11	<b>Glossary</b>	

# Chapter 1: Introduction

The Charnwood Core Strategy was adopted in November 2015 and provides a development strategy to 2028 setting out where and how new development should take place in the Borough. Whilst the Council is working with its partners to deliver that plan, work has commenced on the preparation of a plan for a longer period to 2036 to align with the new Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire and new evidence of the need for homes and jobs. This approach is in accordance with the national policy requirement to keep plans up to date and reviewed at least every five years.

This new local plan will include both strategic and detailed policies. It will set out a vision and a framework for the future pattern, scale and quality of development in Charnwood. It will address needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places that contribute to healthy communities.

The new local plan, once adopted, will form part of the development plan and replace the Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) and the saved policies from the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004). The development plan is at the heart of the planning system with a requirement set in law that planning decisions must be made in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

## **Preparation of the Draft Local Plan**

The draft local plan reflects the Government's requirements as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It has been developed to support and deliver the Council's Corporate Plan and is informed by the Council's vision and local priorities. It reflects the evidence that has been prepared to understand the roles of different settlements, what land is available for development, constraints to development and the options for delivering homes and jobs.

The draft plan has been developed through engagement with the public and key stakeholders such as infrastructure providers, parish and town councils, residents' groups, interest groups and the development industry. This has ensured the draft plan and the evidence underpinning it have been shaped by an understanding of the key local issues.

The Council has already undertaken two consultations to help it prepare this draft plan, the first on the scope of the local plan in July 2016 and the second on the key issues and options in April 2018, when the Council published a discussion paper titled

'Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood'. There has also been engagement to inform the preparation of the evidence.

The Charnwood Local Development Scheme 2019-22 sets out the programme for the next stages in preparing the new local plan which sees this consultation on a draft plan in 2019 and publication of a Pre-Submission Draft Plan and Examination in Public of the plan in 2020.

## **Status of the Draft Local Plan**

This document sets out our preferred options for draft policies following an options appraisal process. The Council is consulting on these preferred options and invites views of its proposed approach to future development in the Borough. These draft policies will need to be tested through consultation and then Examination in Public before they can become part of the development plan for Charnwood.

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

Sustainable development is a key principle which underpins the planning system. It means ensuring a better quality of life, now and for future generations. This means considering all three aspects of sustainable development: the community, the economy and the environment.

A separate Sustainability Appraisal Report accompanies each stage in the preparation of the local plan. Previous to this consultation, there have been Sustainability Appraisal Reports on the scope of the local plan (January 2017) and 'Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood' (April 2018).

A Sustainability Appraisal of the alternative options has been carried out to assess the effect of the draft policies on sustainability principles. The Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (September 2019) summarises the Sustainability Appraisal work carried out to date and how it has influenced the plan; the report is published as part of this consultation and views are invited.

## **Consultation**

Following the earlier consultations that we have undertaken, the purpose of this consultation is to propose our preferred development strategy for Charnwood and present draft policies which respond to the evidence. We will highlight the key choices and alternative options and invite views as part of our ongoing engagement with the public and other stakeholders before a Pre-Submission Draft Plan is published in spring 2020.

### **Consultation Questions**

We have included questions throughout the document asking for your views on what we are proposing. After each section we are asking whether you think that the process we have followed based on our evidence and the results of our previous consultations has led us to the right conclusions. This is a draft local plan



## Chapter 2: Profile of Charnwood

Charnwood is one of seven districts in Leicestershire located around the city of Leicester. The Borough is situated in the north of the county, adjoining the city to the south. Our Borough benefits from being centrally located between the three cities of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. We have excellent connections with the M1 motorway to the west and East Midlands Railway line to the east.

The city of Leicester is the key destination for work and leisure for residents in the south of the Borough whilst in the north of the Borough the university and market town of Loughborough provides the economic and social focus. To the west of Loughborough is the town of Shepshed and to the south are a string of larger villages along the Soar Valley and A6 corridor. These villages act as Service Centres to the more rural parts of the Borough. The village of Anstey also performs the role of a Service Centre in the south west corner of the Borough.

To the west of the Soar Valley is the Charnwood Forest, which stretches to the west of Coalville. The Forest is recognised as a Regional Park, providing a focus for leisure and conservation. To the north east is the Wolds, a rural area with strong links to Nottinghamshire and the city of Nottingham. The Wreake Valley is to the east of the Borough towards Melton Mowbray where a number of villages are located along this corridor. South of the Wreake Valley is High Leicestershire, a predominately rural area with strong links to the city of Leicester and close to the district of Harborough.

The profile below provides key information about Charnwood using the most up to date statistics available.

### PROFILE OF CHARNWOOD

#### Location

Charnwood is located in the East Midlands region, centrally between the three cities of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.

#### Settlements

Loughborough is the main town of Charnwood and is the largest settlement in Leicestershire outside the city of Leicester. Loughborough has been a regionally significant market town since 1221. It is home to the world-renowned Loughborough University which has been a centre of learning since 1909. Shepshed is the second largest town in Charnwood after Loughborough and is located to the north west of the Borough. Syston, the third largest town, is located to the south of the Borough. There are over 30 smaller settlements in the form of villages and hamlets. These are concentrated along the corridors of the Soar and Wreake Rivers and the suburban

boundary with the city of Leicester, with minor concentrations in the Wolds and the fringes of the Charnwood Forest.

### **Area**

The area of the Borough is 27,906 hectares

### **People and society**

The population of Charnwood is 180,387 (ONS Mid year estimates, 2017)

15.8% are under 15 years of age (ONS Mid year estimates, 2017)

17.9% are of pension age 65 and over (ONS Mid year estimates, 2017)

The number of people aged over 65 years old is projected to increase by 78% between 2011 and 2036 whilst the number of people aged over 85 is projected to increase by 157% (HEDNA, 2017)

Black and minority ethnic population is 12.6% (Census, 2011)

### **Housing**

Estimated 74,461 households in 2019 (ONS Household Projections, 2014-2039)

Average household size 2.37 persons (ONS Household Projections, 2014-2039)

Accommodation type (Council Tax data (April 2019):

Detached 30%

Semi-detached 33%

Terrace 22%

Flat 11%

Other 4%

5,571 houses under Council ownership, 3,336 owned by Registered Providers

### **Average house prices** (Land Registry, February 2019)

Detached £329,543

Semi-detached £204,015

Terraced £162,990

Flat and maisonette £120,488

The ratio of house prices to median earnings is 7.23 (ONS, 2018)

### **Accessibility and Transport**

43% of the working population living in Charnwood also work within the Borough. Outside the Borough, the largest proportion of employment is in the city of Leicester (20% of working population). However, there is a net commuter outflow of 11,589 daily from the Borough (Census 2011).

Charnwood has a well-developed transport network:

- M1 motorway is 5 minutes' drive from Loughborough
- Midland Mainline railway serves Syston, Sileby Barrow upon Soar and Loughborough
- East Midlands Airport is 20 minutes' drive from Loughborough

- A6 road links Loughborough to Leicester
- A60 and A606 roads link Loughborough to Nottingham
- A46 is 15 minutes' drive from Loughborough and 5 mins from Syston
- Bus, rail, cycle and footpath networks link Loughborough to the larger settlements.
- National Cycle Route 6 runs from Shepshed to Watermead Country Park

### **Jobs and Prosperity**

65.1% of the population are aged 16-64 (ONS Mid-year estimates, 2017)

74.7% aged 16-64 are economically active (ONS Mid-year estimates, 2018)

14.7% aged 16-64 are unemployed but want a job (ONS, 2018)

84.9% of businesses employ less than 10 employees (ONS, 2018)

Average (Median) annual earnings are £27,768 (NOMIS, 2018)

72.3% of people aged 16-74 in employment travel to work by car (Census, 2011)

4.5% of young people aged 16-19 in 2011 were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Charnwood, which is below the national average of 6.1%.

Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone sites at Charnwood Campus and Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park

### **Environment**

Nearly 800 statutory listed buildings

Over 200 locally listed buildings of interest

38 Conservation Areas

21 Scheduled Monuments

3 Registered Parks and Gardens

218 Local Wildlife Sites

18 Sites of Special Scientific Interest

61% of the river length in Charnwood has a Moderate overall ecological status (Environment Agency, 2016)

45.5% of household waste recycled/reused/composted (Letsrecycle.com 2017/18)

Average annual domestic consumption of electricity is 3,583 kWh per household (DBEIS, 2017)

Average carbon footprint is 6.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/year (DBEIS, 2015)

2,758 properties at risk of flooding from watercourses in a 1 in 100 year flood event and 6,724 in a 1 in 1,000 year flood event (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2018)

### **Health and Care**

In Charnwood, the life expectancy for males is 80 and for female its 83. Both are above the average for England (Public Health England, 2018)

6.7% of people consider their day to day activities to be limited a lot by their health or disability and 4.2% consider their health to be bad or very bad (Census, 2011)

5,870 people received Disability Living Allowance (ONS, 2010)

17,127 people provide unpaid care to a relative or neighbour (Census, 2011)

Number of people experiencing dementia is projected to double between 2011 and 2036 from 1,964 to 4,107 (+109%).

Number of people experiencing mobility problems projected to increase from 5,087 to 9,893 (+94%) between 2011 and 2036.

An increase of 13,909 in the number of people with a Limiting Long Term Health Problem or Disability between 2011 and 2036 (+54%). The vast majority of this increase is likely to be found amongst people aged 65 and older but it will also include working age people.

### **Deprivation**

Charnwood is ranked 237 out of 354 local authorities (where 354 is the least deprived) based on average deprivation scores (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2015)

Approximately 12% of children (3,400) live in low income families (Public Health England, 2018)

### **Students, Education, Skills and Training**

Charnwood has 49 primary and 11 secondary schools. 22,648 pupils attend these schools. (LCC School Health Profile, 2017/18)

38.4% of the population have qualifications at NVQ4 level and above (equivalent to HND, Degree, Higher Degree and above) (ONS, 2018)

Approximately 4.2% of people aged 16-64 have no qualifications (ONS, 2018)

### **Safety and Protection**

In 2017/18, there were 11,965 total crimes (excluding fraud) recorded in the Borough.

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you think we have included the right information in the Profile?
- If not, what would you include or exclude and why?

# Chapter 3: Vision and Objectives

## Vision

The profile highlights that Charnwood is already an attractive place to live, work and visit for many but that there are a number of key challenges for the plan period.

The key challenges include:

- a growing population with a range of housing needs including specialist homes for older people, students and those unable to get onto the housing ladder;
- a number of deprived communities in the Borough with lower than average incomes, poor health and lower levels of educational attainment;
- increasing volumes of traffic and pressure on infrastructure including schools, health centres, open spaces and utilities;
- the changing retail market with the increase in online shopping and town centres that are suffering from this competition;
- pressure on open land as settlements grow to accommodate the population which impacts on the separation and identity of settlements; and
- climate change impacting on the wider environment with localised issues such as increased flood risk.

An understanding of the Borough and our key opportunities and challenges has informed the vision for the Borough to 2036. The vision also reflects the spatial elements of the Charnwood Borough Council corporate vision, setting out the local priorities which have influenced the approach to future development in the Borough alongside national policy and Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire.

### **A VISION FOR CHARNWOOD 2036**

In 2036 Charnwood will be one of the most desirable places to live, work and visit in the East Midlands.

Development will have been managed to improve the economy, quality of life and the environment.

Charnwood will be recognised for the role Loughborough plays in the region's knowledge-based economy.

Our strong and diverse economy will provide more employment opportunities for local people including higher skilled, better paid jobs in high technology research and manufacturing, sports, tourism, creative and cultural industry clusters.

Growing businesses will have been retained and new investment secured. The Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park and Loughborough University will be at the heart of Loughborough's brand as a centre for excellence. Business and technological links with the city of Leicester will have been strengthened through the Watermead Regeneration Corridor.

Our landscape and the special buildings, heritage and biodiversity it contains will be in a good state. Our picturesque villages will have retained their strong sense of identity. Charnwood will be known for its natural and built environment which provides a place that people want to visit and explore.

Our communities will have access to a range of green spaces, leisure and recreational facilities across Charnwood and new parkland in Loughborough and Thurmaston will be provided. The Charnwood Forest will be recognised as a Regional Park. The River Soar and River Wreake will be improved for wildlife and people and a regenerated Watermead area will bring environmental benefits to its surrounding communities and welcome visitors.

Charnwood will be recognised for delivering growth to a high design quality that benefits our communities.

The demand for housing will be focused on Loughborough to support its role as the social and economic focus for the Borough, the edge of Leicester to support the central city and at Shepshed to support its continued regeneration. This will include sustainable urban extensions at West of Loughborough, Birstall and Thurmaston, as well as other planned areas of growth, which will incorporate good quality design and reflect our strong local distinctiveness.

Our communities will have access to homes to suit their needs. In particular, there will be provision of affordable housing including in rural communities. Issues previously associated with houses in multiple occupation will have been managed and social cohesion will have improved.

Growth at Loughborough will be managed to respond to its rich history and relationship with the Charnwood Forest whilst supporting the town centre as the main economic, social and cultural heart of the Borough. The town will have benefitted from regeneration which capitalises on our industrial heritage including the Great Central Railway. The town centre will be an attractive, compact and walkable destination for shopping, leisure, entertainment and culture. It will be a town for all ages, providing an attractive place to live as well as visit.

Growth at Shepshed will support the Strategic Growth Plan's proposal for an International Gateway, secure regeneration that enhances the physical fabric of the town and makes the most of the forest environment. Settlements located within and adjacent to the Forest will be known for their intrinsic connection with that special

landscape. Our other settlements will have an attractive provision of local shops, culture and leisure facilities and will have retained their individual identity.

Our communities will have better access to jobs and services, with a choice to walk or cycle. For longer trips Charnwood will be known for its excellent connections by bus or rail. Some trips will no longer be necessary as an expansive broadband network will make Charnwood one of the best connected semi-rural boroughs in the country.

Our communities will enjoy a cleaner and greener environment. Charnwood will be well prepared for the impacts of climate change and will be playing its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, particularly through its woodland and forest character.

Our communities will have a sense of ownership and increased pride in their local areas due to strong neighbourhood planning.

## **Objectives**

To achieve the vision the Council has identified the following objectives for the local plan, which have been informed by the principles of sustainable development.

### **Development Strategy**

1. To respond to the demand for housing and employment land by focusing growth on:
  - Loughborough, to capitalise on its rich history and support the town centre to continue to be the main economic, social and cultural heart of the Borough and an attractive, compact and walkable destination for shopping, leisure, entertainment and culture;
  - the edge of Leicester, to support Leicestershire's central city; and
  - Shepshed, in its role as part of the Leicestershire International Gateway, to secure its regeneration and make the most of its location on the edge of the Charnwood Forest.
2. To reduce the need to travel by car, and the distance travelled, and increase the use of walking, cycling and public transport to access jobs, key services and facilities.
3. To create distinctive and attractive places for people to live in by requiring high quality design and seeking high environmental standards in new development.

### **Society: Supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities**

1. To provide our communities with access to homes to suit their needs, including providing affordable homes for rural communities.
2. To ensure that there is a network of vibrant local centres so residents have good access to a range of shops, services and facilities.
3. To increase access to a wide range of services and facilities for all people, having regard for their particular needs.
4. To promote health and well-being, in particular by ensuring that residents have access to health care, local parks and other green spaces, the countryside and facilities for sport and recreation, creative and community activities, and by promoting healthy and active lifestyles in the Borough.
5. To promote strong, cohesive and balanced communities and improve social cohesion. This will include responding to changes in demographics, for example in influencing the type of housing provision that is required, and managing the issues associated with houses in multiple occupation.
6. To reduce poverty and deprivation, particularly in those parts of the Borough identified as areas of relatively higher need, for example the Priority Neighbourhoods of Loughborough East, Loughborough West, Mountsorrel and South Charnwood.
7. To protect and reassure our communities through the reduction of crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.
8. To assist our communities to have a sense of ownership and increased pride in their local areas due to strong neighbourhood planning.

**Environment: Contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment**

1. To promote the prudent use of resources through patterns of development, design, transport measures, reducing the use of minerals, energy and water and minimising waste and encouraging recycling.
2. To reduce net greenhouse gas emissions, in support of achieving a carbon neutral Borough, and reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
3. To protect and enhance the range of habitats and species found in Charnwood, seek to deliver biodiversity gain and reverse habitat fragmentation.

4. To protect and enhance the historic environment and the identity of the Borough's locally distinctive towns, villages and neighbourhoods.
5. To protect the special and distinctive qualities of all landscapes, maintaining local distinctiveness and sense of place, and paying special attention to impacts on the Charnwood Forest and supporting the National Forest Strategy and tree planting throughout the Borough.
6. To protect the Borough's soil resources, ensure the sustainable management of the Borough's mineral resources and protect the Borough's geodiversity.
7. To improve local air quality and protect and improve the quality and quantity of the water in the Borough's surface and groundwaters.
8. To reduce the risk to people and properties from flooding, particularly in vulnerable locations such as parts of Loughborough and the villages of the Soar and Wreake Valleys.

#### **Economy: Helping build a strong responsive and competitive economy**

1. To support a strong and diverse economy that will provide more employment opportunities for local people including higher skilled, better paid jobs in the knowledge-based sector including high technology research and manufacturing, sports, tourism, and creative and cultural industry clusters, particularly by safeguarding key employment sites and creating opportunities for new high quality employment sites, including a Science Park extension in Loughborough.
2. To develop transport infrastructure and integrated transport schemes that support growth and include measures to improve safety and reduce the adverse environmental and other impacts of traffic on local communities.
3. To sustain and enhance Loughborough town centre as a prosperous, attractive and vibrant destination for shopping, entertainment and leisure as well as a place to live.
4. To capitalise on the benefits to the Borough of Loughborough University, especially those associated with its reputation as a centre of sporting excellence and for research into new technologies and sustainability.
5. To strengthen business and technological links with the city of Leicester through the Watermead Regeneration Corridor.
6. To regenerate Shepshed town centre and support its future.

7. To encourage thriving and diverse sustainable rural enterprises and farming, and the promotion of local foods and local energy sources.

In order to achieve sustainable development we must prepare policies that meet our economic, social and environmental objectives. We see these objectives as interdependent and there are therefore links between the chapters of this Draft Plan and our Draft Policies. The structure of the document focuses on social objectives in Chapter 5, economic objectives in Chapter 6 and environmental objectives in Chapter 7. However, because of the interrelationships, the document should be read as a whole. In particular, we have identified three key themes that cross all three objectives: these are climate change, design and health. There are separate sections on each of these themes within the document.

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on the vision and objectives or think we have missed something?

# Chapter 4: Development Strategy

## A Strategy for Charnwood's Future Development

Our proposed development strategy sets out the scale and pattern of development in the Borough. It flows from the vision and objectives above which in turn flow from our understanding of the Borough and the key opportunities and challenges it faces.

We want to meet the housing needs of our community, create a strong and lasting economy and protect our environmental assets to create a good quality of life for all our residents.

Our proposed strategy aims to guide new development to the most suitable locations in the Borough, protect our most environmentally sensitive locations and reduce the Borough's contribution to global warming. This means having regard to:

- the role of Loughborough as the economic and social focus of the Borough;
- our relationship with the city of Leicester;
- the separate strong identity and character of our settlements;
- our valued landscapes, biodiversity and heritage;
- the impacts of and contributions to climate change, including the risk of flooding; and
- access to jobs, services, infrastructure and sustainable travel options.

Our preferred development strategy aims to direct development to locations that provide access to jobs, services, infrastructure and sustainable travel options. Successful planning should lead to the creation of healthy places in the Borough. Our evidence shows that Charnwood is already a healthy place to live compared with other places in the East Midlands and the rest of the country. However there is recognition that encouraging more people to adopt active lifestyles is an important public health objective. We want well designed places that take into account people's well-being and encourage walking and cycling as physically active modes of transport, and enable people to have convenient access to open spaces and other facilities for active recreation and play, the natural environment and health care facilities.

Our proposed strategy also takes account of the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire, which sets the scale and pattern of development in Charnwood in the context of the strategic housing market area as a whole. It promotes Charnwood meeting its own need for homes through a strategy that supports an infrastructure led approach to development. The spatial strategy includes an A46 growth corridor around the south and east of Leicester terminating in the south east of Charnwood and an International Gateway in the area around the confluence of the A42 and the M1 motorway. It also encourages managed growth at Loughborough.

The proposed strategy takes account of all of these factors in identifying an appropriate spatial pattern of homes, jobs and facilities. It has been prepared having considered the reasonable alternative options and should be used to understand whether individual proposals are acceptable in principle.

## **Amount of Development Needed**

The UK's and the Borough's populations are increasing with people living longer, birth rates exceeding death rates and more people moving in than leaving the UK. As a result we have a growing and changing community who need homes, jobs, shops and services. The role of the local plan is to make provision for the right amount of development to meet the community's needs for housing, employment and retail.

### **Local Housing Needs**

The Local Housing Need for Charnwood has been calculated using the standard methodology set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance. This shows there is a need for 1,082 new homes a year for the period 2019-2036. This is a total of 18,394 homes.

Charnwood forms part of the wider housing market of Leicester and Leicestershire and it is important that account is taken of any unmet needs from elsewhere in the area. It is anticipated that the city of Leicester will have unmet needs; however the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire identifies how this unmet need will be redistributed in Leicestershire and it does not affect the number of homes we need to plan for in Charnwood.

The Charnwood Core Strategy seeks to deliver 13,940 homes between 2011 and 2028 and therefore a significant proportion of our housing need is already planned for. This includes three Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) that will continue to deliver houses after 2028 into the new local plan period, and in the case of North East of Leicester beyond 2036 as well:

- North East of Leicester at Thurmaston (planning permission for 4,500 homes);
- West of Loughborough (planning permission for 3,200 homes); and
- North of Birstall (planning permission sought for 1,950 homes).

We are proposing to save the policies from the Core Strategy that deal with the North East of Leicester and West of Loughborough SUEs and therefore this plan does not include any specific policies regarding them.

The table below shows both the amount of homes required and how many of the homes already planned for and committed are expected to be delivered by 2036. The table shows there are an additional 5,930 homes required to meet our needs for the longer plan period up to 2036 once commitments are taken into account.

Table 1: Housing Need and Supply 2019-36

Housing Need and Supply	Homes
Local Housing Need (1,082 per annum)	18,394
Housing Supply	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension</li> <li>• West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension</li> <li>• North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension</li> <li>• Other Planning Permissions at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019</li> <li>• Saved Charnwood Local Plan 2004 Allocation</li> </ul>	<p>3,325</p> <p>3,200</p> <p>1,950</p> <p>3,949</p> <p>40</p>
Supply Sub-total	14,464
To be found	5,930

It is important to consider that new sites may also take longer than the plan period to be completed and the long term build out rates of large sites have the potential to change due to unforeseen circumstances such as changes in the housing market or delays with overcoming site constraints.

***How did we arrive at the preferred scale of housing?***

In the 'Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood' (April 2018) discussion paper we consulted on high and low growth options. The low growth options aimed to deliver around 8,100 homes, which was, at that time, the minimum required to deliver the homes needed. This was before the introduction of the new national standard methodology for calculating housing need which has decreased the amount required to 5,930 homes. The high growth options responded to the evidence around the capacity of the market to deliver homes and aimed to deliver around 15,700 homes to provide resilience and flexibility in the supply.

Many respondents to the consultation raised concerns about the need and capacity for more housing developments in the Borough and cautioned against higher housing requirements. Others suggested that the Council should be considering a higher housing figure to ensure a sufficient supply of housing land and meet any unmet needs arising from the city of Leicester.

Our evidence highlights that whilst high growth could lead to greater flexibility which may aid delivery and be of benefit to maintaining a five year supply, it will lead to a

greater environmental impact than a lower level of growth. Our evidence also highlighted that there could be significant difficulties in the delivery of transport and other infrastructure given the scale, complexity and cost of providing significant infrastructure to support higher scales of growth. There would therefore be a risk that the mitigation required for a high growth scenario is not delivered resulting in delays to the delivery of homes.

A low growth scenario was found to cause less environmental harm and to be relatively easier to mitigate. Whilst it has the potential to meet the need for homes, there is a greater risk that the Council will fail to maintain a five year supply of deliverable sites.

**Our preferred strategy, based on our evidence, is to plan for a low growth scenario with a significant element of flexibility to take account of changing circumstances. This is based on housing need, delivery and site availability evidence and is intended to provide sufficient flexibility to maintain a supply of housing land. We propose to plan for approximately 1,400 additional homes over the plan period to achieve this flexibility. We therefore propose to carry forward the existing housing proposals from the Core Strategy, take account of existing commitments and make provision for a further 7,317 homes over the plan period to 2036.**

#### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you agree that we should pursue a low growth rather than a high growth scenario?
- Does planning for an additional 1,400 homes above what is required to meet our needs strike the right balance between ensuring there is flexibility in the plan and protecting our environment? If not, what alternative approach would you suggest and why?

We will need to keep the plan up to date and as the draft plan moves towards a final version and take account of any changes in the local housing need figure for the Borough and monitoring data for housing completions and commitments.

#### **Employment Needs**

We have worked with all the authorities in the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Market Area to understand our employment needs and tested this at a local level. Our evidence identifies a need for 55.9ha of employment land over the plan period. This need is made up of 11.4ha for offices and 44.5ha for small industrial units and warehouses which will be sufficient to meet the identified need and allow for a 10ha contingency in the supply of industrial land to address low vacancy rates and market imbalance.

There is a wider need for larger strategic distribution units in Leicestershire with demand focussed in Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire. We are investigating this at a Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Market Area level with partners to ensure a combined approach in addressing the needs of the sector. The results of this work will be considered and will inform the Pre-Submission Draft Plan.

We have reviewed our existing employment commitments and these continue to meet our needs and deliver our preferred strategy for economic growth. Our commitments include employment provision as part of the Sustainable Urban Extensions at the North East of Leicester, West of Loughborough and North of Birstall as well as part of the Watermead Regeneration Corridor. We propose to carry forward the existing commitments and allocate these in the new local plan. These commitments provide sufficient supply to meet this need and therefore no new land needs to be found.

Table 2: Employment Need and Supply 2019-36

	Office (ha)	Industrial/Small Warehousing (ha)
<b>Employment Need</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>44.5</b>
West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension (Total 16ha)	4	12
North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension (total 13ha)	1.7	11.3
North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension (total 15ha)	1.5	13.5
Dishley Grange, Loughborough	3.6	5.4
Other Planning Permissions at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019	2.84	16.44
Land at Rothley Lodge, Rothley	0	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.64</b>	<b>64.24</b>

Our evidence also continues to support the large scale extension of the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park. This site is justified on its own merits as one of the largest science parks in the UK with a diverse range of potential businesses within the knowledge-based and high technology manufacturing sectors. It serves a wider strategic role at a regional level and does not form part of the land supply required to meet the needs set out above.

**Our preferred strategy is to carry forward the existing employment proposals from the Core Strategy including the extension of the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park, take account of existing commitments and not make any new provision for employment land over the plan period to 2036.**

We are proposing to save the policy from the Core Strategy that deals with the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park and therefore this plan does not include any specific policies regarding it.

### **Town Centre and Retail Needs**

Across the country the way people are using town centres is changing. In recent years, shoppers have been increasingly prepared to travel in order to access the greater choice of shops and leisure facilities that are more commonly available in larger towns and cities. The trend for shoppers to use larger centres and for a greater proportion of shopping to be done online presents a significant challenge to all retail centres but particularly those of smaller towns and villages. Our evidence tells us that despite these national trends, the proportion of spending on non-food shopping in Loughborough has remained fairly stable since 2013. This suggests that, despite the challenging environment, Loughborough town centre continues to function well as a retail destination.

Taking account of developments that are already planned, and the amount of money that is expected to be available for spending on food shopping and non-food shopping, there is no quantitative need for any new floorspace for food shopping in Charnwood up to 2036 and only a need post 2028 for between 3,000m<sup>2</sup> and 4,500m<sup>2</sup> for new non-food shopping. Our evidence tells us that the most appropriate site for accommodating this new non-food need is at Baxter Gate/Pinfold Gate in Loughborough. Our evidence tells us that there may be market interest in developing further discount convenience retail, and where this is the case, there are qualitative reasons to direct such new development to Shepshed in the first instance and then to Mountsorrel, Rothley or Anstey.

**Our preferred strategy is to carry forward the existing commitments and allocations and make longer term provision for an additional 3,000m<sup>2</sup> to 4,500m<sup>2</sup> floorspace for non-food retail.**

### **Location of Development**

Our preferred strategy identifies a pattern of development that seeks to support our economy, provide a balance between homes and jobs in the Borough and ensure access to services and facilities including education, health, shops, leisure and open space. It has been informed by an understanding of the Borough's environment and the relationship between our settlements and the countryside.

Our strategy is built on an understanding of our settlement hierarchy. We have assessed the services and facilities available within our settlements and the relationship each settlement has with the urban centres of Loughborough and Leicester. This has helped us to understand each settlement's role and function and which settlements might be capable of supporting new development.

Table 3: Charnwood Proposed Settlement Hierarchy

HIERARCHY CATEGORY	SETTLEMENT
<p>Urban Centre</p> <p><i>A settlement that has a range of employment opportunities and higher order services that meet all of the day to day needs of residents and are accessible to the surrounding area.</i></p>	<p>Loughborough</p>
<p>Urban Settlement</p> <p><i>A settlement that has a range and choice of services and facilities that meet the day to day needs of residents and physically or functionally forms part of a wider Leicester or Loughborough Urban Area.</i></p>	<p>Shepshed Birstall Syston Thurmaston</p>
<p>Service Centre</p> <p><i>A settlement that has a range of services and facilities to meet most of the day to day needs of residents and good accessibility to services not available within the settlement</i></p>	<p>Anstey Barrow upon Soar Mountsorrel Quorn Rothley Sileby</p>
<p>Other Settlement</p> <p><i>A settlement that has some of the services and facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents.</i></p>	<p>Barkby Burton on the Wolds Cossington East Goscote Hathern Newtown Linford Queniborough Rearsby Seagrave Swithland Thrussington Thurcaston Woodhouse Eaves Wymeswold</p>
<p>Small Village or Hamlet</p>	<p>Barkby Thorpe</p>

*A settlement that has limited services and facilities to meet the day to day needs of the residents.*

Beeby  
Cotes  
Cropston  
Hoton  
Prestwold  
Ratcliffe on the Wreake  
South Croxton  
Ulverscroft  
Walton on the Wolds  
Wanlip  
Woodhouse  
Woodthorpe

### **Consultation Question**

- Do you agree with our proposed settlement hierarchy? If not, what changes would you suggest and why?

Our preferred development strategy has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal and prepared in the context of the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire with local priorities expressed through the local plan vision. Details of the alternative reasonable options considered are summarised below and outlined in detail in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal which supports this consultation.

It is proposed to direct development to those locations where there is a genuine opportunity to walk, cycle or use public transport and which reduce the need to travel by private car. It is proposed to direct development away from the most environmentally sensitive locations and ensure a balance between homes and jobs.

### ***How did we Arrive at the Preferred Strategy?***

The 'Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood' Discussion Paper (April 2018) set out a range of broad options for distributing development in the Borough in the context of either a low or high growth scenario. These options are set out below:

1. Leicester & Loughborough Focus
2. Leicester & Loughborough + Service Centres
3. Settlement Hierarchy Distribution
4. Proportionate Distribution
5. Leicester & Loughborough + New Settlements
6. Leicester & Loughborough + Service Centres + New Settlements

## 7. Large Standalone New Settlement

A number of the consultation responses included a preference for one or more of the options. This included support for urban concentration principles, as they maximise existing infrastructure and minimise the need to travel, but also concern about focusing development in too few areas or too few sites putting too much pressure on existing infrastructure. There was support for a new settlement approach from a small number of respondents as it was considered to take the pressure off existing infrastructure, but others raised concern about timescales and uncertainty in the delivery of new settlements. There was support for more dispersed development to create choice and flexibility from some respondents but also concern about the ability to provide appropriate infrastructure for this pattern of development from others. No further reasonable alternative options for development were identified.

Overall, whilst there was no consensus, the responses identified a range of advantages and disadvantages of each of the options and this has been used to help refine the options for further testing. This process of refining the options also took account of the Sustainability Appraisal, the Council's vision, delivery evidence and the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan.

This process resulted in three of the options being taken forward for further testing:

- urban concentration including development at the Service Centres;
- a dispersed settlement hierarchy distribution; and
- urban concentration with a new settlement.

Alternative growth scenarios and distributions within these three development strategies were tested to establish our understanding regarding the following factors:

- Environmental impacts – including landscape sensitivity, biodiversity, flood risk and heritage;
- Transport – including accessibility by sustainable transport, peak hour traffic impacts, possible mitigation options and transport benefits;
- Access to services – proximity to employment, shops, schools, health facilities, open space and community facilities;
- Deliverability – including market capacity, housing land availability, infrastructure constraints and ownership issues.

The assessment of the options, summarised in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal which supports this consultation, found that there was potential for positive and negative impacts with each of the options. Taking account of these impacts and the requirements to avoid significant adverse impacts wherever possible and arrive at a

sound plan for an appropriate strategy taking account of the reasonable alternatives, the preferred strategy is a hybrid of the options.

The hybrid option that informs the selection of sites in our development strategy includes an additional 2,000 homes directed to the edge of Leicester, 2,000 homes directed to Loughborough, 2,000 homes directed to Shepshed, 1,000 homes directed to Service Centres and 800 homes directed to Other Settlements.

Our preferred development strategy has also been informed by individual site assessments. As a result, the capacity of sites selected does not correspond precisely with the numbers in the proposed hybrid option. We will continue to be guided by the overall strategy in the hybrid option as we consider any new sites as work on the Local Plan progresses and as we work with local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans.

**Our preferred development strategy is an urban concentration and intensification strategy with some growth dispersed to other areas of the Borough. It focuses housing and employment at the edge of Leicester, proposes managed growth at Loughborough, directs some growth to Shepshed and smaller scale growth to the Service Centres and Other Settlements as set out in the table below.**

**It is proposed that priority is given to the development of sites in urban centres to support the vitality and viability of our town centres. This includes new homes as well as town centre uses and employment opportunities, such as retail, offices, entertainment and leisure which are best suited to town centre locations.**

Table 4: Preferred Development Strategy 2019-36

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Existing Planning Permissions and Allocations</b>	<b>Preferred Distribution of New Homes</b>	<b>Preferred Development Strategy Totals</b>
Leicester Urban Edge	5,489	1,567	<b>7,056</b>
Loughborough	4,412	1,945	<b>6,357</b>
Shepshed	830	2,074	<b>2,904</b>
Service Centres	1,559	931	<b>2,490</b>
Other Settlements	151	800	<b>951</b>
Small Villages/Hamlets	23	0	<b>23</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,464</b>	<b>7,317</b>	<b>19,781</b>

The focus of development at the edge of Leicester reflects our commitment to the economic and social success of the city which is central to the success of the wider Housing and Economic Market Area of Leicester and Leicestershire. The growth directed to the edge of the city takes account of landscape constraints including Green Wedges and the transport infrastructure required to support growth. It is intended that the development at the edge of the city reinforces our relationship with the city and the opportunities it presents. It is also proposed to continue to identify a regeneration corridor at Watermead to support the regeneration of Thurmaston, help meet our need for jobs and maximise the potential of the Country Park.

The proposed managed growth at Loughborough reflects the spatial strategy set out in the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire and takes account of landscape, settlement identity and transport constraints. It is proposed that there is a particular focus on urban intensification, with new development focused within the existing urban area, and particularly the areas closest to the town centre, to support the town's role as an Urban Centre and the social and economic focus for the Borough. It is proposed that this is complemented by new and committed extensions to the town.

The growth directed to Shepshed reflects the evidence of landscape and transport capacity and supports the Leicestershire International Gateway set out in the Strategic Growth Plan. It is proposed that the focus is on regeneration and using new development to support and drive opportunities for restructuring the town to improve access to the services and facilities available.

It is also proposed to support smaller scale of growth in our Service Centres and some of our Other Settlements. The growth dispersed to Service Centres and Other Settlements improves the prospects for delivery whilst taking account of landscape and settlement identity constraints outlined in the overall vision and strategy.

Our plan directs 800 homes to Other Settlements but allocates sites for 640 new homes in these villages. These sites have been identified by seeking to avoid significant adverse environmental effects, ensuring that residents of new homes have access to a half hourly bus service, and avoiding overloading a particular village or group of villages. For the remaining housing development in Other Settlements, we consider that local communities have an important role in identifying sites through Neighbourhood Plans. We will work with Neighbourhood Planning Groups to set appropriate housing targets in Other Settlements where a Neighbourhood Plan is to be produced.

### **Consultation Question**

- Do you agree with our preferred development strategy and the way it allocates development to different parts of the Borough? If not, what alternative distribution would you suggest and why?

It is proposed that 10% of new homes are delivered on small sites of 1ha or less. We will work with landowners, developers and our communities to identify sufficient small site opportunities to achieve this objective including through Neighbourhood Plans.

### **Consultation Question**

- How do you think we can best achieve our aspiration of delivering 10% of new homes on small sites of 1ha or less?

The Policies Map shows our preferred settlement Limits to Development for the majority of settlements in the Borough. These boundaries define the cohesive built form of settlements, taking account of development allocations made, and make them distinct from the countryside. Our small villages and hamlets do not have Limits to Development defined and will be treated as part of the countryside. Countryside is the largely undeveloped land beyond the defined Limits to Development of our towns and villages and has its own intrinsic character and beauty.

The Limits to Development, and by extension the edge of the countryside, are an integral part of our development strategy to guide development to sustainable locations.

**Our preferred strategy is to protect the intrinsic character of the countryside whilst supporting the vitality and viability of our most rural communities.**

### **Draft Policy LP1: Development Strategy**

**The overall spatial strategy for Charnwood, between 2019 and 2036, is urban concentration and intensification. The most environmentally sensitive areas will be protected and the pattern of development will provide a balance between homes, jobs and facilities. We will support sustainable development within defined Limits to Development and in the allocations defined in this plan.**

**Development proposals will be supported which:**

- **contribute towards meeting our needs for housing, employment and town centre uses where they are in accordance with the spatial pattern set out in this policy;**
- **minimise the need to travel, particularly by private car and encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling;**
- **contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change;**

- protect the intrinsic character of the countryside, including Green Wedges and Areas of Local Separation;
- support Loughborough as the main economic and cultural focus within the Borough and its compact and walkable town centre;
- support district and local centres to serve the day to day needs of their communities;
- support the regeneration and economic success of urban areas;
- make efficient use of land including using brownfield or underused land and buildings;
- safeguard services and facilities;
- contribute to local priorities identified in Neighbourhood Plans; and
- are in accordance with the policies in this plan.

### New Homes

The Plan makes provision for at least 19,781 new homes between 2019 and 2036. Land for new homes will be identified based on the optimum balance between social, environmental and economic criteria taking account of strategic and local priorities. The pattern of development for new homes in our spatial strategy is as follows:

	Number of Homes	Share of Housing Provision
Leicester Urban Area (Birstall, Syston, Thurmaston)	7,056	36%
Loughborough Urban Centre	6,357	32%
Shepshed Urban Area	2,904	15%
Service Centres (Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby)	2,490	13%
Other Settlements	951	5%
Small Villages and Hamlets	23	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,781</b>	<b>100%</b>

### New Employment and Retail

The Plan makes provision for 77.88 hectares of employment land between 2019 and 2036. Employment land is identified to meet the economic and

regeneration needs of our community and support the economic success of Charnwood and Leicester. The majority of new employment will be delivered as part of Sustainable Urban Extensions and the Watermead Regeneration Corridor with a smaller proportion within and adjoining Service Centres and Other Settlements.

Provision will also be made for the extension to Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park of up to 77 hectares to support the continued role of Loughborough in the knowledge based sector.

In addition to town centre development with planning permission, the Plan makes provision for between 3,000m<sup>2</sup> and 4,500m<sup>2</sup> (net) of comparison retail floorspace (non-food). Land is made available for new comparison retail floor space at the Baxter Gate/Pinfold Gate Opportunity Site in Loughborough, as part of a mixed use development.

We will apply a sequential approach to the location of proposals for main town centre uses. Town centre uses will be directed to town centre locations, then edge of centre locations, and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.

### **Environment**

Development will be directed to those locations of the least environmental or amenity value and to locations within the Borough at the lowest risk of flooding, applying a sequential test and if necessary, applying an exception test.

Development proposals should conserve and enhance the built and natural environment, in accordance with policies in this plan.

Areas designated as Countryside, Areas of Local Separation, Green Wedges and Charnwood Forest Regional Park are identified on the Policies Map. These designations are an integral part of the spatial strategy that has been identified to deliver growth in the context of the objective to conserve and protect the character of our towns and villages and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Development proposals which do not accord with Draft Policies LP18 Landscape, Countryside, Green Wedges and Areas of Local Separation and LP19 Charnwood Forest and National Forest will not be in accordance with the spatial strategy as set out in this policy.

### **Implementation of Spatial Strategy**

**Development proposals which do not accord with this pattern of development in the spatial strategy will not be considered compatible with the vision and will not meet the objectives of the plan and as a result will not be supported, even where there is a proven shortfall in the supply of homes.**

**Proposals for development which are not allocated in this local plan but accord with the vision, pattern of development and other requirements of this policy are likely to be approved where a five year supply of homes cannot be demonstrated.**

**In all other circumstances, new built development will be confined to sites allocated in this plan and Neighbourhood Plans, and other land within the Limits to Development subject to specific exceptions in this plan.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Design of Development**

One of the objectives sought in the local plan's vision is an improvement in the design quality of new development. The NPPF acknowledges that achieving a high standard of design is an integral part of sustainable development. High quality design is not just about how something looks, it is a skilful response to the unique circumstances of a particular site, creating environments where people want to live, work and visit and which are safe, long lasting and adaptable to changing needs. High quality design can respond effectively to a wide range of issues such as tackling climate change, improving local biodiversity and facilitating healthier and more active places.

Charnwood has a diverse natural landscape and this has meant that our towns and villages have distinct identities and character. Loughborough is a thriving university town that expanded rapidly in the Victorian era and is characterised by a large number of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings and terraced streets. The villages along the Soar Valley have attractive, historic centres that reflect past industrial activity but have developed a more suburban character due to their proximity to Leicester and the A6 dual carriageway. Settlements to the eastern part of the Borough, within the Leicestershire Wolds, have a strong rural character surrounded by open countryside. Charnwood

Forest, in the west of the Borough, is a unique landscape of high moorland and woods; the settlements in the Forest are small in scale and feature many buildings built from locally sourced stone.

Successfully designed schemes draw inspiration from the local distinctiveness of the Borough. We will require new development proposals to make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area and will also recognise the role that appropriately innovative and original designs can play in helping to reinforce our local distinctiveness and achieve a high standard of architectural quality.

On strategic sites and sites which we identify as being in sensitive locations, we want to see design excellence showcasing the very best use of urban design principles, setting a benchmark for achieving high quality design elsewhere across the region. For these schemes, our draft policy would require the use of independent design reviews to help influence the design process.

Our preferred approach to design is based upon Building for Life 12 (BfL12), the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods, published by the Design Council and its partners including the Home Builders Federation. BfL12 poses a series of questions to stimulate the design process for, or appraisal of, new developments. Successful application of BfL12 principles by major housebuilders in the East Midlands remains generally poor with many new developments failing to score highly against the questions<sup>1</sup>. We recognise the usefulness of BfL12 principles in communicating important design considerations to applicants and a key objective of our draft design policy is to endorse the use of BfL12 as an assessment tool during the pre-application stage. We will monitor the design standard of new developments through our Annual Monitoring Report.

We will prepare a Design Supplementary Planning Document to support Draft Policy LP2 to provide guidance and advice to applicants.

We also expect Neighbourhood Plans to continue taking a strong lead on the type of design they expect for their area. We will encourage those communities who wish to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan to provide local design guidance which reflects and accords with Building for Life criteria. Many villages also have a Village Design Statement and we will continue to work with our communities who wish to influence the design of new buildings using this type of document.

## **Draft Policy LP2: High Quality Design**

---

<sup>1</sup> Kruckowski S (2018) '*Exploring the effectiveness of Building for Life in improving suburban residential design quality*'

**We will require new developments to make a positive contribution to Charnwood, by responding positively to the local distinctiveness of the area and providing attractive and functional places where people will want to live, work and visit. We will specifically require new developments to:**

- **respect and enhance the character of the area, having regard to scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access arrangements;**
- **protect the amenity of people who live or work nearby and those who will live in the new development;**
- **function well and add to the quality of the area, not just in the short term but over the lifetime of the development;**
- **provide attractive, safe and well managed public and private amenity spaces which support active lifestyles;**
- **provide well defined, legible and multi-functional streets and spaces that support all users and encourage social interaction; and**
- **reduce their impacts upon, and be resilient to, the effects of climate change in accordance with Draft Policy LP30.**

**For strategic or sensitive development schemes, we will require an independent design review to be carried out.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

# Chapter 5: Housing

The local plan meets housing needs in the Borough by making provision for new homes for our growing and changing community. This includes seeking to ensure an appropriate mix of types, tenures and sizes of homes including affordable housing for those who cannot afford market prices.

By seeking an appropriate mix of housing, we will act positively to ensure that new houses best meet the changing needs of the population and create mixed and balanced communities.

## Meeting Our Housing Needs

The preferred development strategy set out in Table 4 and Draft Policy LP1 provides the basis for identifying sites for new homes.

The Sustainability Appraisal has been used to inform an assessment of the sites in terms of how they align with our economic, social and environmental objectives. The sites have been selected to avoid significant adverse impacts and where such impacts are unavoidable, the potential for suitable mitigation measures has been considered.

The process of identifying our preferred options for site selection is set out in detail in the Sustainability Appraisal supporting this consultation.

The preferred sites for new housing are shown on the Policies Map and outlined in the draft policy below. Some of these sites are environmentally sensitive but are capable of accommodating some development. Our Sustainability Appraisal work to date has led us to identify specific areas within some of the allocation boundaries where built form should be confined. Built development should not extend beyond these defined areas, and the allocation should be carefully planned to respond to the context of these sites.

Our Sustainability Appraisal highlights the collective effect of sites west of Shepshed, which means there is potential for significant adverse effects on biodiversity. It is therefore considered essential to set a biodiversity strategy that seeks to improve connectivity between habitats and secure strategic improvements. Provision of a buffer between the developable parts of the sites and the river corridor is important, as is the need to provide areas for recreation that take pressure off existing woodland areas.

Land south east of Syston (HS6) lies in an important location in maintaining the separate identities of Syston, Thurmaston and Barkby, where there is considerable development already committed. It is vital that the site is carefully planned to ensure

that development minimises the loss of separation between settlements and integrates the site with proposed and existing Green Infrastructure networks.

Site HS37 (Nanpantan Grange) lies in a sensitive location on the edge of Loughborough within the Charnwood Forest Regional Park that is important for its landscape character and the links that it has to wildlife sites. It is vital that the site is carefully planned to ensure development in this location successfully integrates into its context.

Cossington is relatively small linear village with a distinctive historic core based around Main Street. It is important that the proposals in this area respond to its sensitive context and utilize evidence such as the Cossington Conservation Area Appraisal.

The preferred sites are a range of sizes in diverse locations to provide variety and flexibility in our housing supply. A recent Government report<sup>2</sup> has investigated build out rates on large sites and concluded that build out rates can be supported by differentiating the types, tenures and design of housing on these sites. We will work with promoters of large sites (500 homes or more) to ensure a variety of houses are provided supporting deliverability of these sites.

The preferred sites include a number of sites in town centre locations which need to take account of our objectives to support the vitality and viability of our town centres by including town centres uses at ground floor level to create active frontages (ie where there are opportunities for people to look or enter into buildings facing pedestrian thoroughfares and interesting and welcoming facades) in our Primary Shopping Area. More vulnerable uses such as housing should be provided above ground floor level in areas of flood risk, provided it satisfies the Exception Test.

We will prepare more detailed policies at the next stage of preparing the local plan relating to how development should take place at the sites we propose to allocate. At this stage we are consulting on the development strategy and the principle of development in these locations.

Should any of the sites listed in this Policy come forward for development before the preparation of these policies, proposals should adhere to the key principles that have informed the proposed allocations.

## **Draft Policy LP3: Housing Sites**

---

<sup>2</sup> The Independent Review of Build Out (October 2018)

**We will make provision for homes in accordance with Draft Policy LP1 and will support housing development on the sites listed below which:**

- **confine built form to those areas defined on the Policies Map;**
- **are carefully planned to avoid and then mitigate significant adverse effects on the environment including biodiversity, heritage, the separate character of settlements and landscape, especially for those sites within or adjacent to the Charnwood Forest Regional Park;**
- **demonstrably address our regeneration priorities as set out in Policies LP14 and LP15;**
- **support our priority for delivering homes in urban areas;**
- **support our priority for supporting the vitality and viability of town centres by providing mixed use schemes with active frontages at ground floor level**
- **demonstrably address the infrastructure requirements including accessible education provision;**
- **provide a variety of housing types and designs on large sites to support their deliverability;**
- **maximise the potential to access sustainable forms of transport, services and facilities;**
- **in the case of sites in close proximity to the Black Brook west of Shepshed (Sites HS39, HS41, HS42, HS44 and HS48), are accompanied by a jointly produced biodiversity strategy to collectively mitigate the potential significant adverse effects of the development of these sites on biodiversity interests;**
- **in the case of site HS6 (land south east of Syston), be informed by a masterplan, Green Infrastructure Strategy and Heritage Strategy to mitigate the adverse effects of development;**
- **in the case of site HS36 (Nanpantan Grange, Loughborough), be informed by a masterplan, Green Infrastructure Strategy and Heritage Strategy to mitigate the adverse effects of development;**
- **in the case of site HS50 (High Leys Farm/Manor Farm, Anstey), take opportunities for securing biodiversity net gain through the enhancement and / or improvement of adjoining woodland and acid grassland priority habits; and**
- **in the case of sites adjoining Cossington (H65 and H66), development proposals should respond appropriately to the area's sensitive context of the linear village and its landscape setting.**

**We will allocate the following sites for new housing, as outlined on the Policies Map:**

<b>SITE REF</b>	<b>SITE DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>SITE LOCATION</b>	<b>HOMES</b>
<b>Sustainable Urban Extensions</b>			
<b>HS1</b>	<b>North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension</b>	<b>Thurmaston</b>	<b>4,500</b>
<b>HS2</b>	<b>North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension</b>	<b>Birstall</b>	<b>1,950</b>
<b>HS3</b>	<b>West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>3,200</b>
<b>Leicester Urban Area</b>			
<b>HS4</b>	<b>Land off Birstall Meadow Road/Long Meadow Way</b>	<b>Birstall</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HS5</b>	<b>Land at Gynsill Lane &amp; Anstey Lane</b>	<b>Glenfield</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>HS6</b>	<b>Land south east of Syston</b>	<b>Syston</b>	<b>747</b>
<b>HS7</b>	<b>Brook Street</b>	<b>Syston</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>HS8</b>	<b>Land north of Barkby Road</b>	<b>Syston</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>HS9</b>	<b>Barkby Road</b>	<b>Syston</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>HS10</b>	<b>Land at Melton Road</b>	<b>Syston</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>HS11</b>	<b>Queniborough Lodge</b>	<b>Syston</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>HS12</b>	<b>Works opposite 46 Brook Street</b>	<b>Thurmaston</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HS13</b>	<b>Works adjacent 46 Brook Street</b>	<b>Thurmaston</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>HS14</b>	<b>Rear of 36-46 Colby Road</b>	<b>Thurmaston</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HS15</b>	<b>Rear of Manor Medical Centre, Melton Road</b>	<b>Thurmaston</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HS16</b>	<b>Land off Barkby Thorpe Lane</b>	<b>Thurmaston</b>	<b>70</b>
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,567</b>
<b>Loughborough Urban Centre</b>			
<b>HS17</b>	<b>Land at Frederick Street</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HS18</b>	<b>Land off Beacon Road</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>HS19</b>	<b>Sital House, 3-6 Cattlemarket</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HS20</b>	<b>Southfields Road Car Park</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>HS21</b>	<b>Devonshire Square Opportunity Site</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>HS22</b>	<b>Former Petrol Station, Pinfold Gate</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>HS23</b>	<b>Part of Baxter Gate Opportunity Site</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>210</b>

HS24	Retail Warehouse Car Park, Regent Place	Loughborough	37
HS25	Beacon House, Forest Road	Loughborough	9
HS26	31-32 Market Place	Loughborough	5
HS27	138-144 Knightthorpe Road	Loughborough	13
HS28	Former Main Post Office, Sparrow Hill	Loughborough	16
HS29	Carillon Court Shopping Centre Derby Square	Loughborough	43
HS30	Park Grange Farm, Newstead Way	Loughborough	15
HS31	Land off Highland Drive and Knox Road	Loughborough	24
HS32	30 Meadow Lane	Loughborough	52
HS33	Land off Leconfield Road	Loughborough	25
HS34	Land rear of Snell's Nook Lane	Loughborough	120
HS35	Land at Woodthorpe, east and west of A6004 Epinal Way	Loughborough	334
HS36	Nanpantan Grange, Land south west of Loughborough.	Loughborough	544
HS37	Extend Park Grange Farm	Loughborough	83
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,945</b>
<b>Shepshed Urban Area</b>			
HS38	Land off Fairway Road	Shepshed	378
HS39	Land at Tickow Lane (Phase 2)	Shepshed	394
HS40	32 Charnwood Road	Shepshed	15
HS41	Land west of Tickow Lane	Shepshed	330
HS42	Land at Oakley Road	Shepshed	133
HS43	Land west of the B591/Ingleberry Road and north of Iveshead Lane	Shepshed	174
HS44	Land north of Hallamford Road and west of Shepshed	Shepshed	250
HS45	20 Moscow Lane	Shepshed	49
HS46	Land rear of 62 Iveshead Road	Shepshed	76
HS47	Land rear of 54 Iveshead Road,	Shepshed	5
HS48	Land at Tickow Lane	Shepshed	243
HS49	Land off Ashby Road West	Shepshed	27
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2,074</b>

<b>Service Centres</b>			
HS50	High Leys Farm/Manor Farm	Anstey	110
HS51	Albion Street/Rosebery Road	Anstey	8
HS52	84 Melton Road	Barrow Upon Soar	18
HS53	Land south of Melton Road	Barrow Upon Soar	130
HS54	Land north of Melton Road	Barrow Upon Soar	120
HS55	Leicester Road	Mountsorrel	10
HS56	Loughborough Road	Quorn	75
HS57	Land south of Rothley	Rothley	44
HS58	Land at Woodcock Farm	Rothley	107
HS59	Factory at the corner of Park Road and Seagrave Road	Sileby	11
HS60	Land rear of The Maltings site High Street	Sileby	13
HS61	36 Charles Street	Sileby	11
HS62	9 King Street	Sileby	14
HS63	Kendal Road	Sileby	32
HS64	Land off Barnards Drive	Sileby	228
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>931</b>
<b>Other Settlements</b>			
HS65	Land west of Main Street and north of Syston Road	Cossington	54
HS66	Land rear of Derry's Garden Centre	Cossington	70
HS67	Land off Melton Road	East Goscote	223
HS68	Land rear of 89 Loughborough Road	Hathern	35
HS69	Land off Zouch Road	Hathern	50
HS70	J R Walton, The Leys	Hathern	6
HS71	Land off Melton Road	Queniborough	55
HS72	Land at Threeways Farm	Queniborough	100
HS73	Land off Gaddesby Lane	Rearsby	47
	Sites to be identified through Neighbourhood Planning process		160
		<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>800</b>
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,317</b>

### Consultation Questions

- We have followed a process informed by our strategy and a sustainability appraisal to identify the sites allocated for housing set out in the Draft Policy LP3. Do you think these are the right sites? If not, what changes or alternative sites would you propose?
- For some of the larger sites we have shown on the Policies Map an indication of the potential division of the site between the extent of the built form and the area for landscaping and green infrastructure. Do you think this potential division should be used to inform development at those locations?
- If you are a land or property owner, do you have other sites that are suitable for housing and/or employment development? If so [follow call for sites/SHELAA process].

## Affordable Housing

The difference between house prices and household incomes makes it difficult for some people to afford to buy a home. The most recent official figures from the Office for National Statistics show that in Charnwood the ratio of house prices to median earnings reached a level of 7.23 in 2018 compared to just 3.29 in 1998.

Our evidence shows that the average house price in Charnwood in 2015 was £175,000 which was the second highest in Leicestershire after Harborough. There was also a 192% increase in house prices in Charnwood between the year 2000 and 2015 which was the highest of any district in Leicester and Leicestershire. Charnwood also had the second highest increase in house prices out of the eight local authority districts in Leicester and Leicestershire between 2010 and 2015.

We wish to help people whose needs are not met by the market by seeking the delivery of affordable homes.

The NPPF categorises affordable housing into four main types:

- **Affordable housing for rent:** owned and managed by a Council or other Registered Provider with rent set at a level which does not exceed 80% of the local market rent;
- **Starter homes:** which are new dwellings which are available for purchase by qualifying first-time buyers and are sold at a discount of at least 20% of the market value, subject to a price cap and with restrictions on sale or letting.
- **Discounted market sales:** housing which is sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value with eligibility determined by local incomes and house

prices and with provisions to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

- **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market including shared ownership, equity loans, low cost homes for sale and rent to buy.

Our most recent evidence identified a need for 384 new affordable homes a year in Charnwood up to 2036 which is a total of 6,528 homes over the plan period 2019-36. This is a significant increase on the provision identified in our Core Strategy where we identified a target of 3,060 new affordable homes to be delivered between 2011 and 2028.

Our evidence shows that the greatest need is for rented affordable housing, with 77% of the total need being for social or affordable rent and a further 23% for intermediate affordable housing (which includes a range of products including shared ownership or shared equity homes or low cost market housing). The NPPF states that major development proposals should make provision for at least 10% of homes to be available for affordable home ownership. Our evidence suggests this should be intermediate homes to meet the needs of those most in need of affordable housing. The balance of the affordable housing should be affordable for rent.

In considering alternative tenure mixes the Council will balance the need to meet the objectively assessed needs of our community with the need for flexibility to avoid delays to the delivery of housing. We will continue to work collaboratively with Registered Providers and housebuilders to consider alternative mixes where there is a clear justification and will monitor the delivery of all types of affordable housing in our Annual Monitoring Report.

In planning for affordable housing we have taken account of viability so as to ensure that development schemes are not rendered undeliverable as a result of excessive obligations and policy burdens. We have considered the types of housing development and the factors that impact on viability. Where a developer considers that the requirement for affordable housing is making a site financially unviable we are proposing that a viability appraisal will be required and for the cost of an independent assessment of that appraisal to be met by the applicant. We will commission the independent appraisal to inform a discussion on the appropriate development of the site.

Our evidence has identified that it would not be viable for sheltered housing or extra care housing to provide affordable housing and they are excluded from the requirement to do so.

The draft policy sets out that our clear preference is for affordable housing to be provided on-site as part of sustainable and mixed communities. Exceptional circumstances may however justify the use of a commuted sum in lieu of provision on-site. Examples might include the lack of a Registered Provider who is willing to acquire and/or manage the affordable homes or a preference from the local housing authority for local affordable housing need to be met in an alternative location.

We will work to ensure that housing proposals are delivered on all suitable sites and will invite interest from developers regarding providing new starter homes for young first time buyers at discounted prices on underused or unviable commercial or industrial sites not currently identified for housing.

The draft policy proposes that we will not seek contributions from applicants for small sites of less than 10 dwellings. However, developers are expected to make efficient use of land and the Council considers as unacceptable any attempt to deliberately circumvent the local plan thresholds. When considering whether a development meets the threshold for the provision of affordable housing the Council will consider the development potential of land adjacent to a site. Where the site forms part of a wider allocation or a larger area within the control of the applicant which is suitable for development, this will be taken into account to ensure comprehensive development and avoid piecemeal development which does not make appropriate provision of affordable housing.

#### **Draft Policy LP4: Affordable Housing**

**We will seek 30% affordable housing from housing developments. New affordable housing should generally be delivered on-site and integrated with market housing.**

**A clear justification supported by an independent viability assessment will be required if the applicant considers that particular circumstances justify the need for a different level of provision.**

**Contributions will not be sought from self-build developments and developments of less than 10 houses or a site that has an area of less than 0.5 hectares. We will not normally seek a contribution from sheltered or extra care housing schemes.**

#### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Rural Exception Sites**

The availability of affordable housing in rural areas can often be very limited. The draft policy proposes considering allowing rural exception sites where development would not normally be acceptable outside the Limits to Development of settlements. We will seek to address an identified local need by only accommodating households who are either current residents or can demonstrate a local connection for example through a family or employment link to the local area but are unable to access market housing.

Rural exception sites will be limited to our villages and hamlets in rural locations with a population less than 3,000 which are not designated as service centres. Some market housing may be acceptable where it subsidises the delivery of rural exception schemes as part of the same development. We will only do this where there is clear and robust evidence of the needs being met and the financial justification for the market housing being proposed to deliver the scheme.

Proposals for small scale rural exception sites will be expected to be adjacent, or well related, to the existing village or hamlet so that they are accessible and within a short and safe walk. Developments should be appropriate in scale, character, and appearance. A high standard of design will be expected with small scale assessed not only in terms of the number of dwellings but also in terms of its impact upon the landscape, the existing built form of the village or hamlet and its effect upon the role and function of the settlement.

The successful delivery of rural exception sites will require a partnership approach between the Borough Council, Parish Council, Registered Provider and the landowner. Proposals must be supported by a Housing Needs Survey which demonstrates local housing need having regard to the Council's local lettings policy.

### **Draft Policy LP5: Rural Exception Sites**

**We will support the provision of small scale developments in rural areas for affordable housing outside settlement Limits to Development as an exception where:**

- **the housing is demonstrated to meet an identified local need for affordable housing; and**
- **development is well related to a rural settlement, and respects the character and scale of the settlement and its landscape setting.**

**Planning permission for rural exception sites will be subject to conditions, or a planning obligation will be sought, to ensure that all initial and subsequent occupiers of the affordable dwellings will be local people in housing need and benefit from the status of the dwellings as affordable housing in perpetuity.**

## Consultation Questions

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## Housing Mix

### Sizes of Homes

A range of house sizes is required to cater for a diverse housing market and provide levels of affordability. The housing mix needs to have regard to how the entire housing market functions, for example the delivery of larger family homes can help to release smaller properties for other households.

Our evidence shows that the suggested mix for market dwellings should be largely split between 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings, with some 4 bedroom dwellings reflecting the lack of turnover in larger dwellings and the number of larger households in the Borough. There is also some need for 1 bedroom dwellings. For affordable dwellings our evidence suggests a particular need for 2 bedroom dwellings.

The design of affordable housing is influenced by the need to ensure that the best use is made of the housing stock to ensure that properties are both affordable and provide stability for low income households to meet housing needs. Our preferred approach is to seek to ensure affordable homes are designed to accommodate the following number of people to reflect how homes will be allocated to those on the housing register:

- 1 bed affordable rented homes need to accommodate 2 people;
- 2 bed affordable rented homes need to accommodate 4 people;
- 3 bed affordable rented homes need to accommodate minimum of 5 people; and
- 4 bed plus affordable rented homes need to accommodate minimum of 7 people.

It is also important to consider the types of affordable homes to ensure what is provided best meets the needs of the community and ensures a Registered Provider can be successfully secured to manage the homes. On this basis we are proposing that we will generally seek to avoid the following:

- rented affordable flats for families;
- large numbers of one bedroom rented affordable flats on an individual site;
- one bedroom intermediate affordable homes; and

- intermediate affordable flats.

## **Housing for Older and Disabled People**

People are living longer and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. Our evidence suggests that there will also be an increase the number of people with mobility and health problems because long term health problems and disability increase as people age. There is therefore likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options, whether in the form of sheltered housing, enhanced sheltered housing or extra care housing. We wish to encourage enhanced provision of these types of housing in both market and affordable sectors.

The Borough Council owns 15 sheltered housing schemes across the Borough comprising nearly 500 units. The Council is already engaged in a phased programme to upgrade the quality of provision of sheltered accommodation in Charnwood and we will endeavour to ensure the levels of overall provision are responsive to needs.

Our evidence also shows a significant increase in the need for accessible and adaptable dwellings as a result of an unmet need for wheelchair adapted dwellings equivalent to 3.5 per 1,000 households. Applying this proportion to the ONS 2014 based population and household projections for Charnwood would give a figure of 232 dwellings in 2011 rising to 312 in 2036.

Bungalows can provide more appropriate accommodation for those with limited mobility and we will therefore support their provision on appropriate sites. We also propose to encourage an adequate supply of accessible housing through the provision of homes which can provide greater accessibility, flexibility and adaptability to meet a diverse range of needs over time.

### **Draft Policy LP6: Housing Mix**

**We will seek a mix of house types, tenures and sizes having regard to housing needs, market conditions, economic viability and site specific circumstances.**

**We will seek at least 5% of all new properties to be Building Regulations, Part M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable Category 2 or 3 properties including wheelchair accessible bungalows or other single level properties as part of the overall mix of homes provided in order to meet the needs of the ageing population.**

**The provision of specialist accommodation will be encouraged where it addresses the needs of older people in accordance with identified housing needs and care requirements.**

### Consultation Questions

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## Space Standards

Living in a dwelling that is overcrowded or too small can cause health problems and be detrimental to well-being. Average dwelling sizes in the UK are amongst the smallest in Europe. The Government has introduced optional national space standards to ensure minimum standards and help bring consistency across the country. The space standards provide a minimum standard of amenity which the draft policy proposes we would expect to be met to ensure adequate living conditions for residents and to avoid overcrowding. These are minimum standards which applicants are encouraged to exceed to the extent that this is consistent with the efficient use of land and Draft Policy LP6 on Housing Mix.

We will test the full effects of introducing this standard upon the deliverability of the plan when we undertake a viability assessment of the whole plan.

### Draft Policy LP7: Space Standards of Residential Properties

**We will expect all new residential dwellings and changes of use to residential use which require planning permission to meet the nationally described space standards.**

### Consultation Questions

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

have the opportunity to do so as part of our strategy for meeting housing need. There are around 100 people who have registered an interest in building their own home and are looking for land around Charnwood. Approximately half of these have no specific location in mind with the other half identifying an area of search.

Our evidence suggests that most of these homes are likely to be on small sites whilst recognising there is some potential for larger housing sites to include plots for self-build homes.

We will support self-build housing in any location considered suitable for housing in accordance with our spatial strategy set out in Draft Policy LP1. Where there is an identified need as evidenced by the Register we are proposing to secure serviced plots for self-build and custom housebuilding as part of an appropriate mix of homes. Our evidence tells us a 5% requirement on residential sites of 20 or more homes is unlikely to adversely impact the viability of those sites. We are proposing that this standard will be implemented on a whole plot basis, rounding down, so sites of 20 units and over will be required to provide 1 plot, sites of 40 units and over will provide 2 plots and sites of 60 units and over will provide 3 plots and so on. For example, a development of 39 units would require 1 plot (39 divided by 20 = 1.95 plots and rounded down to nearest plot is 1 plot).

To make sure that the plots are made available to self-builders the draft policy will require applicants to market them when available. After a suitable period of time, if this does not result in the sale of a plot to a self or custom builder then the developer may seek an alternative use of the site. To make sure that we can address our identified housing needs for the local area any plot not required by self or custom builders should firstly be made available to the Council or Registered Provider for an agreed period of time before being built out by the developer.

### **Draft Policy LP8: Self-build and Custom Housebuilding**

**We will support proposals for self-build and custom housebuilding in locations considered suitable for housing in accordance with Draft Policy LP1.**

**Where there is clear evidence of demand the Council will seek the provision of at least 5% as serviced plots for self-build and custom housebuilding as part of an appropriate mix of dwellings on housing allocations of 20 or more dwellings. We will do this by requiring:**

- **self-build and custom housebuilding developments to be completed within 3 years of development commencing on a self or custom build plot; and**
- **where plots have been made available and marketed appropriately for at least 12 months and have not sold, the plot(s) may either remain on the open market as self or custom build or be offered to the Council or a Housing Association, before being made available for market housing.**

### Consultation Question

- Does our proposed policy provide sufficiently for the needs of people who wish to undertake self-build or custom housebuilding? If not, what other support would you suggest and why?

## Houses in Multiple Occupation

When a group of 3 or more unrelated people live together the home is known as a house in multiple occupation (HMO). There are two types of HMO:

- HMO: small shared houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities, classified as C4 in the Use Classes Order; and
- Large HMO: those with more than 6 people sharing, unclassified by the Use Classes Order and described as being sui generis (of their own kind).

The number of properties used this way has grown in recent years. Our evidence tells us that HMOs are meeting the needs of a range of social groups including students, low income households, young professionals, migrant workers, those going through a change in family circumstances and those who select HMOs as a preferred choice of accommodation such as weekday accommodation returning to another home at weekends.

### Concentrations of HMOs in Charnwood

Our evidence shows that there are two distinct dimensions to the local HMO market. The student HMO market is focused around the northern, eastern and southern edges of the Loughborough University Campus, and in particular Storer Ward and Southfields Ward. The non-student HMO market is most marked in the eastern wards of Loughborough and to a lesser extent in other larger settlements in the Borough and some outlying villages. Traditionally, HMOs in Loughborough were considered to be mainly used by students who attend Loughborough University or Loughborough College. Our research has shown, however, that a high proportion (44%) is occupied by other groups in our community.

HMOs bring a number of benefits to the community such as affordable accommodation to those groups who otherwise may struggle to access housing, short term flexible accommodation and housing for students attending Loughborough University and Loughborough College. Our student population makes a significant economic, social and cultural contribution to our Borough which is valued.

However, some communities in Loughborough with a high concentration of HMOs experience problems, including anti-social behaviour, noise, crime, poor maintenance of properties, lack of car parking and highway safety issues, a negative impact on local amenity and an imbalance in the mix of the community which can leave community facilities under resourced.

Where there is a high proportion of HMOs occupied by students it can lead to a sharp contrast between busy term times and quieter periods during the holidays which impacts on social interactions, surveillance and local services and facilities. In essence, an over concentration of HMOs can lead to a loss of community spirit as long standing communities are replaced by transient populations with little stake in the community.

### **Article 4 Direction for Loughborough**

In recognition of the concentration of HMOs we have seen in Loughborough, special powers were granted to us by the Secretary of State under an Article 4 Direction. The Direction requires that in Loughborough planning permission is needed to use a house as a small HMO, i.e. for 3 or more unrelated people who live together. Planning permission has always been required for use as a large HMO and this remains the case for the whole of the Borough.

### **HMO Threshold**

The development of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities is a key planning objective which aims to ensure the needs of different groups in the community are met. It will be important to consider whether a new HMO by itself, or cumulatively with others, will impact negatively on the character and amenity of a street or residential area or prejudice the safe operation of the highway. Where the mix and balance of a community is threatened by the dominance of one group to the exclusion of others it can lead to both social and physical problems developing.

We are proposing that one of the tests we will use to understand and manage the proportion of both small and large HMOs and understand the cumulative impacts of HMOs will be a threshold approach. This will assess whether there is already a high concentration of HMO accommodation within an area where a new HMO is being proposed. The threshold approach will apply both to new HMOs and to conversions of existing small HMOs (3-6 unrelated people) to large HMOs (more than 6 unrelated people).

Our preferred approach is that an assessment of the current concentration of houses in multiple occupation will be undertaken using the following methodology:

- a 100m radius will be measured from the centre of the proposed HMO for which the application applies;
- the number of HMOs will be measured as a proportion of the total number of residential properties within the area defined by the radius;
- a property will be included in a calculation where the centre of the property falls within the area defined by the radius;
- each dwelling house within the area defined by the radius will be counted as a single property, regardless of the number of bedrooms;
- each HMO will be counted as a single property, regardless of the number of bedrooms;
- the number of known large HMOs within the area defined by the radius will be recorded and their impacts considered as part of the decision making process;
- the extent to which natural or physical boundaries take up a proportion of the area defined by the radius will also be considered; and
- halls of residence and purpose built student accommodation will not be included within the calculations, however, any halls of residence and purpose built student accommodation falling within the area defined by the radius will be recorded and the impacts considered as part of the decision making process.

Decision making must always be reasonable. In setting a threshold above which no further HMOs will generally be granted planning permission, a balance will need to be struck. There is a need to maintain mixed and balanced communities, whilst not reducing the overall supply of HMOs across Loughborough and therefore limiting the housing available to meet the needs of the population.

### **Sandwiching**

Our evidence has identified an issue with residential properties being sandwiched between two HMO properties. In these circumstances negative impacts from HMO properties can be exacerbated for occupants of the non-HMO property. The residents of the non-HMO property may also feel isolated from other residential properties on the street. The draft policy seeks to resist an HMO where it would result in a residential property being sandwiched between two HMOs. This would not apply where the properties are separated by an intersecting road or where properties have a back to back relationship in different streets. Subdivided units will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **Noise**

People who reside in HMOs are not necessarily noisy themselves; however, HMOs can often be noisier than a family home because of the number of people living independently within the property. There is likely to be a greater number of journeys up and down stairs and entering and exiting the property. There is the potential for a greater number of TVs, gaming consoles, music systems and other devices to be in

use at the same time and there can also be increased noise created by self-closing devices which are fitted to doors for fire safety reasons. Noise can adversely affect the amenity of neighbours and other tenants and the potential noise impact of a proposed HMO will need to be considered.

## **Amenity**

The impact on the social and physical character and amenity of an area will be assessed in light of evidence of existing standards of property maintenance and repair, parking issues, reported crime and anti-social behaviour including noise complaints, a fear of crime, accumulations of waste and rubbish, littering, fly-posting and the proliferation of letting signs.

In addressing the impact on amenity, the provision of secure, unobtrusive and accessible refuse and recycling storage away from the public highway but with easy access to the front of the property for collection for new HMOs and conversions to large HMOs will be considered.

We will work closely with our partners, particularly local residents' groups, Loughborough University, the Students' Union, Loughborough College, Leicestershire County Highways, Leicestershire Police and our licencing colleagues to address issues arising from concentrations of houses in multiple occupation.

## **Car Parking Standards for HMOs**

HMOs by their nature have the potential to increase the number of cars associated with a single property and therefore to increase the pressure on on-street parking provision. This can lead to problems such as traffic obstructions (to pedestrians, emergency vehicles and refuse vehicles), congestion and harm to the visual amenity of the local area. The accessibility of key services and facilities, the town centre and University are important considerations when assessing the appropriate parking provision for HMOs.

Assessing these factors will be an important part of the decision making process and should be informed by an assessment of parking capacity which is carried out outside of normal working hours of 8am to 6pm and during term time. The assessment should also consider the accessibility of key services and facilities including a convenience store, the University and town centre. This could include the accessibility to a bus stop with a frequent service (at least half hourly) to the town centre and campus. Decisions on any proposals would also have to take account of advice from the Local Highway Authority and the standards in the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide.

We will work with our partners to seek adequate off-street parking and appropriate storage space for bikes in accordance with the County Council's Design Guide to assess whether there is adequate available on-street parking capacity.

### **Draft Policy LP9 Houses in Multiple Occupation**

**We will support the well-being, character and amenity of our communities by managing the proportion of houses in multiple occupation. We will do this by preventing new houses in multiple occupation or conversions to large houses in multiple occupation that either in themselves or cumulatively with other houses in multiple occupation:**

- **create a concentration of 10% or more houses in multiple occupation within the area defined by a 100m radius around the application site;**
- **result in a residential dwelling being sandwiched between two houses in multiple occupation;**
- **damage the social and physical character and amenity of a street or residential area;**
- **generate noise and disturbance which is detrimental to the amenity of the street or residential area; or**
- **generate a demand for on-street car parking that would prejudice the safe operation of the highway, or cause detriment to amenity.**

### **Consultation Question**

- **Do you agree that the proposed policy on houses in multiple occupation will achieve our objective of supporting the well-being, character and amenity of our communities? If not, what changes to the policy would you propose and why?**
- 

## **Campus and Purpose Built Student Accommodation**

Loughborough University and Loughborough College are important contributors to the local economy, both in terms of the number of people whom they employ and the investment that they attract in to the town. The provision of new purpose built student accommodation on the campuses of the University and College, or in accessible locations nearby, can help reduce pressures on residential areas to accommodate students and help meet the housing needs of other groups.

### **Draft Policy LP10: Campus and Purpose Built Student Accommodation**

**Additional student housing provision within the campus and in locations with good accessibility by cycle, public transport or on foot to the Loughborough University and Loughborough College campuses will be encouraged.**

**In assessing applications for student accommodation on the Loughborough University campus we will take into account the University's existing sustainable transport plan which is reviewed with Leicestershire County Council on a regular basis.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

The Government has an overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for gypsies and travellers, in a way that facilitates their traditional and nomadic way of life whilst respecting the interests of the settled community. To inform our policies we have worked with other Leicestershire local authorities to assess the need for sites to accommodate their needs.

The Charnwood Core Strategy identified the need for at least 8 permanent pitches, 10 transit pitches and 16 plots for show people to be provided by 2028. This is being implemented as follows:

- Land for 4 gypsy and traveller pitches and 4 travelling showpeople plots has been set out in the Section 106 agreement for the North East Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension;
- Land for 4 gypsy and traveller pitches and 4 travelling showpeople plots has been set out in the Section 106 agreement for the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension;
- 4 plots for travelling showpeople have been included within the planning application for the North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension and discussions are ongoing concerning their delivery.

Our evidence shows that there are no additional needs for gypsy and travellers or travelling showpeople in Charnwood for the period up to 2036. It also recommends

local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire cooperate in bringing forward sites in the areas of greatest need for transit provision. We will work with our partners to other Leicestershire local authorities to achieve this by identifying suitable sites.

### **Draft Policy LP11 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

**We will support sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople in accordance with the assessment of needs that are:**

- **designed to create a safe and healthy environment for the residents;**
- **appropriate in scale;**
- **well related to local infrastructure and services including shops, schools and health facilities;**
- **sensitively designed to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on the character, appearance and amenity of the locality; and**
- **ensure safe access for the movement of vehicles to and from the site with provision for parking and servicing within the site.**

**We will monitor the delivery of plots and pitches, including those at the Sustainable Urban Extensions, to ensure they are provided within agreed timescales and we will work with neighbouring local authorities in Leicestershire to bring forward transit sites at appropriate locations in accordance with the recommendations of the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

Charnwood is the largest district by population in Leicestershire and one of the largest in the country. Our Borough is centrally located in the UK and is exceptionally well connected by road and rail networks which make Charnwood an extremely attractive location for business. Leicester, Nottingham and Derby are within easy reach whilst the Midland Mainline railway, M1 motorway and East Midlands Airport provide good connections with more distant destinations.

Loughborough is a big driver for the local economy in the north of the Borough. We also have a strong relationship with Leicester and our economic fortunes are closely

linked to the city. Many businesses in the south of the Borough benefit from their proximity to the city and many residents living in Charnwood travel to work in the city.

In the north of the Borough the focus for jobs, services and facilities is provided by Loughborough and Shepshed. Loughborough's economy was originally developed around the textile and engineering industries. In more recent years as traditional industry has declined Loughborough has become well known for science and innovation activity in areas such as advanced engineering, bioscience and pharmaceuticals.

The multi-site Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone has two sites in Loughborough. The Charnwood Campus is a Life Sciences Opportunity Zone offering state of the art laboratory space for research and development supporting bio-medical and pharmaceutical industries. Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park is one of the largest and fastest growing science parks in the UK and is home to knowledge-based businesses specialising in advanced engineering and manufacturing, high value research and development, and energy and low carbon technology. It benefits from the close links it has with Loughborough University, ranked in the top 5 Universities in the UK and is an important contributor to our economy.

Sport and physical activity is also a significant area of economic activity. Loughborough is an important location for the training and development of elite athletes and sports science research, and the base for a number of sports governing bodies.

Our villages in the Soar and Wreake Valleys were once associated with the manufacture of clothing, shoe making and engineering. As these industries have declined former factories have been redeveloped for housing and these villages now serve as home to residents who work in larger towns and cities, benefitting from our attractive countryside and tranquil environment. Nevertheless, we have had some success with new jobs being created in Service Centres and through supporting our rural businesses via initiatives like the Council-run Oak Business Centre in Sileby, a complex of 26 units providing workshop and office accommodation for new and start-up businesses. Whilst most new business will be located at Loughborough and Shepshed or on the edge of Leicester we still want to see jobs in our Service Centres. There are also important clusters of commercial activity in smaller settlements such as East Goscote and Wymeswold which we will continue to support.

A new Economic Development Strategy was produced in 2018 and a new 'inCharnwood' initiative has been launched to encourage inward investment and business growth. Charnwood has significant economic growth potential and our policies are designed to help facilitate that.

## **Our Economy and Labour Market**

In 2016 there were around 77,800 jobs in Charnwood with our businesses producing goods and providing services worth £3.5 billion a year to the economy, which is the second largest in Leicestershire after the city. The education sector and professional, scientific and technical activities are particularly well represented compared to the national average. Despite a 35% decline in employment in manufacturing from 2000 to 2016, this sector is still substantially larger in Charnwood than the regional and national average.

The Borough's average wage is very similar to that of Leicestershire and the wider country whilst the number of our residents claiming out-of-work benefits is lower than the national average and that of the East Midlands. Unemployment levels are also lower than the national and regional average. However, there are still areas of Charnwood which suffer from higher unemployment, lower wages and lower levels of educational attainment, especially in our Priority Neighbourhoods of Loughborough East, Loughborough West, Mountsorrel and South Charnwood (Thurmaston and Syston).

Many of our residents travel outside the Borough for employment opportunities. Whilst there are a significant number of jobs in Charnwood approximately 11,500 more people travel out of the Borough to work than travel in, with 84% of these heading to Leicester. This is not surprising given the proximity of the city from larger settlements in the south of the Borough such as Syston, Thurmaston, Birstall and Anstey.

## **Charnwood's Future Economy**

We want to create a strong and lasting economy which will encourage the success of our businesses and in turn provide jobs and a better quality of life for all our residents.

We want to ensure that businesses in Charnwood are able to access suitable premises which enable them to thrive. We also want to attract new inward investment. Our aim is to encourage a flexible supply of land which can respond to a changing market, encourage competition and maximise economic growth. We propose to help facilitate the supply of major employment sites and also make provision for the supply of land and property which encourages the establishment and growth of small and medium sized businesses.

Innovation is important for value creation, growth, competitiveness and employment and we have the ability to capitalise on this by taking advantage of the presence of Loughborough University, the Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone sites, our existing businesses that are involved in innovation and the excellent transport links in our Borough. We will continue to support Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park and Charnwood Campus as centres for high value,

knowledge-based businesses. We will work with our partners at Loughborough University to further develop learning, creativity and innovation and assist in the commercialisation of research. This includes supporting the growth of Loughborough University by providing for the expansion of the university campus and providing opportunities which encourage our graduates to remain employed or set up their own business within the Borough and to deliver support for entrepreneurship and enterprise in the community.

We will continue to support the Watermead Regeneration Corridor, one of our Economic Development Strategy priorities. The Watermead Corridor supports the regeneration of Thurmaston village centre and provides a highly accessible site for inward investment. It will create jobs close to our Priority Neighbourhood in South Charnwood and will connect the community with the adjacent County Park and heritage canal frontage.

Our evidence forecasts a growth in office related jobs to 2036. Around half of this growth will be focussed in professional services with the rest spread across a range of sectors. In the manufacturing sector the decline in jobs is forecast to slow down compared to past rates and as a result manufacturing is likely to remain an important part of our local economy in future years and we propose to seek to support this.

To encourage the establishment of small and medium sized businesses we propose to seek to ensure land and buildings which meets their needs are provided whilst facilitating the supply of major employment sites and their delivery. Our evidence has also identified that there is a strong demand for smaller freehold industrial units. It is proposed that additional development for such units to meet this need will be supported provided it is in suitable locations.

The economic relationship between south Charnwood and the city of Leicester has been taken into account and we want to encourage new manufacturing and small warehousing jobs within Charnwood to take advantage of this relationship by benefitting from business investment and expansion that may not be able to take place in the city.

Our evidence regarding employment land needs highlights that our existing commitments provide sufficient land, choice and flexibility in land supply.

To create favourable conditions for the growth of our economy requires good infrastructure and a built environment which suits the needs of businesses so they can thrive. We will support and influence infrastructure providers to meet the future needs of existing and new businesses.

By 2036 we will meet the economic needs of our community and support the economic needs of Leicester by:

- delivering up to 77.88 hectares of land up to 2036 for employment purposes in accordance with Draft Policy LP1 by allocating the following sites as shown on the Policies Map:

<b>SITE REF</b>	<b>SITE DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>SITE LOCATION</b>	<b>AREA</b>
<b>ES1</b>	<b>Employment land at the North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension in accordance with Draft Policy LP35</b>	<b>Birstall</b>	<b>15 hectares</b>
<b>ES2</b>	<b>Employment land at The Warren, for industrial uses and small warehouses</b>	<b>East Goscote</b>	<b>3.95 hectares</b>
<b>ES3</b>	<b>Employment land at the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>16 hectares</b>
<b>ES4</b>	<b>Employment land at Dishley Grange</b>	<b>Loughborough</b>	<b>9 hectares</b>
<b>ES5</b>	<b>Employment land at Rothley Lodge, for industrial uses and small warehouses</b>	<b>Rothley</b>	<b>5.6 hectares</b>
<b>ES6</b>	<b>Employment land at Land at Loughborough Road, for industrial uses and small warehouses</b>	<b>Rothley</b>	<b>2.99 hectares</b>
<b>ES7</b>	<b>Employment land at Watermead Business Park in accordance with Draft Policy LP36</b>	<b>System</b>	<b>12.34 hectares</b>
<b>ES8</b>	<b>Employment land at the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension</b>	<b>Thurmaston</b>	<b>13 hectares</b>

- **supporting the expansion of the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park on up to 77 hectares of land;**
- **encouraging a greater proportion of high technology and knowledge based businesses;**
- **providing opportunities for manufacturing businesses to develop, re-locate and expand;**
- **providing opportunities for small-scale, high quality business units and offices including freehold industrial units;**
- **promoting business and employment regeneration opportunities which support our Priority Neighbourhoods;**
- **encouraging the provision of live/work units in accordance with Policy LP1;**
- **supporting major employment opportunities in locations where they reduce journeys to work by car; and**
- **supporting and promoting transport, power and broadband infrastructure which facilitates employment developments.**

#### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Protecting Our Existing Employment Sites**

We have a range of good quality and well used existing employment sites, with very low vacancy rates. We want to prevent the loss of good quality employment sites to alternative uses as our evidence identifies that these sites are needed to maintain a supply of land and buildings for new and growing businesses. Employment uses are generally considered to fall within the B Use Classes along with some sui generis employment uses; however, we also recognise that there may be occasions when other employment generating, commercial uses may be acceptable.

The Policies Map identifies the good quality employment sites which should be safeguarded, based on our evidence of their attractiveness to occupiers, accessibility and compatibility with their surroundings.

We propose to require any proposal involving the loss of commercial accommodation or land to demonstrate that there are no reasonable prospects that the site will be

required for employment use in the future through proportionate marketing relevant to the site's circumstances and setting, and the market demand at that point in time.

The marketing evidence submitted with a planning application should demonstrate:

- that the site or land has been widely advertised and marketed for a wide range of economic uses for at least one year, including offering the site for both freehold and leasehold interest;
- the site or land has been offered at values reflective of current market values, including benchmarking with similar sites in the market area;
- details have been provided of any interest received from potential buyers or tenants since marketing commenced, including explanation of why this was not pursued; and
- viability testing of indicative schemes where sites or land are undeveloped or property needs to be redeveloped.

We will consider sites on an individual basis to take account of specific circumstances including the relationship with, and amenity, of adjoining sites. It may be possible for an employment site which cannot remain wholly in employment use to become a mixed use development to offset part of the loss of employment space. This should be considered prior to total loss of the site.

### **Draft Policy LP13: Protecting Existing Employment Sites**

**Existing good quality employment sites, as identified on the Policies Map, will be protected for employment uses unless it can be demonstrated that:**

- **the site or land has no reasonable prospect of being re-occupied or redeveloped for a new employment use;**
- **the proposed use would contribute to delivering the wider local plan objectives in accordance with Draft Policy LP1;**
- **immediately prior to submission of a relevant planning application the site or land has been widely advertised and marketed for a wide range of economic uses at reasonable market values for at least one year;**
- **consideration has been given to mixed use development of the site including employment uses; and**
- **alternative built accommodation is available to meet any need.**

**For other existing employment sites, not identified as good quality or allocated on the Policies Map, proposals for alternative uses will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:**

- **the property or land is vacant and has been unsuccessfully marketed for employment use for at least six months, at reasonable market values, and**
- **the change would result in amenity or environmental benefits to the adjacent uses or area.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Regeneration Strategy**

We want to help all our towns and villages to thrive and to revitalise and further improve our urban areas. Our overall development strategy of urban intensification and concentration aims to support the vitality and viability of existing centres. We want to encourage people to live close to the urban centres in the Borough to promote the future success of those centres by boosting footfall and the local economy.

We have identified priorities for regeneration at the Watermead Regeneration Corridor in our Strategic Allocations policies. We also recognise the importance of regenerating the town centres of Loughborough and Shepshed, as the major urban areas in the north of our Borough, and have developed Masterplans which will assist in this revitalisation.

### **Loughborough**

Loughborough's economy is based on a range of service and manufacturing businesses. Whilst there has been a national decline in heavy and electrical engineering industries, they continue to make an important contribution to the prosperity of Charnwood. Our diverse economy has helped protect the town from the worst impacts of the economic downturn.

The continued vitality and viability of Loughborough town centre is key to our regeneration strategy for the town which is set out under Draft Policy LP17 Town Centre and Retail. The supporting text relating to Loughborough town centre is also relevant to this policy.

To the east of the town centre is Loughborough's Industrial Heritage Quarter. It is the product of industrial growth during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The quarter is characterised by terraced houses, redundant hosiery mills and engineering sheds and a former waste disposal site. Many of the former industrial premises are now vacant or derelict offering a significant opportunity for the delivery of new homes and businesses. Regeneration of the area has started but there is more to do.

The Tourism Blueprint for Charnwood recognises the tourism potential of our industrial past and its key heritage attractions such as the Great Central Railway, the Grand Union Canal and Taylor's Bell Foundry and Museum.

The Great Central Railway is an established heritage railway that runs between its main base in Loughborough and Birstall (Leicester) and is expanding its successful events programme and on-site offer. We will support development and investment in the infrastructure necessary to enhance the railway's appeal as a major tourism destination.

The River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership supports the delivery of improvements to the canal corridor in association with the regeneration of the Loughborough Industrial Heritage Quarter and the opportunities for enhanced linkages between the waterway and the town centre.

The Loughborough Bell Foundry Trust is restoring key parts of the historic Grade II\* Listed Taylor's Bell Foundry to enhance the commercial operation and attract more visitors.

The former landfill site at Allsopps Lane is currently neglected and could provide a major informal recreational area for the local community. We want to see it reclaimed for new green space and have identified it as a priority project in our Open Spaces Strategy.

Our proposed approach is to encourage the regeneration of the Industrial Heritage Quarter. We will do this by promoting mixed use development that retains and enhances the remaining heritage assets and investigating the potential for a heritage trail which links these elements. Nottingham Road forms the direct route between the mainline railway station and the town centre and passes close to these heritage assets. There have been recent improvements to the public realm around the station; however, these have not been continued along Nottingham Road. We will encourage improvements to the public realm along Nottingham Road which enhances the walking and cycling experience from the station and link these to the wider heritage trail.

There are Priority Neighbourhoods at Loughborough East and Loughborough West, where levels of deprivation are amongst the highest in Leicestershire. The

neighbourhoods suffer from low incomes, high unemployment, low attainment levels, poor health and high crime rates. The east of Loughborough also has pockets of derelict and neglected land. Whilst they contribute to deprivation they also provide an opportunity that can support regeneration.

### **Draft Policy LP14: Regeneration of Loughborough**

**We will make a significant contribution to the regeneration of Loughborough by 2036 by:**

- **supporting proposals for town centre uses at our opportunity sites in accordance with Draft Policy LP17 as part of mixed use developments at Baxter Gate, Aumberry Gap, Devonshire Square and Ashby Road;**
- **supporting improvements to the infrastructure for markets and events;**
- **encouraging residential development and a wider mix of commercial uses in the town centre which support and complement the traditional retail offer;**
- **supporting proposals that provide flexible accommodation for offices and managed workspace;**
- **supporting development which conserves and enhances the heritage and tourism value of Loughborough's Industrial Heritage Quarter and its heritage assets, including the Great Central Railway, Grand Union Canal and Taylor's Bell Foundry;**
- **supporting proposals to reconnect the northern and southern sections of the Great Central Railway and associated infrastructure;**
- **requiring development adjacent to the Grand Union Canal to provide an active waterfront with public access;**
- **supporting proposals that enhance the landscape and biodiversity value of the former Allsopps Lane refuse tip and provide for public access; and**
- **supporting proposals which provide clear benefits to the Priority Neighbourhoods of Loughborough East and Loughborough West.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Shepshed**

The economy of Shepshed was historically focussed on small manufacturing businesses. The majority of Shepshed's factories are now closed and have been redeveloped, mainly for homes. Shepshed continues to have significant employment areas and after Loughborough is the second most self-contained settlement in the Borough, with 20% of those living in the town also working there. However the majority of residents work elsewhere, including the 27% of people living in Shepshed who work in Loughborough.

Many of the new homes which have been built on old factory sites have been to the south of the town centre. Unfortunately, access to the town centre from these locations is difficult due to a lack of walking and cycling links and, as a consequence, many people choose to shop where they work. Shepshed town centre has declined as a result, with the closure of shops and services exacerbating the fragmented character of the main shopping streets. We are proposing to support the community in its efforts to break this cycle.

We are aware that regenerating the town centre will be difficult due to the structural issues of access and invite views on how improvements to Shepshed town centre can be taken forward. For example, a radical approach could be to shift the focus of the town centre further to the west, in association with the release of land for homes. This could improve accessibility by foot and cycle and allow for the provision of workspaces and start-up units to encourage local employment opportunities alongside other services and facilities. To achieve such a fundamental change however would require a feasibility study and new masterplan to guide the change.

With our partners we have already produced a strategic vision to improve the overall economic health and vitality of the current town centre through the Shepshed Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Framework. It focuses interventions around complementary activities combining public realm improvements with strategies to relate character and identity to the town's retail function. The Bull Ring, Market Place and Hall Croft are identified as the focus for revitalisation. It is proposed that improvements in these areas will continue to be supported.

Our preferred development strategy includes proposals for around 2,000 new homes at Shepshed, along with the sustainable urban extension at the West of Loughborough. We will seek to encourage footfall and spending in Shepshed town centre by ensuring new homes are well connected to, and contribute to the regeneration of, the town centre.

**We will make a significant contribution to the regeneration of Shepshed to 2036 by:**

- **supporting developments which contribute to the vitality and viability of Shepshed and are in accordance with Draft Policy LP17;**
- **supporting innovative proposals for improving the town centre and increasing accessibility;**
- **supporting proposals that provide managed workspace and small business start-up space; and**
- **supporting developments that improve access to community facilities.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Our Rural Economy**

Our rural areas have changed with the continued mechanisation of agriculture and consolidation of holdings into larger farms. Jobs in agriculture have declined considerably and are forecast to continue to do so and we want to ensure the economic viability of rural communities and enterprises. Our rural areas generally have less access to public transport and it is important that local services and facilities are supported. We are proposing to support the regeneration and diversification of the rural economy whilst protecting the character and appearance of the countryside and our rural communities.

### **Small-scale Business Development in Villages**

The proposed policy will support development which is not detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside and will provide employment opportunities in our rural areas for local communities. Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity for local communities to take the lead in deciding how to balance the employment needs of their communities and several have already done so.

### **Re-use of Rural Buildings**

The proposed policy will help our rural economy by supporting the reuse of rural buildings for small scale business activities compatible with countryside locations.

## **Farm Diversification**

Farm diversification can help farmers by providing sources of income which allow them to continue to farm and manage the land. Successful farm diversification activities include small farm shops, processing and selling produce from the farm, craft workshops, small businesses, bed and breakfast and holiday accommodation. The proposed policy will support activities which are compatible with a countryside location as long as farming remains the dominant business activity.

## **Tourism and Leisure**

Tourism in Charnwood contributed £279 million to our economy in 2015 and the Charnwood Tourism Strategy found that this supports over 6,000 jobs in more than 900 businesses. We recognise the important role it plays in the Borough's rural areas and overall economy and will support our partners to continue to grow the tourism sector in our Borough.

The Great Central Railway plays a significant role for our rural tourism offer with stations at Rothley and Quorn providing a focus for tourism activity. We will continue to work with the Great Central Railway to support the future success of this heritage line.

We will continue to work with the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Partnership to harness the potential of the waterway and make it more attractive to visitors. The proposed policy will support development which improves accessibility and facilities for canal related tourism development.

There is also potential for rural tourism based on the enjoyment of the countryside, our rich built heritage, festivals and events supported by restaurants, cafés, bars and public houses.

The Charnwood Forest is a unique and important landscape which is related to the wider National Forest. With our partners in the Charnwood Forest Regional Park we will promote sustainable leisure and tourism, manage and promote landscape and settlement character, and support agricultural diversification and woodland and rural economy uses. A successful bid for a Landscape Partnership Scheme has been made which will enable and encourage people to explore its rich landscape and diverse heritage.

## **Small-Scale Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside**

There are a number of existing businesses across the rural areas of the Borough including offices, warehousing and manufacturing operations. Some, such as those at

Wymeswold and Rearsby, are associated with redundant military and civil airfields. Whilst these sites are not good locations for businesses that create a significant number of vehicle movements, some types of business can contribute to the local economy and provide jobs for our village communities. We are proposing to support small scale expansion or intensification of these types of business provided it is sensitive to the character and appearance of the countryside.

### **Draft Policy LP16: Rural Economic Development**

**We will maximise the potential of our rural economy by 2036. We will do this by:**

- **supporting development where the scale and character is designed and operated so as to cause no detriment to the character and appearance of the countryside;**
- **supporting the small scale sustainable growth and expansion of existing businesses in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;**
- **supporting farm diversification where farming remains the dominant element of the business;**
- **supporting the provision of superfast broadband networks for all homes and businesses; and**
- **supporting tourism and leisure facilities, particularly developments that benefit the Great Central Railway, the River Soar and Grand Union Canal, the National Forest Strategy and the Charnwood Forest Regional Park.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Town Centres and Shopping**

Our town, suburban and village centres are focal points for their communities; they provide goods and services close to where people live and are focal points for

employment and for economic activity<sup>3</sup>. These centres are an essential part of the character and identity of places; they provide opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, and contribute to the liveability of our communities, making them sustainable. Maintaining a network of vibrant centres is an essential part of our vision, regeneration strategy and overall spatial strategy.

We want to see main town centre uses<sup>4</sup> being focussed in our town centres rather than in other locations. The development of such uses outside our town centres will not help us to deliver our vision.

We have a hierarchy of centres in Charnwood which perform different functions:

**Loughborough Town Centre** – is the top of our hierarchy of centres, as it is the largest and the main focus for retail, leisure, offices, arts, tourism and cultural activities in Charnwood, particularly the north of the Borough.

**District Centres** – usually comprise groups of shops, often including at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library.

**Local Centres** – include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette.

## **Loughborough Town Centre**

Loughborough's town centre includes a historic Market Place, a variety of shops and services but faces competition from larger centres like Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, along with new models of internet based shopping and other forms of online commerce.

To help us develop the town centre and ensure its continued viability and vitality we have produced a Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan. It was adopted in April 2018 and presents the spatial vision for the development of Loughborough town centre. It

---

<sup>3</sup> References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance.

<sup>4</sup> Main town centre uses are defined in the Glossary.

was prepared in consultation with those who visit, work in or run businesses in the town centre.

The Masterplan identifies key characteristics which make Loughborough town centre special:

- A compact walkable town centre with the Market Place at its heart, which provides an attractive focus for the town;
- A variety of shops with a mix of high street and independent retailers;
- A number of attractive open spaces in the centre including Queen's Park, Southfields Park and Parish Green;
- Love Loughborough (the Business Improvement District) is delivering a programme of activities and events to enhance the centre and assist businesses; and
- The presence of civic, cultural, leisure and entertainment facilities within the town centre.

Loughborough town centre has weaknesses however, including:

- many of the points of arrival into the centre are poorly defined and uninviting;
- poor quality pedestrian connections between key destinations;
- the built environment in some parts of the town centre (such as The Rushes and Woodgate/Southfield Road character areas) is disjointed and incoherent;
- limited residential use in the town centre aside from student accommodation; and
- numerous town centre car parks but overall there is a shortfall in parking spaces.

The Masterplan is underpinned by the following vision:

*Loughborough Town Centre will be a successful and vibrant place with a strong identity that stems from its role as a market town and home to Loughborough University. It will be an attractive destination with a diverse retail and leisure offer, a mix of housing and a wide range of employment opportunities.*

*The town will be easy to access with a well-connected network of vehicular and pedestrian routes. Activity in the town will be supported by a range of events and innovative marketing, business and promotional strategies that will make Loughborough a great place to be.*

The Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan identifies a number of opportunity sites that are currently under-utilised and offer potential for development to strengthen the town centre offer and improve the townscape and sense of space.

1. Baxter Gate;
2. Aumbery Gap;
3. Devonshire Square;
4. Sainsbury's store on Ashby Road; and
5. The Loughborough University School of Art and Design building.

The site at Baxter Gate, which is located to the south of the Baxter Gate leisure complex and to the north of Pinfold Gate, was the only one of the five sites identified as suitable for significant retail development.

The Aumbery Gap site recently received planning permission for purpose built student accommodation and development is expected to commence on site shortly. The fourth site, Sainsbury's, is in active use and unlikely to come forward in the near future; however, there is potential to intensify development on the site and improve the environment along The Rushes. On that basis a number of principles to guide any redevelopment have been prepared, along with an illustrative layout. Proposals for the Loughborough University School of Art and Design building have been developed by a community interest company to convert the building into a centre for creative businesses. The redevelopment of this building would be a significant opportunity for the town and its economy.

Alongside these major proposals, the Masterplan sets out that we will also support smaller interventions which can deliver local and immediate change at relatively low cost, such as themed events, pop up shops, temporary public realm interventions and support for existing community projects. We will also develop a Loughborough Lanes Strategy to improve the overall experience of the town centre for people and enhance retail loops to increase footfall for businesses by encouraging improvements to the large number of lanes and alleyways that play an essential role in linking many of the town's important destinations.

We also recognise that encouraging people to live in the town centre and supporting flexible workspaces/offices and commercial uses beyond the traditional retail offer, will support and complement Loughborough's vitality and viability.

Having regard to the amount of retail development that is needed in the plan period, and the network of centres and the strengths and weaknesses of Loughborough town centre, the Baxter Gate site is considered to be the most appropriate site for accommodating the Borough's need for retail floorspace. This site can support a mixed use scheme where this supports the vitality and viability of Loughborough town centre.

We will continue to work closely with the Loughborough Town Team and support the Love Loughborough Business Improvement District. The proposed policy will support

town centre developments in Loughborough town centre to support Loughborough's vitality and maintain its role as the main social and economic focus of the Borough.

## **District Centres**

Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Birstall, Gorse Covert, Shelthorpe, Shepshed, Sileby and Syston all contain District Centres that provide for the day-to-day needs of their communities.

In terms of the hierarchy of centres, Shepshed town centre<sup>5</sup> meets the definition of a District Centre. The Shepshed Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Framework has been produced to improve the overall economic health and vitality of the town centre. The Framework identifies the following issues with the town centre:

- A poor non-food retail offer, with residents in Shepshed travelling elsewhere for work and shopping;
- No clearly defined town centre and no readily discernible high street;
- Poor public realm and pedestrian safety harm the town centre shopping experience;
- A public space used for a declining street market in Hall Croft that is invisible to passing trade; and
- A lack of leisure facilities to meet the needs of its community.

We want to support Shepshed District Centre to improve its overall economic health and vitality and viability. We set out proposals for Shepshed's town centre as part of our Regeneration Strategy earlier in this chapter and town centre developments will be supported where they respond to this strategy.

The remaining District Centres are performing their role for their local communities and are in reasonable health.

We want District Centres to continue to provide for the day-to-day needs of their local communities. It is important to support town centre developments in our District Centres that are compatible with, and maintain their position in our hierarchy, as well as maintaining their vitality and viability and our proposed policy seeks to achieve this.

## **Local Centres**

---

<sup>5</sup> Shepshed and Syston are referred to as towns rather than villages because they both have a town council rather than a parish council. This is an administrative distinction which does not affect the terminology used in this document.

Melton Road, Thurmaston; Leicester Road/Market Place, Mountsorrel; Sharpley Road, Loughborough; Quorn, and Rothley all contain Local Centres which serve a small catchment.

Melton Road, Thurmaston provides for the day-to-day needs and acts as a focal point for its community. We want to see new development within this Local Centre not only support its role as a Local Centre but help our priority for the regeneration of Thurmaston and the wider Watermead Regeneration Corridor.

We have surveyed our remaining Local Centres and they are performing their function, serving their local community.

It is important to support town centre developments in our Local Centres that are compatible with, and maintain their position in our hierarchy, as well as maintaining their vitality and viability. We want Local Centres to continue to provide for the day-to-day needs of their local communities.

## **Draft Policy LP17 Town Centres and Retail**

### **Loughborough Town Centre**

**We will make a significant contribution to the regeneration and continued vitality of Loughborough town centre by supporting retail, leisure, office, professional services and other town centre development which:**

- **reinforces and enhances the compact, legible and walkable character of Loughborough town centre maintaining the Market Place at its heart;**
- **maintains continuous street frontage activity within the Primary Shopping Area;**
- **makes a significant improvement to the character and appearance of Loughborough town centre, particularly at points of arrival into the Centre;**
- **makes a significant improvement to pedestrian connections within the centre, including to surrounding public open spaces; and**
- **is designed to address public safety and wider security, particularly in areas where large numbers of people congregate.**

**Our additional need for non-food retail floor space will be met by at the site at Baxter Gate/Pinfold Gate as part of a mixed use development, as this represents the best opportunity for supporting the vitality and viability of Loughborough and delivering our vision for the town centre. This will be done by:**

- supporting proposals to include a retail parade, health centre, major new car park and housing; and
- ensuring comprehensive redevelopment of this key opportunity site, following the design principles set out in the Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that an alternative high quality design solution is needed to ensure a viable scheme.

We will support proposals for housing within Loughborough town centre where this supports its vitality and viability and its main town centre functions.

We will also support a wider mix of commercial leisure uses, including restaurants, that support activity throughout the day and the night for a range of age groups and which support the main retail attraction of the town centre.

### **Shepshed District Centre**

We will make a significant contribution to the regeneration of Shepshed by 2036 by supporting proposals which:

- are physically well integrated within Shepshed District Centre;
- maintain street frontage activity which encourages activity within the District Centre throughout all hours of the day; and
- secure improvements to connectivity, public realm, landscaping, leisure provision, public art and heritage particularly for the Bull Ring, Field Street and Market Place.

### **District and Local Centres**

For District and Local Centres we encourage town centre development which supports their vitality and viability where it is physically integrated into the defined centre and of an appropriate scale for that centre.

We will apply a sequential approach to the location of proposals for main town centre uses, as set out in Draft Policy LP1.

We will require an impact assessment for proposals (including the formation of mezzanine floors) for/or which include retail, leisure and office developments which are not located within a defined centre where:

- the proposal provides a floorspace greater than 500 m<sup>2</sup> gross; or
- the proposal is located within 800 metres of the boundary of a District Centre and is greater than 300 m<sup>2</sup> gross; or

- the proposal is located within 800 metres of the boundary of a Local Centre and is greater than 200 m<sup>2</sup>

**The boundaries of Loughborough Town Centre, Loughborough Town Centre Primary Shopping Area, and the District and Local Centres are identified on the Policies Map.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

### **Hot Food Takeaways**

Hot food takeaways can provide an important component in the mix of uses of our town centres and can be an ingredient in a successful daytime and evening economy. A concentration of hot food takeaways particularly on prominent streets or retail frontages can, however, detract from the appearance of our town and village centres, and can result in a lack of street activity at certain times of day. They can lead to the generation of significant litter, including food waste, and to short term parking outside takeaways leading to congestion. Evidence suggests that the concentration of hot food takeaways in specific locations, particularly in Birstall and Shelthorpe District Centres, detracts from their vitality. We want to manage the concentration of hot food takeaways to support the vitality and viability of our Town, District and Local Centres.

We are aware that one way of delivering our objective of supporting healthy communities is to ensure that our communities can access a range of healthy food options. This could be compromised if there is a concentration of hot food takeaways in a particular location and there is some evidence showing a link between the concentration of fast food takeaways and obesity.

### **Draft Policy LP18: Hot Food Takeaways**

**In considering proposals for hot food takeaways within the defined Primary Shopping Areas of Loughborough Town Centre, and our District and Local Centres, we will have regard to the following factors:**

- the number of existing takeaway establishments in the immediate area of the application site and their proximity to each other, in order to avoid clusters of takeaway uses;

- the impact on the amenity of the immediate area (including smells, fumes and noise), traffic or safety issues arising from the proposal itself or cumulatively with the existing uses in the area; and
- the potential impact upon the health of local residents where this can be demonstrated through evidence.

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

# Chapter 7: Environment

Our built and natural environment is fundamental to our way of life. Our communities and the buildings we use are nestled in a rich setting formed by our landscape and the wildlife it contains. These, and the relationships between each of them, give us our sense of place.

We want our existing and new communities to live and work in a high quality and healthy environment. Our vision seeks to both protect and enhance our built and natural environment. A more attractive environment also helps us to attract economic investment.

We recognise the intrinsic value of the natural environment, its value as natural capital and the range of ecosystem services that it provides. We also recognise that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation contribute to health and well-being and to the cohesion of our communities.

Protecting and enhancing the natural environment can help in both our efforts to reduce climate change and adapt to it. The buildings and townscapes of our built environment that are of heritage value also perform ongoing functions as homes and business premises.

The natural environment and the different types of green spaces that make it up benefit from a connectivity between these spaces. This network of formal and semi natural green spaces across the Borough is known as Green Infrastructure. This is important for a number of reasons including providing habitat and landscape connectivity for wildlife, offering safe and attractive cycling and walking routes for people, helping us to manage flooding, and countering the heat island effect in urban areas by reducing the heat retained in buildings and streets.

Our strategically important areas of Green Infrastructure include the National Forest / Charnwood Forest Regional Park, River Soar and Grand Union Canal corridor and the Green Wedges which extend from the Leicester urban area. We have therefore developed specific policies for these. However, outside these areas other Green infrastructure and features of the natural environment continue to play an important role.

The policies in the first part of this chapter relate strongly to the countryside. However, green spaces and wildlife habitats are also present in our towns and villages. Similarly, parts of the Borough's built environment and heritage occur in the countryside as well as in our towns and villages. As such, much of this chapter is relevant to all development, regardless of where it is proposed.

## **Countryside and Landscape**

Countryside is defined in Draft Policy LP1. Countryside and the areas within the Limits to Development of settlements make up our landscape. Countryside has an important role in providing the landscape setting to our settlements and understanding our landscape helps us to understand and maintain settlement identity.

In different places the landscape has its own distinctive character that is valued by our communities. Our Landscape Character Assessment identifies 6 character areas within Charnwood:

- Langley Lowlands
- The Soar Valley
- The Wolds
- Wreake Valley
- High Leicestershire; and
- Charnwood Forest.

We want to make sure the landscape as a whole and the characteristics of these character areas continue to be recognised for their distinct quality. Protecting our landscape character and allowing sustainable development that supports our rural areas is a delicate balance. There is a close relationship between protecting our landscape and our support for the rural economy. Our proposed strategy and draft policy support our rural communities' needs for affordable housing, facilities and services.

Within land designated as countryside there are additional designations which have their own purposes in guiding development and delivering sustainable development: Areas of Local Separation and Green Wedges.

### **Areas of Local Separation**

Our towns and villages are concentrated along the river valleys of the Soar and the Wreake and around the edge of the city of Leicester. As these towns and villages have grown the spaces between them have got smaller. Our communities have increasingly become concerned about their identities as separate places.

Areas of Local Separation are a longstanding local plan designation. They are areas of open countryside that separate two neighbouring settlements. Their main purpose is preserving settlement identity, and they are based on landscape character, the visual appearance of the area and maintaining landscape connectivity.

Areas of Local Separation have been used successfully to guide development in areas between our towns and villages. The policy has maintained the character and identity of individual settlements and prevented their coalescence.

We have reviewed the evidence regarding how existing Areas of Local Separation are working and whether there is a need for new ones and the following proposed Areas of Local Separation are identified on the Policies Map:

- Loughborough/Woodthorpe (ALS1)
- Quorn/Mountsorrel (ALS2)
- Mountsorrel/Rothley (ALS 3)
- Sileby/Cossington (ALS4)
- Sileby/Barrow upon Soar (ALS5)
- Thurcaston/ Cropston/The Ridgeway Area of Rothley (ALS6)
- Wanlip/Birstall (ALS7)
- Rearsby/East Goscote (ALS8)
- East Goscote/Queniborough (ALS9)
- Queniborough/Syston (ALS10)
- Syston/Thurmaston (ALS11)
- Syston/Barkby (ALS12)
- Anstey/Newtown Linford (ALS13)
- Quorn/Loughborough (ALS14)
- Birstall/Rothley (ALS15).

## **Green Wedges**

Green Wedges perform a number of important functions, including acting as green lungs for our urban areas, providing areas for recreation and protecting individual identity for some settlements by safeguarding them from merging together. Green Wedges contribute to the setting of our towns, urban areas and surrounding villages and the relationship between them.

We have considered with our partners which of our networks of green spaces perform the functions of Green Wedges and also where new Green Wedges can be provided in association with our new strategic developments. Our strategy proposes the following Green Wedges as part of our Green Infrastructure network:

- Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall /Thurcaston/Cropston/ Anstey/Glenfrith/Groby (GW1)
- Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston (Soar Valley North) (GW2)
- Leicester Hamilton Green Wedge (GW3).

## **Draft Policy LP19: Landscape, Countryside, Green Wedges and Areas of Local Separation**

**We will carefully manage development to protect the countryside's intrinsic character and beauty by:**

- **requiring new development to protect landscape character and to reinforce sense of place and local distinctiveness by taking account of relevant local Landscape Character Assessments;**
- **requiring new development to maintain the separate identities of our towns and villages;**
- **supporting rural economic development or residential development which has a strong relationship with the operational requirements of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and other land based industries;**
- **supporting development for the reuse and adaptation of rural buildings and small scale new built development where there would not be significant adverse environmental effects;**
- **supporting the provision of community services and facilities that meet proven local needs as identified by a Neighbourhood Plan or other community led plan; and**
- **supporting rural communities by allowing new housing development for local needs in accordance with Draft Policy LP5.**

**We will protect the predominantly open and undeveloped character of Areas of Local Separation unless new development clearly maintains the physical separation between the built up areas of these settlements.**

**We will support development in Green Wedges that:**

- **retains the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge;**
- **retains and creates green networks between the countryside and green spaces within the urban areas; and**
- **retains and enhances public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- **Do you have any comments on this draft policy?**
- **If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?**
- **Do you think we have missed something?**

## **Charnwood Forest and National Forest**

Charnwood Forest is an important landscape for the region and is characterised by granite topped hills, wooded valleys, heathlands and grasslands. It is valued for its distinctive landscape, geology, biodiversity and its cultural heritage. Charnwood Forest is England's 'unexpected upland' lying within generally low lying Midlands landscapes. Our vision recognises the importance of the Charnwood Forest and it has shaped our development strategy for homes and jobs, especially around Loughborough and Shepshed.

Two thirds of Charnwood Forest is within Charnwood. The remainder is in neighbouring areas of North West Leicestershire and Hinckley and Bosworth.

Charnwood Forest has been identified as a Regional Park and, together with our partners, we have prepared landscape evidence which defines the boundary of the Park. The partnership has been successful in securing Heritage Lottery funding for a Landscape Partnership Scheme to protect, manage and celebrate the heritage of Charnwood Forest. The delivery of the scheme should run from 2020-2025. We will support the objectives of the scheme through the local plan.

The majority of the Charnwood Forest is within the area designated as the National Forest. We support the National Forest Strategy 2014-2024. The strategy seeks to create a National Forest between the ancient forests of Needwood in Staffordshire and Charnwood in Leicestershire to support rural regeneration and to demonstrate the benefits of a forest close to a large population.

Charnwood Forest is fringed by a number of towns and villages as well as being accessible to residents in the wider sub-region, and experiences significant pressure from visitors. Much of the visitor pressure is focussed on a few honey pot sites including at Bradgate Park, Beacon Hill Country Park and The Outwoods – all of which are in our Borough. We want to support the aims of the National Forest Strategy to create a visitor destination for the National Forest as a whole, whilst recognising the unique character of Charnwood Forest. Similarly we will support the aims of the Landscape Partnership Scheme to provide a high quality experience for visitors where this is through new or improved small-scale tourism facilities.

It is essential that visitor growth is managed in a way that is compatible with the special and unique character of Charnwood Forest.

### **Draft Policy LP20: Charnwood Forest and the National Forest**

**We will work with our partners to define, protect and enhance the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and support the aims of the National Forest Strategy by:**

- **Supporting the woodland economy and rural diversification, including sustainable small scale tourism proposals which protect and enhance the distinctive Charnwood Forest landscape;**
- **Seeking tree planting within the Charnwood Forest Regional Park in accordance with Draft Policy LP23; and**
- **Securing through new developments an improved network of public rights of way between the edge of Leicester and Loughborough and the heart of the Charnwood Forest.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

### **River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor**

The River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor contains significant wildlife habitats. The corridor also has links to the wider River Soar and River Wreake catchments. Many people within our community live close to the corridor and enjoy the opportunities it provides for walking, cycling and other leisure activities. However, there are nearby villages that suffer from a lack of access to green spaces.

We have produced the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy with our partners. The strategy aims to improve and promote a 23-mile-long corridor which runs from Kilby Bridge in Oadby and Wigston to the south, through the city of Leicester and to Loughborough Meadows in the north.

The River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy identifies hubs at Loughborough, Barrow upon Soar and Thurmaston for leisure activities. We support this strategy and can improve access to green space for our communities by encouraging improved links between our villages and the River Soar.

### **Draft Policy LP21: River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor**

**We will support proposals that relate to the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor which:**

- **provide high quality walking and cycling links between the corridor and our towns and villages;**
- **deliver hubs and other high-quality tourism opportunities linked to the River Soar at Loughborough, Barrow upon Soar and Thurmaston;**

- **protect and enhance water bodies and resources; and**
- **actively seek opportunities to enhance the corridor and links to it.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

Our Borough benefits from a rich and varied range of habitats and species which reflect the diverse landscape character we enjoy in comparison to other parts of Leicestershire and the wider East Midlands. Few places are fortunate enough to possess the array of habitats provided by the river valleys of the Soar and Wreake, the uplands of the Charnwood Forest and the more gently undulating Leicestershire Wolds.

The ecological interest provided by our natural environment is highly valued by our community and should be protected for future generations in years to come. The significance of Charnwood's natural environment is recognised by statutory designations including 18 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are identified as being of national importance. Alongside these there are 5 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and 218 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) which have an important ecological value and contribute to our Borough's natural environment.

We also have sites of geological interest in the Borough, some of national significance, recognised through being statutory geological SSSIs, and 4 Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS).

These statutory and local designations are complemented by landscape and habitat features which have not been formally designated. These additional assets also make an important contribution to Charnwood's wider ecological networks and are essential to the continued health of the more valuable sites. For example they create a means for wildlife movement and dispersal through the landscape as well as being habitats with value in their own right, and as such should be protected and enhanced.

Despite these advantages we recognise that there has been a loss of habitats and species in Leicestershire over the past 50 years, reflecting the national picture. We must manage our natural environment to limit damage and habitat fragmentation and give appropriate support to wider duties, such as the Water Framework Directive. It is hoped that enhancing biodiversity will reverse this decline and sustain the benefits from our natural environment which we currently enjoy.

The most threatened priority habitats and species for conservation at a national level are identified through the England Biodiversity List. At a more local level the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan sets out habitats and species of local conservation concern in Charnwood and the rest of Leicestershire and Rutland. For us, Charnwood Forest and the National Forest, along with the floodplain of the River Soar and River Wreake valleys are recognised as having high value for wildlife because of the quality of existing habitats.

Trees can be important individually and within formal groups, copses and woodland. Development should seek to protect and enhance these assets for our community. Ancient woodland, such as The Outwoods, is a particularly important ecological resource and landscape feature. Due to its age such woodland is valuable for biodiversity and once lost such habitat cannot be recreated.

Veteran trees in Charnwood are also important to us as their age, size and condition create biological, cultural and visual interest which cannot easily be replaced. These trees provide ecosystems that support a wide range of other plants and wildlife, many of which require the special environment created by an old tree. The loss of such valuable trees and habitats in Charnwood will be resisted unless there are overriding exceptional circumstances and their loss can be compensated.

We have a statutory duty to improve prospects for biodiversity. Local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks which provide essential supporting habitat to designated sites should also be conserved, restored and enhanced to prevent the decline of our most valuable protected ecological sites. We recognise that this landscape scale approach will become more important as a means of mitigating the impact of climate change on our biodiversity.

We will protect biodiversity in our Borough by seeking to ensure that development proposals avoid any impact on biodiversity. Where impact is unavoidable we will require development to mitigate this by making on-site biodiversity enhancements to ensure measurable net biodiversity gain. We will also seek to utilise the opportunities provided by development to enhance the ecological networks and biodiversity of the Borough.

## Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain means leaving the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand. To achieve net gain, a development must have a higher biodiversity unit score after development than before development.

A suitable metric should be used to allow the assessment of biodiversity impact of a given development, and where appropriate the size of contribution required to offset the ecological impact of that development.

Features provided by development to provide net gain should relate as closely as possible to the impacts that they are proposed to mitigate. Net gains in biodiversity can be provided for all development proposals from a single dwelling to much larger strategic developments through a variety of measures, for example:

- Ensuring open spaces, landscaping and other areas include areas of wildflower meadows, urban woodland, community woodland etc.
- Sustainable drainage systems which benefit wildlife
- Removing barriers to wildlife movement and restoring connections
- Planting suitable trees and shrubs in landscaping
- Other features such as integrated bird and bat boxes which can help to enhance the ecological value of developments and in some cases may be used to provide specific mitigation for protected or notable species and can, where there is a specific requirement for such features, result in biodiversity net gain.

We may consider biodiversity offsetting where it can be evidenced that on-site improvements are not possible, may result in piecemeal mitigation on small sites, or where better opportunities exist to secure net gain elsewhere. In essence this can allow ecological harm caused by development in one location to be compensated by habitat enhancement and creation in another. We will prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document which will provide guidance on our approach to protecting and enhancing our natural environment, biodiversity net gain and offsetting.

### **Draft Policy LP22: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

**We will conserve and enhance our natural environment for its own value and the contribution it makes to our community and economy.**

**We will ensure that biodiversity, ecological networks and geodiversity interests are protected and enhanced. We will do this by supporting development proposals which:**

- **protect and enhance national and local priority habitats and species;**

- protect and enhance the provision of biodiversity networks and wildlife corridors including the River Soar and Wreake corridors and the Charnwood Forest;
- protect features of geodiversity value and enhance their interpretation;
- ensure biodiversity and geodiversity are maintained during construction;
- improve the water quality of any water body as required by the Water Framework Directive; and
- provide a measurable net gain in biodiversity, on-site in the first instance or through biodiversity offsetting where appropriate.

We will only support development proposals which harm internationally, nationally or locally designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites and/or Charnwood's priority habitats and species in exceptional circumstances. It must be demonstrated that:

- there is no alternative site available; and
- there are clear and convincing public benefits of the development that clearly outweigh the nature conservation or scientific interest of the site.

Where this is demonstrated we will require adequate mitigation measures, relocation or as a last resort compensatory measures providing a net gain in biodiversity value above the habitat lost.

We will consider this by requiring development proposals to be accompanied by ecological surveys and an assessment of the impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity where appropriate.

We will also prepare further guidance in our Supplementary Planning Document on Biodiversity Net Gain.

### Consultation Questions

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## Tree Planting

Trees are a valuable part of our environment offering a range of benefits. They provide a habitat for wildlife, enhance our natural landscape, help to reduce flood risk by contributing towards flood control, and offer space for recreation and enjoyment of the natural world. They can also help to lower temperatures, especially in urban areas, and most importantly offset CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In Leicestershire the tree population changed significantly in the late 1970s with more than 200,000 mature trees lost from the landscape to Dutch elm disease. Since then the effects of other disorders, the impacts of residential and commercial development, and changes to farming methods were primarily responsible for a further 52% reduction in individual trees between 1980 and 1998.

More recently there have been some positive developments with the introduction of tree planting initiatives in areas such as the National Forest to create attractive sustainable woodland environments. Our Borough enjoys the benefits of such initiatives as it contains part of the National Forest and the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. To take advantage of this we are proposing to work with our partners to achieve high levels of tree planting across the Borough, not only within the Charnwood Forest, but also in other rural and urban areas. This will enable us to ensure all our communities benefit from tree planting and to enhance our Green Infrastructure and ecological networks. A significant increase in tree planting will help achieve many of our wider corporate objectives and we will set out the full range of our priorities and actions in a Tree Strategy.

We want residential developments to make a significant contribution to tree planting as an integral part of their landscaping schemes. We understand that this may not be appropriate in every case, for example if there are space constraints or where tree planting may impact on important landscapes or habitats. In such instances it may be more appropriate to agree to tree planting elsewhere.

As a priority, we want to make a step change in the numbers of trees planted in Charnwood and would welcome your views on how an effective tree policy to achieve this objective should be set out.

### **Draft Policy LP23: Tree Planting**

**We will seek to protect and enhance our natural environment by increasing the number of trees in Charnwood. We will do this by supporting development proposals which maintain and extend tree cover through:**

- **providing tree planting on-site; and**
- **retaining existing trees where appropriate.**

**Where on-site planting is not possible due to the size of site, its characteristics or the impact upon habitats and biodiversity we will encourage trees to be planted at a suitable location outside the site either directly, or through a commuted sum.**

**Within the area covered by the Charnwood Forest we will support development proposals which follow the latest National Forest planting guidelines.**

**We will encourage Neighbourhood Plans to identify suitable locations for additional tree planting.**

### **Consultation Question**

- How do you think we can best achieve our aspiration of significantly increasing the number of new trees that are planted in the Borough?

## **Heritage**

Alongside the importance of our natural environment to the quality of life, the built environment in Charnwood also contributes greatly to the enjoyment of our surroundings and understanding of our history. The heritage assets and historic environment in our Borough signify Charnwood's long history and are irreplaceable resources which contribute greatly to our well-being and sense of place. We recognise that our historic environment is essential in creating a distinctive, enjoyable and thriving place in which we live and work. It can help economic growth, attracting investment and tourism, and provide a focus for successfully regenerating our Borough.

Our nationally designated heritage assets include nearly 800 Listed Buildings, such as the Grade I listed Prestwold Hall, Ulverscroft Priory Ruins and Triumphal Arch at Garendon Park. There are 21 Scheduled Monuments from the Hill Fort at Beacon Hill to Bradgate House, the home of Lady Jane Grey. We have three Registered Parks and Gardens at Bradgate Park, Garendon Park and Prestwold Hall.

We want to protect the listed buildings in our Borough, and other designated heritage assets, and ensure that the special architectural and historic interest they represent is preserved for future generations and help to reflect Charnwood's unique character.

There are 38 Conservation Areas in the Borough, including most of our traditional village and town centres as well as some Victorian, Edwardian and 1920s residential suburbs.

The Conservation Areas in our Borough acknowledge the important contribution of the historic cores of our towns and villages, along with more recent suburbs, to the high-quality built environment we enjoy. We regularly monitor their character and appearance through Conservation Area Character Appraisals to identify opportunities for improvement and ensure that they continue to be of architectural and historic merit.

We also have more than 200 locally-listed buildings of historic or architectural interest identified for their contribution to our local environment and heritage. A number of our communities have also identified local heritage assets through Neighbourhood Plans and these should also be recognised for the role they play in the local character of an area.

We accept that to fully appreciate our heritage assets it is important we ensure that their setting is respected. This may include a variety of views of the asset and surroundings and we will seek to ensure that they are not compromised.

Archaeological remains also form part of our historic environment providing evidence of earlier human activity in Charnwood which should be protected to help understand our past. Whilst some are recorded through the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) other sites are yet to be discovered but may still be important.

Some of our buildings and structures of historic importance are at risk of falling into disrepair as they are no longer required for their original purposes. Alternative uses can help retain these valued buildings by addressing that risk, but any changes to them must be carefully considered.

Historic England has identified eleven heritage assets at risk in our Borough including The Triumphal Arch and The Temple of Venus at Garendon Park, along with the Park itself; Taylor's Bell Foundry; Ulverscroft Priory ruins; churches at Rothley, South Croxton and Woodhouse; a Roman villa at Barkby Thorpe, and the Shelthorpe Conservation Area.

We have worked with our partners through development of the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension to address the risk to Garendon Park and its assets. The remaining heritage assets at risk in our Borough will be monitored and we will proactively seek opportunities for their restoration and re-use, supporting appropriate development schemes that ensure their repair and maintenance.

We are proposing that our listed buildings and locally listed heritage assets will be safeguarded from inappropriate development whilst the character and appearance of our Conservation Areas will be preserved and enhanced.

Our draft policy states that we will encourage the sympathetic reuse of our historic assets and where we consider the loss of a heritage asset to be clearly justified by the benefits to the public, we will seek to ensure investigation and recording of the asset for our community.

### **Draft Policy LP24: Heritage**

**We will conserve and enhance our heritage assets and the wider historic environment for their own value and the contribution they make to the community, environment and economy. We will do this by:**

- **requiring development proposals to protect and enhance heritage assets, including non-designated heritage assets, and their significance and setting;**
- **supporting developments which incorporate Charnwood's distinctive local building materials and architectural details to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area;**
- **supporting developments which have been informed by our Conservation Area Character Appraisals, Landscape Character Appraisals and Village Design Statements;**
- **supporting the sympathetic reuse of buildings of archaeological or historic importance, which make a positive contribution to the historic environment, and which reinforce local distinctiveness and sense of place; and**
- **encouraging the conservation, protection and enhancement of heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.**

**Where development would lead to substantial harm to or total loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset or its setting, planning permission will not be granted unless:**

- **the nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;**
- **no viable use can be found through marketing that will enable its conservation;**
- **conservation by grant funding or public/charitable ownership is demonstrably not possible; and**
- **the proposed development demonstrates that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.**

**Where the proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset or its setting, this harm will**

be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum public use.

Where there is a clear and convincing justification for the loss or partial loss of a heritage asset we will seek public benefits by requiring developers to investigate and record the features affected and provide publicly accessible interpretation which is appropriate to the scale and level of interest of the heritage asset.

### Consultation Questions

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## Healthy Communities, Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Open spaces are an important resource with multiple benefits for people, but particularly for their health and well-being. In order for people to benefit from our open spaces and the opportunities they provide for sport and recreation we need to make sure that they remain as accessible as possible to our communities. As our population increases the pressure on current provision will mount and we need to ensure that our communities have access to open spaces which meet their needs, as well as having the opportunity to practice sport and recreational activities at good quality, accessible facilities.

We have identified nine types of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities:

- **Parks and gardens** – from major parks to small memorial gardens;
- **Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces** – from woodlands to grasslands;
- **Amenity green space** – often small spaces which improve the local environment;
- **Provision for children and young people** – primarily for play and social interaction;
- **Outdoor and indoor sports facilities** – including playing fields;
- **Allotments, community gardens and urban farms** – for people to grow produce;
- **Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds** – primarily used for burials but can also provide open space benefits;
- **Green corridors** – accessible linear spaces for walking and cycling;

- **Civic spaces** – comprising civic and market squares and village greens.

We have undertaken assessments of our communities' needs for open space, sport and recreation facilities, along with opportunities for new provision. This evidence has been used to inform our standards for provision of open space and facilities from new development.

New development often places greater demand on existing sites and facilities in the locality, and so in cases where provision on site may be inappropriate, we will expect a contribution towards enhancing existing provision and/or the provision of new facilities.

We have used our evidence to develop the following standards of provision and are proposing to apply these to all new residential developments of 10 dwellings or more based on an average of 2.4 persons per dwelling. We will apply the open space provision standards having regard to the type of accommodation proposed.

Table 5: Provision Standards

<b>Open Space Type</b>	<b>Quantity per 1000 population</b>	<b>Accessibility (including maximum distance to open space)</b>
Parks and gardens	1.4ha per 1000 people	1200m in the Towns and Service Centres
Amenity Green Space		400m for either Amenity Green Space or Parks and Gardens in the Towns, Service Centres and Other Settlements
Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	2.0ha per 1000 people	800m
Children's Play and provision for young people	0.25 ha per 1000 people of designated equipped playing space including teenage provision	400m for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)  1000m for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)  1000m for teenage facilities  There should be a full network of NEAPs, LEAPs and teenage facilities in the Towns and Service Centres

		There should be a full network of LEAPs in the Other Settlements and Small Villages and Hamlets where the population is greater than 200 people and there is an identified local need.
Allotments	0.33ha per 1000 people	1000m
Outdoor Sports Facilities	To be calculated using the Sport England Pitch New Demand Calculator and local priorities.	10 minute drive time for formal provision, recognising that for some sports i.e. hockey and athletics the drive time will be greater.  20 minute drive time for Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP).  10 minute walk (800m) to informal outdoor sports provision i.e. grassed kick about areas.
Indoor Sports Facilities	To be calculated using the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator and local priorities.	No standard set
Green Corridors	No standard set	No standard set
Civic Spaces	No standard set	No standard set
Cemeteries, closed churchyards and other burial sites	No standard set	No standard set

Sources: Charnwood Borough Council Open Spaces Assessment 2017, Indoor Built Sports Facility Strategy, 2018, Playing Pitch Strategy, 2018, and Open Spaces Strategy, 2019

We are proposing that the above standards will be applied having regard to the size and the circumstances of the proposal. Table 6 below gives an indication of the types of open space that will be expected for different sizes of residential proposals.

Table 6: Indicative Types of Open Space and Recreational Provision for Development Scale

10–99 residential units (24 to 238 persons)	Typically this might include on-site provision of amenity green space plus natural and semi-natural green space (as part of public open space) and off-site contributions towards parks and gardens, sports facilities, provision for children and young people, canopy cover and allotments.
100-249 residential units (240 to 598 persons)	Typically this might include on-site provision of amenity green space, natural and semi-natural green space, provision for young people and/or children’s play and off site contributions towards parks and gardens, sports facilities, canopy cover and allotments.
250+ units (600 persons +)	Provision for all types of open space, sport and recreation provision in accordance with our standards and with a presumption for on-site provision in accordance with our policy.

Development proposals which affect playing pitches will require strong justification because of their health and recreational value and we will always ensure that the views of Sport England are fully considered. We will also consult Natural England where development proposals may affect protected sites, species and landscapes.

To ensure that the needs of our community are met our proposed approach is to secure the provision of open space, sport and recreation by planning condition or a Section 106 agreement in accordance with the following draft policy.

**Draft Policy LP25: Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation**

**We will seek to protect and enhance our open spaces, sports and recreation facilities to support the health, well-being and cohesion of our communities.**

**We will require residential developments of 10 dwellings or more to:**

- **provide on-site open space, sport and recreation facilities in accordance with our published standards, having regard to the quantity, accessibility and quality of existing provision; and/or**
- **contribute towards off-site provision where on-site provision is not possible or desirable.**

**We will require new open space, sport and recreation facilities to contribute towards healthier and more active lifestyles by:**

- i) **being accessible, functional, and of high quality design, visible and safe, and including facilities for a range of ages;**

- ii) enabling links to be created with surrounding recreational networks and facilities (including public rights of way);
- iii) providing appropriate landscaping and a landscape scheme; and
- iv) specifying the responsibilities for management and maintenance prior to commencement of development and, if the site is to be transferred to the Borough Council or its nominee, agreeing a maintenance payment.

**We will safeguard our open space, sport and recreation provision identified on the Policies Map, or any future provision made as part of new development, from loss unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that:**

- the proposed development is ancillary to the existing recreational use of the site;
- the provision is surplus to requirements as evidenced by an assessment of need; or
- alternative provision of an equivalent or greater standard will be provided in an accessible location nearby.

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

In addition, are there any other green spaces, not identified on the Policies Map, that you consider have a special importance for your local community? If so, please provide a description of its location and its significance, eg beauty, historical significance, recreational value, tranquillity or importance for wildlife. There is no need to mention sites that have already been allocated as Local Green Spaces in made Neighbourhood Plans.

a high quality service that is sustainable and accessible. We have provided detailed guidance on the maintenance arrangements we would expect for open spaces, sports and recreation facilities in our Open Spaces Strategy.

Open space sites can be transferred to the ownership of the Borough Council, Parish Council or through other arrangements such as a management company. Where land is transferred to the ownership of the Borough Council or Parish Council the payment of a commuted sum to ensure ongoing maintenance would be required. In those cases where on site provision is retained and maintained under a management company we

would expect the site to be managed to a high standard and be open to our whole community and not restricted to occupiers of that specific development.

## **Indoor Sports Facilities**

We enjoy a good range of existing sport and leisure facilities in Charnwood; however, some existing facilities are now ageing, are of a poorer quality than others, or require long term replacement and refurbishment. We have set out our priorities for new or enhanced provision of these facilities through the Action Plan in our Indoor Built Sports Facility Strategy and these include:

- retaining existing levels of community accessible sports halls and fitness provision in the Borough as a minimum, but recognising that these need not necessarily be the same facilities as at present;
- promoting investment into additional swimming pool provision in accordance with the evidence of need;
- encouraging investment in ageing facilities which need to be replaced or refurbished in accordance with Sport England and national governing body standards; and
- supporting opportunities for participation to be provided in a wider range of places and spaces particularly at a local level.

To support these objectives, we will seek contributions from new developments towards new or enhanced provision either on or off site. We will calculate the contributions required from new developments using Sport England's Facility Calculator.

### **Draft Policy LP26: Indoor Sports Facilities**

**We will encourage the development of healthier lifestyles across our communities and maintain and grow the amount of regular physical activity undertaken through the provision of accessible indoor sports facilities. We will do this by:**

- **requiring financial contributions from new developments calculated using Sport England's Facility Calculator, having regard to viability;**
- **seeking to ensure that any new sports facilities on education sites provide a balance of opportunities and enhanced access through a community use agreement; and**
- **promoting flexibility in design of new future facility provision to respond to changing participation trends and opportunities.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Protection of Community Facilities**

Community facilities are essential to ensure and maintain a high quality of life for those people who visit, live and work in Charnwood. We will support and where possible, enhance, viable and necessary community facilities which play an important role in social interaction and community cohesion.

### **Draft Policy LP27: Protection of Community Facilities**

**Development resulting in the loss of an existing community facility will only be permitted where:**

- **adequate alternative provision exists or will be provided in an equally accessible or more accessible location within 800 metres walking distance; or**
- **all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the facility but it has been demonstrated that it would not be economically viable, feasible or practicable to retain the building or site for its existing use; and**
- **evidence is provided to confirm that the property or site has been marketed for a meaningful period and that there is no realistic interest in its retention for the current use or for an alternative community use.**

**The involvement of the local community will be sought in identifying the importance of local facilities, including them (where appropriate) on the statutory list of assets of community value, and developing appropriate solutions for their retention and enhancement.**

## **Burial Space**

As our population grows we will also need to ensure that sufficient space is available for burials in the future. The Borough Council has assessed how best to meet its long term need for burial space and has identified a new 9.1ha site at Nanpantan which will help us to provide for the needs of the Loughborough area. Elsewhere in the Borough our evidence shows that burial provision is likely to be sufficient to deal with the likely demand for burials well into the future.

### **Draft Policy LP28: Burial Space**

**9.1ha of land at Nanpantan as defined on the Policies Map will be allocated for burial space.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## Chapter 8: Climate Change

Climate change is the large-scale, long-term shift in the Earth's weather patterns or average temperatures, largely as a result of increased greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels. We recognise it as one of the key challenges facing Charnwood today with climate change predictions for the East Midlands indicating that we can expect hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters as well as an increase in incidents of severe weather such as storms and flooding.

We know that we need to take immediate action to protect the environment for future generations and this is a priority in our Corporate Plan, reflected through our Climate Change Strategy. We have already reduced the carbon footprint of our organisation by 32% since 2012 and we are committed to making our operations carbon neutral by 2030 through using less energy, producing more power from renewable energy sources and reducing waste.

Carbon emissions from activities in the Borough of Charnwood as a whole have also fallen over recent years; however, we want to see further reductions and there is a role for us all to play in achieving this.

Ensuring that our Borough fully contributes to reducing the impacts of climate change is a priority and we can all make changes to our lifestyles to reduce our impact on the environment. We will help make these changes by raising awareness of climate change issues with our local communities, partners and stakeholders; introducing mitigation measures which reduce our impact on climate change, and by ensuring our built and natural environments are resilient and can adapt to climate change over the short and longer term.

We are aware that there are parts of the Borough where air quality is an issue. Our proposed policies on Sustainable Construction and Sustainable Transport also seek to address activities that can detrimentally affect air quality.

The proposed policies in our draft local plan will play a significant role in helping to shape a sustainable pattern of development which supports our climate change ambitions. Our proposed approach also provides a positive planning framework which addresses issues such as renewable and low carbon energy, sustainable construction, minimising flood risk, encouraging the application of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and promoting sustainable transport. We will work with our partners, stakeholders and local communities to protect and enhance our local environment.

We also recognise that trees play an essential role in helping to tackle climate change by offsetting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and reducing the heat island effect. We want to increase

the number of trees being planted in Charnwood to significantly increase the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> being captured as set out in more detail in Chapter 7 on the Environment.

## Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Carbon emissions in Charnwood fell 26% between 2005 and 2015 to 894 ktCO<sub>2</sub> due to a reduction in local energy consumption and the use of cleaner energy sources. However, there is still an over reliance on the use of fossil fuels in the UK and much of the fuel used in the nation's power stations is imported from overseas.

Whilst we have seen a reduction in energy consumption and emissions patterns in our Borough, we still need to do more to reinforce our efforts in reducing carbon emissions. One way we can achieve this is to significantly increase the proportion of renewable and low carbon energy generated within our Borough.

Renewable energy technologies produce energy from natural resources that will not run out. The most common technologies are energy from wind (wind turbines), energy from the sun (solar panels) and energy from water (hydro-electricity). The existing renewable and low carbon installations in Charnwood are shown in the table below which also includes less common technologies. We are proposing to support the delivery of our Climate Change Strategy by encouraging further renewable sources of energy supply in the Borough. Whilst we have the most technical potential for wind and solar energy; other renewable energy technologies, such as district heating, will also be considered positively.

Table 7: Renewable and Low Carbon Installations in Charnwood

<b>Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technologies</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Location</b>
Solar	64.8 megawatts	Five solar farms at Wymeswold, Six Hills and Barrow upon Soar, with the largest solar farm at Wymeswold Airfield.
Wind	2.57 megawatts	Two wind power installations, one at West Beacon Farm and the larger one at the Severn Trent Sewage Treatment Works, Wanlip.
Anaerobic Digestion	5 megawatts	Three anaerobic digestion plants at Wanlip and Loughborough.
Landfill Gas	1.6 megawatts	One landfill gas facility at Mountsorrel Landfill Site.

Energy Recovery	-	Newhurst Quarry near Shepshed has planning permission and could process 350,000 tonnes of waste per year.
-----------------	---	---

Increasing the amount of energy we produce from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to secure energy supply whilst also helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, slowing climate change and stimulating investment in new jobs and businesses.

We recognise that renewable energy installations are generally large in scale and can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of parts of our Borough, potentially impacting on our landscape, biodiversity, heritage assets and the amenity of local residents. Our preferred approach is to ensure that we provide a positive strategy for renewable energy and low carbon technologies which maximises the potential for suitable development whilst ensuring that any adverse impacts are satisfactorily addressed, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts.

We have identified suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources on our Policies Map. We know that the main technical potential is for wind and solar energy and that identifying opportunity areas, based on low to moderate landscape sensitivity, offers a reasonable balance between landscape harm and increasing renewable energy capacity in our Borough. These proposed opportunity areas reflect a combined understanding of the sensitivity of each landscape character area and the likely impacts of different sizes of renewable energy installations, and are set out in the tables below:

Table 8: Opportunity Areas for Wind Turbines

<b>Wind Turbines</b>	
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<b>Scale of wind turbine that could be accommodated within each Landscape Character Area</b>
Low Moderate	<p><b>Langley Lowlands</b> Small-scale turbines (&lt;40 metres)</p> <p><b>Soar Valley</b> Small scale and medium scale wind turbines (up to 80m)</p>
Moderate	<p><b>High Leicestershire, Langley Lowlands, Wolds, and Wreake Valley</b> Small scale and medium scale wind turbines (up to 80m)</p>

Table 9: Opportunity Areas for Solar Energy Installations

<b>Soar Energy Installations</b>	
<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<b>Scale of solar energy installation that could be accommodated within each Landscape Character Area</b>
Low	<b>Soar Valley</b> (very small less than 1ha)
Low Moderate	<b>Soar Valley</b> Small (1- 5ha) <b>High Leicestershire, Langley Lowlands, The Wolds, Wreake Valley</b> (very small less than 1ha)
Moderate	<b>Charnwood Forest</b> (very small less than 1ha) <b>Wolds</b> (small 1 -5ha) <b>High Leicestershire, Langley Lowlands, Wreake Valley</b> (medium up to 10ha) <b>Soar Valley</b> (large 10 -15ha)

Our draft policy sets out that proposals for renewable energy installations will be expected to have regard to our landscape sensitivity evidence and this will inform the scale of installation that will be appropriate in each landscape character area.

Whilst our evidence tells us these areas have the most potential, any individual proposals for energy installations would need to be supported by robust evidence and detailed site-based assessment and, in some cases, an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Our local communities also have the opportunity to identify suitable locations for, and state the range of, renewable and low carbon technologies that could be accommodated in their area through Neighbourhood Plans.

We are proposing that we will support proposals for wind energy installations where they are located within the area identified on the Policies Map or in a Neighbourhood Plan as suitable for renewable energy installations and where consultation has been undertaken and it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and, therefore, the proposal has their backing.

#### **Draft Policy LP29: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Installations**

**Proposals for wind and solar energy installations will be supported where any adverse impacts on the environment including local amenity, the historic environment and the setting of heritage assets, noise and odour, the wider landscape, biodiversity and public safety have been fully addressed.**

**Where any localised adverse environmental effects remain, proposals will be supported where these adverse effects are outweighed by the wider environmental, economic or social benefits of the scheme.**

**We will require wind energy development involving one or more wind turbine to:**

- **be located in an area identified as suitable for wind energy on the Policies Map or in a Neighbourhood Plan;**
- **be of an appropriate scale in that area, taking account of the evidence on landscape sensitivity; and**
- **demonstrate that, following consultation, the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.**

**Other renewable energy technologies in suitable locations will also be considered positively in line with the policy outlined above.**

**We will support Neighbourhood Plans to consider identifying specific locations and the range of renewable and low carbon technologies that could be accommodated.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Sustainable Construction**

We recognise that the construction process for new developments in our Borough uses a significant amount of resources and generates a large amount of waste. To reduce this impact on our environment during the construction phase, developments should take account of the principles of sustainable development by carefully managing the production, use and disposal of materials and sourcing materials with minimum environmental impact, such as those that are from local sources, recycled or reused.

Our preferred approach is to expect all new developments to be designed to exceed national sustainable building standards to maximise the use of energy efficiency and

energy conservation in their design, layout and orientation. All major development proposals should be accompanied by an assessment, in their Design and Access Statement, proportionate to their scale, of their sustainability, setting out the actions that have been taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, having regard to:

1. **Reducing** the need for energy, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and reducing the heat island effect through design features that provide natural heating, cooling and lighting, using landform, building layout orientation, massing and landscaping;
2. **Generating** the residual energy required through the use of low or zero carbon energy technologies; and
3. **Adapting** to the effects of climate change whilst contributing to health and well-being.

We will expect that proposals for 9 dwellings or less and all non-residential developments less than 1,000 square metres gross internal floorspace will be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement setting out how the proposal intends to reduce the energy, water and materials used in the construction and operation of the new buildings. The Sustainability Statement should be brief and to the point and demonstrate the environmental benefits and impacts of any proposal.

It will be important that the design and layout of new buildings does not preclude the later installation of renewable or low carbon technologies. For example, spacing, orientation and roof space will be important in the installation of solar energy technologies. Ensuring good energy efficiency in the fabric of buildings will make the later installation of heat pumps more viable. Larger schemes also offer the opportunity to explore the future potential for district heating.

Our sustainable urban extensions provide the opportunity to maximise the potential for a reduction in carbon emissions through their design and layout. We will encourage these schemes to provide a 10% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions when compared to the Building Regulations at the time the detailed scheme is proposed. We recognise the impact which such an ambitious package could have on viability; however, some of the best ways to improve environmental performance are through simple decisions on the layout and orientation of buildings and spaces. We will offer the flexibility for the scheme to be designed to achieve the best range of these measures. We will support schemes that compensate for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions where reductions are not possible through the design and construction of a development.

We will support energy efficient buildings and work with our partners to secure funding and deliver projects that support a low-carbon economy across Charnwood. We will encourage on-site, near-site and off-site compensatory measures for development, taking into account their location and opportunities available.

## **Draft Policy LP30: Sustainable Construction**

**We will adapt to and mitigate against the effects of climate change by expecting all new developments and refurbishments to take account of sustainable development principles.**

**We will do this by:**

- encouraging sustainable construction processes including the use of materials with low embodied carbon and passive cooling and heating and locally sourced and recycled materials;**
- minimising construction waste, including designing out waste during the design stage, selecting sustainable and efficient building materials and reusing materials where possible;**
- supporting developments that reduce waste, provide for accessible and unobtrusive sustainable waste management facilities such as refuse/ recycling/ composting bin storage and allow convenient waste collections;**
- requiring that sustainable water management measures such as sustainable drainage systems, green roofs and/or rainwater harvesting systems are incorporated into proposals where viable;**
- encouraging residential development to meet the Building Regulations optional water efficiency requirement of 110 litres/per person per day;**
- encouraging non-residential development in excess of 1,000 sqm gross floorspace to achieve the equivalent of BREEAM 3 credits for water consumption as a minimum;**
- combating the heat island effect by encouraging green roofs, green walls, increased tree cover, waterways and the suitable layout of external spaces;**
- encouraging the layout, orientation and design of buildings to improve efficiency of heating, cooling and lighting and to maximise the potential for daylight and passive solar gain;**
- encouraging the design and layout of new buildings which enable low carbon energy generation to be installed at a later stage, including district heating;**
- encouraging the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value; and**
- supporting new development that protects environmental resources including local air quality and our most versatile agricultural land.**

**We will require the Design and Access Statements for major developments to demonstrate how the need to reduce emissions has influenced the design, layout and energy source used.**

**For developments of 9 dwellings or less (including apartments) and all non-residential developments less than 1,000 square metres gross internal floor space, we will require a Sustainability Statement to be submitted alongside a planning application setting out how the development proposes to reduce the energy, water and materials used in design and construction.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Managing Flood Risk**

The Rivers Soar and Wreake flow through Charnwood and together with the Grand Union Canal and a number of other watercourses mean that approximately 12% of our Borough lies in Flood Zone 3 (highest risk of flooding). Charnwood's rivers, reservoirs, canal and brooks are a valuable asset but they require careful management to preserve their quality and value, and to manage flood risk.

Significant fluvial flooding incidents occurred in April 1998 and January 1999 along the Rivers Soar and Wreake, and surface water flooding occurred during the summer of 2007 in the settlements around Charnwood Forest in the west of the Borough. More recently fluvial flooding occurred in June and November 2012 in Loughborough and across the wider Borough.

The main flood risk from rivers (fluvial flood risk) is along the River Soar, the River Wreake and their tributaries. These present flood risk to rural communities as well as to the main urban areas including Loughborough, Syston, Thurmaston and Quorn. The risk of flooding from surface water (pluvial flood risk) is usually caused by intense rainfall that may only last a few hours and usually occurs in lower lying areas, often where the natural or artificial drainage system is unable to cope with the volume of water. Our evidence also tells us that surface water predominantly follows topographical flow paths of existing watercourses.

Groundwater susceptibility mapping of the Borough has shown that the lower permeability of bedrock in Charnwood means that the majority of the Borough is at a lower probability of groundwater flooding (less than 25%). Areas with higher susceptibilities and more likely to flood from groundwater are found along the river Soar and River Wreake. The Grand Union Canal is the only canal in Charnwood. There have been only two incidents of a breach of the canal which occurred at Wanlip Weir in 1962 and Barrow Weir in 1971.

Our evidence provides us with an appraisal of all potential sources of flooding and makes an assessment of the potential increase in risk due to climate change. We propose to adopt a risk-based, sequential approach to the location of development, avoiding high risk areas and steering development to areas at lower risk. This will be done by applying the Sequential Test meaning that sites at risk of flooding can only be allocated for development if there is no other land available in areas with little or no flood risk.

If it is not possible for development to be located in areas with a lower risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1), the Exception Test will need to be applied (this is for development in Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b). Where no suitable sites on land with the lowest risk of flooding are available, we will need to ensure that developments are appropriately flood resilient and resistant, safe for its users for the development's lifetime and that there will be no increase to overall flood risk. Our evidence provides a framework for the application of the Sequential Test of sites and, where necessary, the Exception Test.

The draft policy will require all applications for major developments in Flood Zone 1 or any development in Flood Zones 2 or 3 to be accompanied by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment. This should identify the main flood risks to the site, including whether a development will increase flood risk downstream, and recommendations for mitigating measures such as sustainable drainage systems, site layout and design or modifying ground levels.

The draft policy will also require developments to take account of the cumulative impact of flooding at the design and planning application stage and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are installed so flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

We recognise that measures to manage the biodiversity and landscape of major watercourses such as the River Soar and River Wreake corridors and the Grand Union Canal will be extremely important in helping to reduce flood risk. The creation of new habitats, including woodlands, planting of trees and reconnecting rivers to natural flood plains can all be used to reduce flood risk naturally and provide ecological benefits.

We will work with our partners including the Environment Agency, Leicestershire County Council, in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority, and Seven Trent to manage flood risk across the Borough.

### **Draft Policy LP31: Flood Risk Management**

**We will ensure that development is directed to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, in the Borough (Flood Zone 1), applying the Sequential Test and Exception Tests where necessary. We will do this by:**

- **ensuring that major developments in Flood Zone 1 and any developments in Flood Zones 2 and 3 are accompanied by a flood risk assessment;**
- **requiring developments to consider the cumulative impact of proposals within, or which affect, local areas susceptible to flooding, and ensuring appropriate mitigation measures are in place to minimise any effects of flooding;**
- **requiring developments to manage surface water run off with no net increase in the rate of surface water run off for greenfield sites;**
- **requiring development of brownfield sites to secure a decrease in surface water run-off;**
- **ensuring that the design of flood risk mitigation measures is appropriate and in keeping with the environment in which they will be implemented;**
- **ensuring that all major developments incorporate sustainable drainage systems, where appropriate, in accordance with Draft Policy LP32; and**
- **ensuring that the natural environment and major watercourses are suitably managed to help reduce flood risk.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

### **Sustainable Drainage Systems**

We want to manage flood risk in our Borough and one way we can do this is by incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into new developments. SuDS mimic natural drainage processes to reduce the effect of surface water run-off from a development. They are important as they help to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; remove pollutants from urban run-off at source and provide benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife.

We recognise that the use of SuDS may not be appropriate in all circumstances and will depend on the nature of the proposed development and its location; however, our preferred approach is that all major development proposals should ensure that SuDS are put in place unless clear evidence is provided that they would be inappropriate.

It is important that SuDS are considered at an early stage of the development process to ensure the delivery of well designed, appropriate and effective schemes whilst also providing multifunctional benefits. We will also seek advice from Leicestershire County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, to ensure that the development's proposed minimum standards of operation are appropriate and that there are clear arrangements for on-going maintenance over the lifetime of the development.

### **Draft Policy LP32: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

**We will require SuDS to be included as an integral part of all new major development proposals, where appropriate. We will do this by:**

- **ensuring that new development will only be considered in areas at risk of flooding if priority has been given to the use of SuDS and in accordance with the criteria set out in Draft Policy LP31;**
- **requiring SuDS to be considered at the masterplanning stage of the development process;**
- **ensuring that the design, construction and ongoing maintenance of SuDS is carefully and clearly defined;**
- **seeking advice from Leicestershire County Council on SuDS schemes and ensuring that minimum standards in both national and local SuDS guidance have been met; and**
- **requiring SuDS to provide multifunctional benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife, that utilise natural features where possible.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Sustainable Travel**

Transport plays an important role in allowing our local communities to access jobs and services and should be considered in the earliest stages of development proposals. Our vision is that our communities will have better access to jobs and services, with a choice to walk or cycle and that for longer journeys people will be able to take advantage of the excellent connections by bus or rail in Charnwood. This vision is a fundamental part of our preferred development strategy, which seeks to direct development to those locations where it can benefit both our communities and the local economy, and most effectively protect and enhance our environment.

Our walking and cycle networks have seen significant investment in recent years, including the Loughborough Town Centre Transport Scheme, which has helped to secure an increase in the number of journeys made by foot and bicycle. Making areas, such as Loughborough town centre, more accessible by foot and bicycle will also help revitalise and further improve our local economy.

Part of National Cycle Route 6 connects Birstall in the south of the Borough to Loughborough and Shepshed in the north, via the Soar Valley villages. This is part of our network of safe cycle routes which includes the Connect 2 Project in the Watermead area. There are also plans for a new bridge at Watermead Country Park which will span the River Soar improving cycling and footpath access along the river and canal corridor between Leicester city centre and Birstall, Thurmaston and Syston. We will continue to work with our partners, including Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Sustrans to deliver walking and cycling links across the Borough.

We will expect major developments in the Borough to make provision for improving and extending our walking and cycle networks and ensuring priority is given first to pedestrians and cycle movements. We will also explore opportunities for improved signage, safe well-lit routes and increased connectivity between urban and rural areas.

Travel by bus and train is essential for longer journeys which cannot be made on foot or by bicycle. We benefit from a well-connected bus network in Charnwood which offers commuters reliable and direct routes between Loughborough, Shepshed and our smaller settlements and further afield to Leicester, Derby and Nottingham. However, less than half of our community uses a local bus service once a month because of the congestion on services at peak periods and poor interchanges.

We recognise that people are more likely to use buses for their journeys where there is easy access to half hourly or more frequent services within less than a 400m walk. People are also more likely to use the bus rather than their car if there are good quality passenger facilities and the bus has priority over the car on congested routes.

The Ivanhoe Railway Line provides local passenger rail services which serve some of the Borough's Service Centres. There is a Midland Mainline railway station located in Loughborough which has been improved as part of the Loughborough Eastern Gateway scheme. It is the busiest station in Leicestershire outside the city and provides excellent local and national rail connections to the north, Leicester and London. There is ample parking at the train station and it is also served by local bus services with good access for walking and cycling.

The Great Central Railway is a heritage railway and important regional tourist attraction. There may be potential in the future for the Great Central Railway to support the area's quarrying industry once the line is fully reconnected at Loughborough.

We will work with our partners, developers and service providers including bus operators, Leicestershire County Council and Network Rail to ensure routes are economically viable and that operators are able to make improvements to existing services and provide new services where these are required.

Our draft policy expects that new developments will be comprehensive and well-designed, and located adjacent to existing transport networks. Improving connectivity and integration between sustainable transport modes and existing transport networks will ensure that travelling sustainably is an easier option for our community by being fast, efficient and value for money. We will also help to reduce the need to travel by ensuring that the right mix of uses in new developments is a priority.

Sense of place is important to our residents and the good design of sustainable transport infrastructure can have a positive influence on this. Our draft policy will ensure that this infrastructure, including bus stops, cycle parking infrastructure, signage, lighting and charging points for electric vehicles, is well designed and contributes to making places that are safe, secure and attractive.

Working with our local partners, we will ensure that sustainable transport strategies are aligned and investment is targeted to the places where it is needed most in our Borough. We will also work with our local partners to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which takes advantage of walking and cycling opportunities in Charnwood.

We will promote the health benefits of walking and cycling for healthier lifestyles and improved well-being. More people walking and cycling will also mean less congestion and emissions on our roads, improving air quality for our local communities.

We recognise that travel by car will remain the only available or preferred option for some journeys and people. The impact of those journeys on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions can be reduced if they are made in low emission vehicles. The Government's Road to Zero Strategy has confirmed its ambition for at least half of new cars to be ultra-low emission by 2030. It is forecast that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from road transport in the UK will increase by 5% over the plan period; therefore, we need to be proactive about making a positive contribution to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. We will work with our partners to deliver an integrated network of affordable electric vehicle charging points in locations which are safe, accessible and convenient throughout Charnwood.

We are proposing to require new developments to make provision for electric vehicle charging points to encourage our residents to switch to low carbon vehicles. We will also work with infrastructure providers to trial new technologies such as street lamppost charging points and rapid charging hubs.

### **Draft Policy LP33: Sustainable Transport**

**We will improve the sustainable transport offer in our Borough. We will do this by:**

- **requiring new major developments to provide walking, cycling and public transport access to key facilities and services;**
- **requiring new developments to provide well-lit, safe and attractive walking and cycle routes;**
- **securing new and enhanced bus services serving major developments to ensure the new development is no more than 400 metres walk from a bus stop;**
- **ensuring that sustainable transport infrastructure is well designed and contributes towards making high quality places;**
- **requiring new residential dwellings with a dedicated car parking space (excluding apartments and residential care homes with communal parking areas) to include an appropriate means to recharge electric vehicles; and**
- **requiring non-residential developments that have at least 100 car parking spaces, to make provision for at least 20 electric charging points.**

**We will require all major developments to have robust transport assessments and travel plans and to consider sustainable travel options at the outset and form an integral part of the development.**

**We will work with our partners to:**

- **secure funding for and delivery of sustainable transport improvements;**
- **prepare a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan; and**
- **deliver infrastructure for electric vehicles and ensure charging points are provided at appropriate locations.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

# Chapter 9: Infrastructure and Delivery

## Road Transport

We will coordinate and plan the delivery of infrastructure by working in partnership with providers and delivery agencies to assess requirements and ensure that all development proposals are supported by appropriate infrastructure provided in a timely manner with on-site and off-site mitigation measures. The Local Plan provides the opportunity to plan for infrastructure in an integrated manner and to ensure that individual sites can be linked together through a strategic approach to infrastructure provision.

We interpret the definition of infrastructure in a broad manner to include all of the services and facilities that are necessary for economic and social activity, including roads, schools, health facilities, waste management facilities, electricity, gas, water and telecommunications.

Transport plays an important role in allowing our local communities to access jobs and services and should be considered in the earliest stages of development proposals. Transport is important to supporting growth, but we need to manage growth in a way which secures improvements but does not compromise the efficiency and effectiveness of our existing transport network.

Over the plan period the number of journeys being made is likely to increase so we need to ensure that our transport network is able to cope. The starting point for this will be to improve the sustainable transport offer in our Borough by encouraging more journeys to be made by sustainable transport modes.

Our evidence tells us that nearly 64% of people who live in Charnwood make their journey to work by private cars. Our priority is to improve the sustainable transport offer in our Borough; however we know that our local communities will still need to make some journeys by car.

The proximity to the M1 motorway and the A46 enhances the Borough's accessibility to the strategic highway network. In addition the A6 runs through the centre of the Borough providing access to destinations north and south. These key routes benefit the local economy; however congestion along these roads impacts on business efficiency and reduces the attractiveness of the Borough for inward investment.

The Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire identifies the importance of key transport corridors, particularly the A46 Corridor which is also identified as a strategic priority by Midlands Connect, the transport arm of the Midlands Engine, a

coalition of Councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Universities and businesses working across the Midlands. Works to improve the A46 will improve business growth and competitiveness, widening access to jobs, and facilitating housing development. Aligning growth and transport infrastructure will be an important strategic priority and the Borough Council is supporting a partnership agreement to ensure a coordinated approach.

We would expect the growth delivered by our strategy to manage the impact of traffic in order to avoid further congestion, increased emissions and poorer accessibility. Development should not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or residual cumulative impacts which would be severe. We will work with key stakeholders including Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and Highways England to maximise the delivery of transport infrastructure.

### **Draft Policy LP34: Local and Strategic Road Network**

**We will reduce congestion and improve the efficiency of our local and strategic road network by:**

- **requiring that sustainable transport proposals are considered first before any improvements to the local and strategic road network;**
- **ensuring that all developments mitigate the impact of their proposals on the road network including any residual cumulative impact;**
- **ensuring that any road improvements are supported by a robust transport assessment; and**
- **requiring other network improvements as identified by appropriate transport assessments.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Car Parking**

The availability of residential and non-residential parking is important in our Borough as it can have a major influence on the way in which people travel and on the accessibility of services and facilities.

Our evidence tells us that demand for car parking will increase and in some areas demand will exceed supply. We will seek to ensure that car parking is sufficient to meet demand particularly where a lack of supply may be detrimental to the vitality and viability of our towns and villages, but we need to ensure that parking standards strike a balance between providing sufficient parking for local communities and businesses whilst encouraging sustainable modes of transport and good design.

Leicestershire County Council, as the local Highway Authority, has prepared a Leicestershire Highway Design Guide which provides advice on highway design, including parking standards. It makes recommendations on the levels of car, cycle, motorcycle, electric car charging and disabled parking that should be provided. This document is the starting point for detailed discussions and agreement on development proposals and any new development will have to have regard to the guidance and advice set out in the document. All new proposals will be expected to be supported by robust evidence that justifies the need for the specified amount of parking.

### **Draft Policy LP35: Car Parking Standards**

**We will ensure that all new developments which generate a demand for car parking make provision appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. Proposals for the provision of residential and non-residential parking should:**

- **reflect the guidance set out in the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide unless it is supported by robust evidence that illustrates that the development would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety, parking in neighbouring areas and local amenity;**
- **ensure that new parking infrastructure is well designed and in suitable, sustainable locations; and**
- **be in accordance with wider transport objectives to promote sustainable transport modes through Travel Plans and the encouragement of active places.**

### **Consultation Questions**

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Education and Health**

Development proposals in our plan will need to be accompanied by adequate provision of schools and health centres, either through making use of existing facilities where there is sufficient capacity, expanding existing facilities where there is scope to do so, or alternatively providing new facilities.

Leicestershire County Council has a duty to secure a sufficient number of school places under the Education Act 2006 and we will work with the County Council, landowners and developers to identify appropriate solutions, in particular identifying sites for new schools in our plan.

Where a single housing development, or a group of housing developments within the same geographical area, require a new school or schools to be provided, then developers will be expected to provide land and pay for construction costs or make direct provision in accordance with the County Council's requirements.

Most people register with a General Practitioner Practice close to their home and new housing growth will place increased demands on this local provision. We will work with Clinical Commissioning Groups and Primary Care Networks to identify where capacity constraints will be greatest and how these can be provided for.

## **Delivery and Viability**

We will prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to inform our plan and to demonstrate to funding bodies and investors that the local authority has a clear understanding of the area's infrastructure needs through to 2036. This will consider the infrastructure requirements of new development including education, health and utilities. It will provide an assessment of the funding required to achieve the aspirations for the Borough and will also support the Council's use of Section 106 agreements to secure their implementation.

We will take all reasonable steps to mitigate the impact of development through planning obligations secured by legal agreements prepared under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 278 of the Highways Act 1990 and, should the Council decide to introduce it, the Community Infrastructure Levy.

In assessing the infrastructure requirements associated with new development we will ensure that Section 106 agreements conform to the legal tests which are set in Regulations 122 and 123 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 as amended which state that a developer contribution should be:

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- b) directly related to the development; and
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

## **Viability**

Development viability is a critical issue given the importance of meeting the need for housing, including affordable housing, and sustainable development. The plan's policy requirements will therefore be subject to an assessment of viability that takes into account all relevant policies, and local and national standards, including the cost implications of Section 106 contributions. The assessment will be used to ensure that our policies are realistic, and that the total cumulative cost of all relevant policies will not undermine the deliverability of the plan.

The NPPF sets out that the role for viability assessment is primarily at the plan making stage so that planning applications that comply with the plan's policies should be assumed to be viable. It would therefore be up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances such as further information on infrastructure or site costs justify the need for further viability assessment work.

### **Consultation Questions**

- What more should the Council and its partners do to ensure that there are robust plans in place for providing the infrastructure that is necessary to support new development in Charnwood?
- What steps could the Council and its partners take to ensure that a comprehensive network of public transport services remains available?

# Chapter 10: Strategic Allocations

There are existing policies in the Core Strategy relating to the sustainable urban extensions north east of Leicester and west of Loughborough and the Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park, which we intend to carry forward. We also propose to allocate the Directions for Growth identified in the Core Strategy for the North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension and Watermead Regeneration Corridor.

## North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension

The allocation boundary and scale of development for the sustainable urban development can be seen on the Policies Map and this reflects our understanding of the site. The proposed update to the policy is set out below.

### **Draft Policy LP36: North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension**

**We will allocate land to the north of Birstall as shown on the Policies Map as a sustainable urban extension to deliver a garden suburb of approximately 1,950 homes. The development will make a significant contribution to meeting our housing needs by delivering approximately 1,950 homes by 2036.**

**The sustainable urban extension will be to the north of the A46, west of the A6, east of the Great Central Railway line and to the south and west of the Broadnook Spinney. It will create a balanced community and a safe, high quality and accessible environment. We will do this by:**

#### **Housing**

- **seeking 30% affordable homes to meet local needs in accordance with Draft Policy LP4;**
- **seeking a range of tenures, types and sizes of homes in accordance with Draft Policy LP6;**
- **supporting extra care housing where it meets the needs of our ageing population in accordance with Draft Policy LP6; and**
- **requiring a site of at least 4 plots for showpeople in accordance with Draft Policy LP11.**

#### **Employment**

- **providing up to 15 hectares of employment land, comprising 1.5 ha of office and 13.5 ha of industrial/small warehousing, to help meet our strategic and local employment needs in accordance with Draft Policy LP12.**

## **Community Facilities**

- providing a primary school as appropriate to meet the need for school places, as a focal point for the new community;
- contributing to the provision of secondary school places as appropriate to meet the need for school places;
- providing one accessible Local Centre delivered as part of an early phase of development, including as a minimum, local shops and a small supermarket, small scale employment and a range of non-retail and community facilities and services including a community centre in accordance with Draft Policy LP17;
- supporting the provision of superfast broadband networks for all homes and businesses in accordance with Draft Policy LP16; and
- supporting development that maximises the opportunities to create strong social links with Birstall.

## **Transport**

- requiring well connected street patterns and walkable neighbourhoods that provide high quality, safe and direct walking, cycling and public transport routes in accordance with Draft Policy LP33;
- requiring a comprehensive package of transport improvements in accordance with Draft Policies LP33 and LP34 and including:
  - new and improved cycling and walking routes, well related to the Green Infrastructure network, connecting to existing and new employment areas and centres, the Birstall Park and Ride, Watermead Country Park and Charnwood Forest;
  - bus service enhancements connecting the new community with local employment opportunities and Birstall, Leicester City Centre and Loughborough, as identified through a Transport Assessment;
  - a new roundabout on the A6, north of the A46 interchange;
  - appropriate access arrangements including a connection to the A6 and Rothley;
  - appropriate capacity improvements at the A46 interchange; and
  - other network improvements as identified by an appropriate Transport Assessment.

## **Environment**

- protecting the separate identity of Wanlip, Rothley and Rothley Conservation Area;
- responding to the landscape and surrounding areas to create a locally distinctive development in accordance with Policies LP2 and LP19;

- protecting historic and archaeological features including the setting of Rothley Park and Rothley Conservation Area in accordance with Draft Policy LP24;
- protecting and enhancing existing wildlife corridors and, where appropriate, provide new corridors to create a coherent biodiversity network in accordance with Draft Policy LP22;
- encouraging the development to, where viable, exceed Building Regulations for carbon emissions in accordance with Draft Policy LP30;
- delivering buildings and spaces that have been designed to be adaptable to future climatic conditions including extremes of temperature, drought and flooding in accordance with Draft Policy LP30;
- requiring development that provides appropriate sustainable drainage systems and flood alleviation measures and where possible reduces flood risk associated with the Rothley Brook in accordance with Draft Policy LP32;
- providing an accessible, comprehensive and high quality network of multi-functional green spaces in accordance with our open space standards, in accordance with Draft Policy LP25 and garden suburb principles; and
- requiring the development to respond to the minerals safeguarding policies in the Leicestershire Minerals Development Framework.

We will do this by working with our public and private partners and will require the following to support a planning application:

- a Development Framework, including delivery and phasing arrangements and a masterplan informed by an independent design review panel and community consultation including key design principles to ensure the development of a comprehensive sustainable urban extension;
- a Green Infrastructure Strategy to inform the development of detailed proposals and long term management; and
- a Sustainability Assessment that identifies the development's response to carbon emissions reduction and climate change resilience.

Before outline planning permission is granted, we will require a development brief, design code or equivalent to be prepared to inform detailed planning applications or reserved matters applications.

### Consultation Questions

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?

## **Watermead Regeneration Corridor**

The Watermead Regeneration Corridor is located on the edge of the Leicester Urban Area and follows the Soar Valley. It begins just over 2 miles north of Leicester City Centre and runs along the River Soar to Wanlip.

It contributes to the Soar Valley Living Landscape, a nature conservation initiative led by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

At its centre is the Watermead Country Park, a network of old mineral workings and artificial lakes that run north to south along the path of the river. The Grand Union Canal also runs through the valley providing a direct access to the waterfront at Thurmaston. The Country Park is used for water sports and informal recreation and is a Local Wildlife Site. Within the Corridor there are areas at high risk of flooding.

Community cohesion in Thurmaston is restricted by the physical barriers of the A607 and Midland Mainline railway. The opportunity to benefit the community by linking Thurmaston to the Watermead Corridor has not been taken in the past.

We have worked with our stakeholders and partners to define the Watermead Regeneration Corridor and to prepare a Regeneration Framework for the area around the themes of opening up the Country Park, turning Thurmaston around, waterfront development and improving connections in the Corridor.

We want to use the Corridor as a focus for identifying an allocation of employment land to support the regeneration of Thurmaston, to restore the remaining mineral workings and to maximise the potential of the Country Park. Any development within the Corridor must be balanced carefully with our desire to protect and enhance the area's valuable landscape, tranquillity and biodiversity. We also want to make sure that the Corridor continues to act as a Green Wedge and contributes to community identity on the fringe of the city.

We have worked with our partners to prepare a River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy. It recognises the need for new facilities to serve the 250,000 annual visitors to Watermead Country Park.

We expect any development to be designed so that it is resilient to climate change, manages areas at risk of flooding and protects and enhances water quality. We will work with our partners to deliver our regeneration strategy in the context of a detailed Flood Risk Assessment.

We have worked with our partners, including Sustrans, to improve walking and cycling links between the Country Park and Thurmaston. There is also an opportunity to extend the network of links to connect to the new sustainable urban extension north east of Leicester. Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership are working on proposals for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge to connect the City and County Council administered parts of Watermead Country Park, and if completed will remove one of the last missing links in a 10 mile stretch of the Soar from Blaby to Syston.

The existing offices and industrial buildings at the Pinfold Industrial Park and Bridge Business Park at Thurmaston are well occupied and provide significant local employment but are reaching the end of their design lives and present a poor setting to Watermead Country Park. Redevelopment of these sites for a mixture of homes and employment may be appropriate in the longer term, but our evidence states that this land should not be released until new floor space is provided for occupiers to move into.

We will encourage employment uses in the Watermead Regeneration Corridor which support regeneration and enhancement. We expect proposals to pay particular attention to their relationship with Watermead Country Park and the Grand Union Canal.

This allocation offers the potential to reduce our carbon footprint through design including the careful layout and orientation of buildings. We have an aspiration that the scheme will result in a 10% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions when compared to Building Regulations where viable as set out in Draft Policy LP30.

The best location for prime office development is the Leicester City Centre. However, some businesses have operational needs, such as quick access to the strategic road network, which cannot be met within the city. We will support a limited amount of office space within the Watermead Regeneration Corridor to meet the needs of these businesses and help to provide a range of employment sites for the Leicester Urban Area.

Land located within the northern sector of the Watermead Corridor, potentially accessed from the roundabout on Wanlip Road south of the Hope and Anchor public house, is well placed to provide sites for and to attract inward investment that supports growth.

#### **Draft Policy LP37: Watermead Regeneration Corridor**

**We will identify the Watermead Regeneration Corridor, allocate employment land as shown on the Policies Map and will support developments that:**

- contribute directly to the regeneration of Thurmaston village centre, the Thurmaston waterfront and the Grand Union Canal;
- improve connectivity and accessibility between the Country Park, waterfront and the wider community;
- responds positively to the high quality tranquil setting of the Country Park;
- meet local employment needs and contribute to regeneration and jobs in accordance with Draft Policy LP12;
- provide up to 9,000m<sup>2</sup> for offices and around 9.5ha for employment and a hotel accessed off Wanlip Road in accordance with Draft Policy LP12;
- where viable, exceed Building Regulations for carbon emissions in accordance with Draft Policy LP30;
- deliver buildings and spaces that have been designed to be adaptable to future climatic conditions including extremes of temperature, drought and flooding in accordance with Draft Policy LP30;
- include appropriate sustainable drainage systems and flood alleviation measures, and where possible reduces flood risk in accordance with Draft Policy LP32;
- design development to protect and enhance water quality; and
- protect and enhance the wildlife corridor in accordance with Draft Policies LP21 and LP22.

We will do this by requiring the following in support of planning applications:

- a Development Framework, including delivery and phasing arrangements and a comprehensive masterplan including key design principles for each element of the development and how it relates to the Watermead Regeneration Corridor, informed by a Flood Risk Assessment and community consultation; and
- a Green Infrastructure Strategy to inform the development of detailed proposals and long term management.

### Consultation Questions

- Do you have any comments on this draft policy?
- If you don't agree with the proposed policy please set out why this and what alternative approach would you suggest?
- Do you think we have missed something?



# Appendix A: Glossary

**Affordable Housing:** Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market. Can comprise a range of tenures including social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing. Eligibility is determined having regard to local incomes and house prices.

**Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** Designated areas where priority action is required in order to meet air quality objectives by the relevant deadline. The area could be just one or two streets, or it could be much bigger.

**Annual Monitoring Report:** A report submitted to the Government by local planning authorities assessing progress with the implementation of planning policies.

**Areas of Local Separation:** An area of open countryside that separates two neighbouring settlements, whose main purpose is preserving settlement identity, and which is based on landscape character and visual appearance of the area.

**Article 4 Direction:** A direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

**Biodiversity:** Biodiversity is a term commonly used to describe the variety of life on Earth which encompasses the whole of the natural world and all living things with which we share the planet. It includes plants, animals, even invisible micro-organisms and bacteria which, together, interact in complex ways with the inanimate environment to create living ecosystems.

**Biodiversity Action Plan:** Summarises what is known about the most important areas of green space and how they provide a place for animals and plants to survive. The BAP identifies the priority habitats (spaces where plants and creatures live) and species (insects, birds and other animals) in the Borough, and targets actions to maintain and enhance the wildlife.

**Brownfield Land:** Land which has previously been developed encompassing vacant or derelict land, infill sites and land occupied by redundant or unused buildings.

**Brownfield Land Register:** A register of sites that would be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. The local register comprises two parts - Part 1 comprises all brownfield sites appropriate for residential development and Part 2 those sites granted permission in principle.

**Building for Life 12:** Building for Life 12 is the industry standard, endorsed by Government, for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods so that new developments can be attractive, functional and sustainable places.

**Business Improvement District:** An arrangement whereby businesses get together to plan how to improve their trading environment and the public realm. They decide what improvements they want to make, what it will cost them and how they are going to manage the process.

**Carbon Footprint:** A carbon footprint is the total set of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)) produced by the things we do.

**Climate Change:** Changes in climate due to human activity resulting in global warming and greater risk of flooding, droughts and heat waves. **Climate change adaptation** refers to adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. **Climate change mitigation** refers to action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Community Infrastructure Levy:** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new development in their area as a means of funding infrastructure required to deliver the Core Strategy.

**Conservation Area:** Areas of special architectural or historic interest. Conservation area designation does not prevent change but is intended to help preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

**Core Strategy:** Spatial vision and strategy for the Borough including key policies and proposals to deliver the vision.

**Deliverable:** To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

**Designated Heritage Asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

**Design Review Panel:** A method of improving the quality of development proposals by offering constructive, impartial and expert advice to developers and planning authorities.

**Developable:** To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

**Development Plan:** Development Plan Documents collectively make up the Development Plan. Under the Planning Acts the Development Plan is the primary consideration in deciding planning applications

**Economic Market Area (EMA):** A geographical area which is relatively self-contained in terms of economic activity.

**Edge of Centre:** For retail purposes a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange.

**Geodiversity:** The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

**Greenfield Land:** Greenfield land is land that has never been built on or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time. Greenfield land should not be confused with green belt land which is a term for specially designated land around large built up areas to prevent settlement coalescence.

**Green Infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Green Wedge:** Green wedges are a local planning policy designation that have been used in Leicestershire since the 1980s whose role is to prevent the merging of settlements, guide development form, provide a green lung into urban areas and provide a recreational resource.

**Heritage Asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**House in Multiple Occupation:** A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is where at least 3 tenants live together in a single dwelling and share basic facilities.

**Housing Delivery Test:** Measures net additional dwellings provided in a local authority area against the homes required, using national statistics and local authority data.

**Housing Market Area (HMA):** A geographical area which is relatively self-contained in terms of housing demand.

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan:** A supporting document which includes details of the infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the Core Strategy

**Land Based Industries:** In its simplest and traditional sense the land-based industries are assumed to refer to farming and forestry with an emphasis on agriculture and horticulture for primary food production.

**Landscape Character Assessment:** A tool that is used to help understand, and articulate, the character of a landscape, helping to identify the features that gives a locality its sense of place and pinpoints what makes it different from neighbouring areas.

**Listed Building:** Statutory Listed Buildings are protected for their architectural and historic value as part of the nation's heritage. There are over 1,000 such Listed Buildings and structures in Charnwood including individual buildings and groups of buildings, from modest cottages to stately houses, and structures such as bridges, monuments and milestones.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS):** A three year project plan outlining the Council's programme for preparing the Local Development Framework.

**Local Enterprise Partnership:** A body designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

**Local Housing Need:** The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Local Nature Reserve:** To qualify for Local Nature Reserve status, a site must be of importance for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment. Some are also nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest. All district and county councils have powers to acquire, declare and manage sites.

**Local Plan:** The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law, this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, also form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

**Local Wildlife Site:** Local Wildlife Sites are identified and selected for their local nature conservation value. They protect threatened species and habitats acting as buffers, stepping stones and corridors between nationally-designated wildlife sites.

**Main Town Centre Uses:** Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

**Major Development:** For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Masterplan:** Strategic plan setting out the overall framework and key principles for the development of a site.

**Mineral Safeguarding Area:** An area designated by minerals planning authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

**National Cycle Route:** Part of a national network spanning the UK comprising scenic traffic-free paths, quiet roads and lanes, signed on-road routes and themed long-distance routes

**National Forest:** An environmental regeneration project covering 200 square miles of Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire.

**National Planning Policy Framework:** Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** A plan prepared by a Parish Council, Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a designated neighbourhood area and ultimately adopted by the Council as part of the development plan. It must be prepared in general conformity with the Council's Core Strategy.

**Open Space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Out of Centre:** A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

**Permission in Principle:** An alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development.

**Planning Condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**Planning Obligation:** A legal agreement entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Priority Neighbourhoods:** Parts of the Borough identified as areas of relatively higher need based on higher levels of social exclusion, deprivation and lower levels of educational attainment. The priority neighbourhoods in Charnwood are Loughborough East, Loughborough West, Mountsorrel and South Charnwood (Syston and Thurmaston)

**Previously Developed Land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

**Primary Shopping Area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated.

**Priority Habitats and Species:** Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

**Regionally Important Geological Site:** Sites selected for their geological or geomorphological value and their interpretive use for earth science as well as cultural, educational, historical and aesthetic reasons.

**Registered Provider:** An organisation providing social housing (for example low-cost rental properties and low-cost home ownership. Registered providers include local authority landlords and private registered providers (such as not-for-profit housing associations and for-profit organisations).

**Renewable and Low Carbon Energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat.

**Rural Exception Sites:** Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.

**Scheduled Monument:** Scheduling is shorthand for the process through which nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection by being placed on a list, or schedule. Historic England takes the lead in identifying sites in England which should be placed on the schedule by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

**Section 106 Agreement:** See Planning Obligation above.

**Section 278 Agreement:** Where a development requires works to be carried out on the existing adopted highway, an Agreement will need to be completed between the developer and the County Council under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980.

**Self-build and Custom Housebuilding:** Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing.

**Service Centre:** Large villages with a good range of services and community facilities including shops, schools and health facilities which serve the more rural parts of the Borough. These settlements are Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby and Syston.

**Sequential Test:** There are two areas in which a specific logical sequence is applied to taking planning decisions. For **town centres**, the sequential test guides main town centre uses towards town centre locations first, then, if no town centre locations are available, to edge of centre locations, and, if neither town centre locations nor edge of centre locations are available, to out of town centre locations, with preference for accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. When dealing with **flooding risk**, the Sequential Test is used to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The aim is to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of flooding). Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, available sites in Flood Zone 2 (areas with a medium probability of flooding) can be considered. Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 would sites in Flood Zone 3 (areas with a high probability of flooding) be considered.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features and designated by Natural England.

**Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA):** Part of the evidence base to inform local planning policies for housing which identifies sites with potential for housing and assesses their housing potential and when they are likely to be developed. May also include an assessment of employment land in which case it is called a SHELAA.

**Strategic Road Network:** Highways England is responsible for the construction and maintenance of motorways and major trunk roads in England used to move people and freight around the country which is known as the strategic network of roads.

**Sustainable Transport Modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** Documents which add further detail to policies in the development plan. They do not form part of the development plan itself but they are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** An appraisal of the social, economic and environmental implications of a strategy, policies and proposals.

**Sustainable Development:** Meeting our own needs without prejudicing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** A sequence of management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable fashion than some conventional techniques.

**Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE):** An urban extension which enables sustainable patterns of living to be built into all stages of planning and implementation including high quality design, well-planned infrastructure and sustainable transport options facilitating easy access to a wide range of facilities and services.

**Town Centre:** Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

**Transport Assessment:** A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

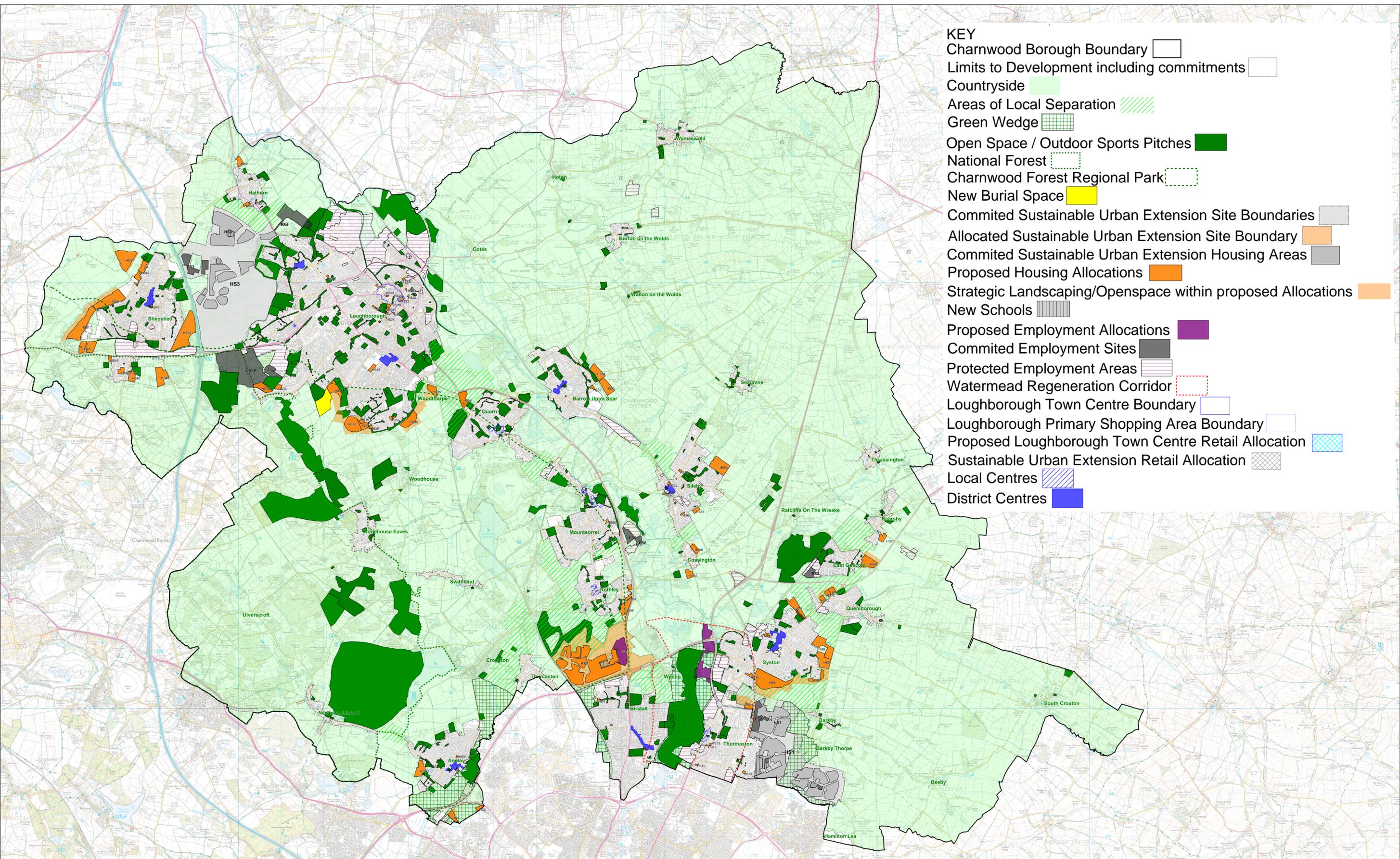
**Transport Statement:** A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

**Travel Plan:** A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

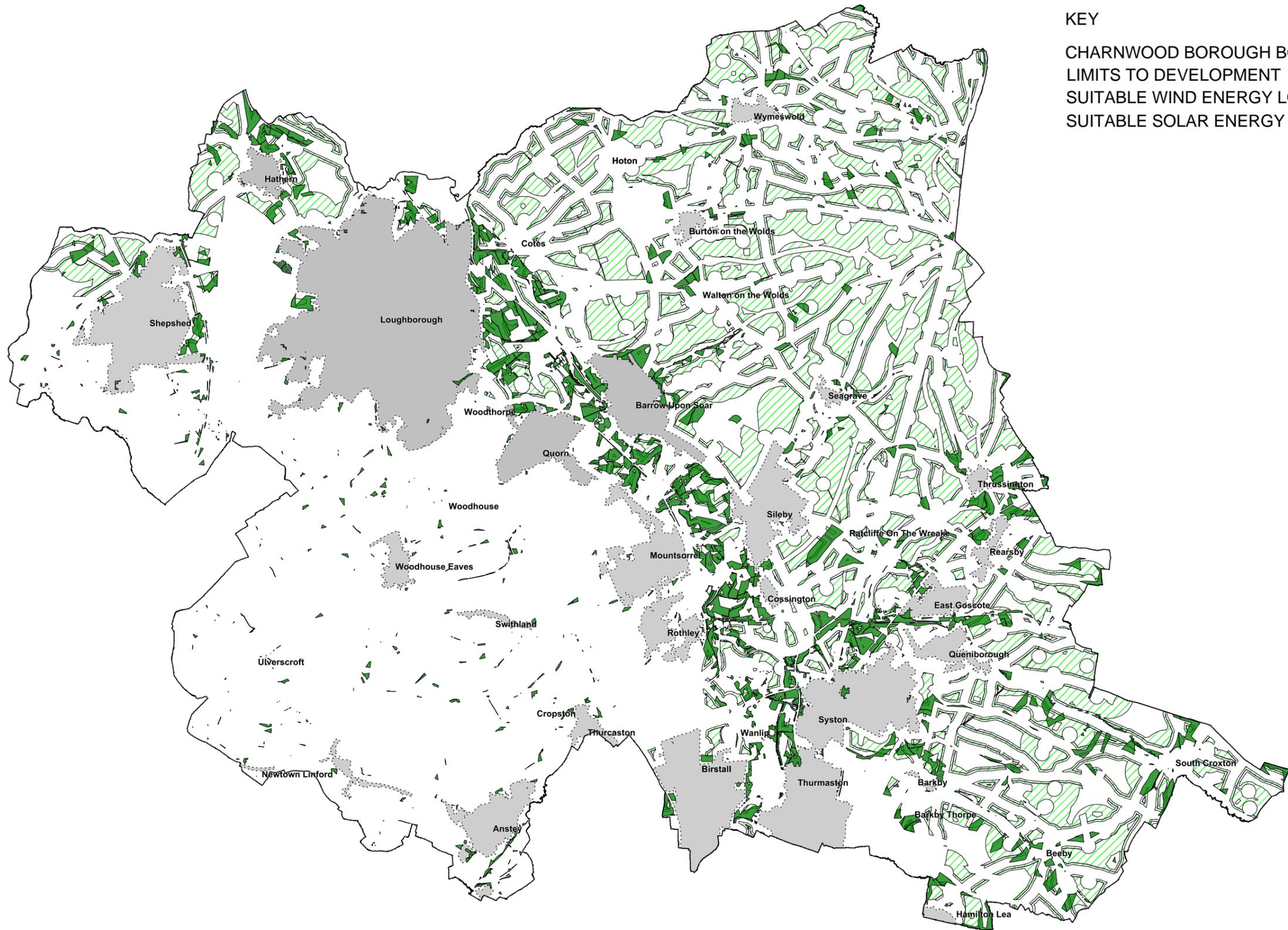
**Village Design Statement:** Documents prepared by local communities, which give guidance to developers and individuals to encourage good design of the type that will

enhance and protect the individual character of the locality, without preventing future growth.

**Water Framework Directive:** A European Union directive which commits member states to achieve good qualitative and quantitative status of all water bodies by 2015. It provides an opportunity to plan and deliver a better water environment through river basin management planning.



- KEY**
- Charnwood Borough Boundary
  - Limits to Development including commitments
  - Countryside
  - Areas of Local Separation
  - Green Wedge
  - Open Space / Outdoor Sports Pitches
  - National Forest
  - Charnwood Forest Regional Park
  - New Burial Space
  - Committed Sustainable Urban Extension Site Boundaries
  - Allocated Sustainable Urban Extension Site Boundary
  - Committed Sustainable Urban Extension Housing Areas
  - Proposed Housing Allocations
  - Strategic Landscaping/Openspace within proposed Allocations
  - New Schools
  - Proposed Employment Allocations
  - Committed Employment Sites
  - Protected Employment Areas
  - Watermead Regeneration Corridor
  - Loughborough Town Centre Boundary
  - Loughborough Primary Shopping Area Boundary
  - Proposed Loughborough Town Centre Retail Allocation
  - Sustainable Urban Extension Retail Allocation
  - Local Centres
  - District Centres



KEY

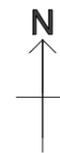
- CHARNWOOD BOROUGH BOUNDARY
- LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT
- SUITABLE WIND ENERGY LOCATIONS
- SUITABLE SOLAR ENERGY LOCATIONS

Charnwood Borough Council  
 Council Offices  
 Southfield Road  
 Loughborough  
 Leicestershire  
 LE11 2TX

[www.charnwood.gov.uk](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk)



Scale: 1:85000  
 Date: 19-09-2019 Time: 10:07:55



This material has been reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. © Crown copyright.

Licence No. 100023558

Any Aerial Photography shown is copyright of UK Perspectives

# Appendix B: Consultation Plan

## Introduction

The Council is committed to ensuring stakeholders can have an input into policies which directly affect them.

The consultation plan for the Draft Charnwood Local Plan 2019-36 sets out how the Council will engage with key audiences during the proposed consultation period to ensure stakeholders can give their views. It is planned to run the consultation between November 4 and December 16.

By the time the consultation begins, some communications will already have been issued surrounding the report to Cabinet and therefore there will already be some awareness of the draft local plan.

The consultation will aim to direct people to the online consultation platform but print consultation forms will also be available and some focussed work, in particular for the hard to reach groups, will also be carried out.

Key actions, audiences and channels are identified in the table below.

Date	Activity	Channel	Audience
Wk commencing Oct 28	Updates that a consultation is due to start shortly	Website Social media Email	Residents Members Parish Councils Interested parties
Monday November 4	Website updated with Draft Charnwood Local Plan 2019-36, summary of key points and link to online consultation	Website	All
	Press release outlining launch of consultation	Media	Residents
	Launch social media campaign to drive traffic to the Council website relating to the draft local plan	Twitter Facebook	Residents / partners / community groups /
	Planning News email alert	Email	Subscribers to email

Date	Activity	Channel	Audience
	Printed materials including posters for various sites across the borough distributed	Print	Residents
	Email to members to inform them the consultation has started	Email	Members
	Email to parish councils to inform them the consultation has started	Email	Parish Councils
	Email alert to parties who have registered an interest about the local plan with the Council	Email	Various
Nov 4 – Dec 16	Hard to reach groups will be identified pre-consultation and various methods used to engage with them	Print Email Face to face Website	Hard to reach groups
Mid to late November	Charnwood News distributed around the borough	Print	Residents
November	Utilise internal channels to inform staff about the consultation	Staff magazine / intranet	Staff / Members
TBC	High-quality display at key locations across the borough, supported by printed copies of the consultation. The display will be staffed at times.	Print Face-to-face	Residents
Late November – early December	Reminders about the consultation closing date	Media Social media Email Website	Residents Members Parish Councils

# **CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN**

**2019 to 2036**

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**July 2019**



## **Introduction**

This is the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Charnwood Draft Local Plan (2019-36) Preferred Options Consultation version. The Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool which will assist in ensuring that the impacts of the Local Plan have been considered in relation to the protected characteristics. It provides a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts on particular protected groups. This will ensure that better decisions are made based on robust evidence and provides transparency to the process.

## **Legislation- Equality Duty**

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility (as set out in the Equality Act 2010) to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

There are certain characteristics protected by equalities legislation. These “protected characteristics” are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

The equalities legislation does not allow the following:

- Direct Discrimination including by association and perception
- Indirect Discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
- Discrimination arising from disability
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments

## Step 1 – Introductory information

Title of the policy	Charnwood Draft Local Plan (2019-36) Preferred Options Consultation version
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	Group Leader Plans, Policies and Place-Making Principal Planning Officer
Date EIA started	July 2019
Date EIA completed	

## Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)
<p>The Charnwood Local Plan (2019 – 36) will include both strategic and detailed policies. It will set out a vision and a framework for the future pattern, scale and quality of development in Charnwood. It will address needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places.</p> <p>The new Local Plan, once adopted, will form part of the development plan and replace the Charnwood Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) and the saved policies from the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004). The development plan is at the heart of the planning system with a requirement set in law that planning decisions must be taken in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p>
What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?
<p>The Charnwood Local Plan will provide a framework for delivering growth and infrastructure and conserving and enhancing the natural environment; therefore, it will affect the whole community. It is intended to respond to the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and new evidence of the need for homes and jobs in line with the national policy requirement to keep plans up to date and reviewed at least every five years. It is envisaged the plan will deliver the right growth, at the right time, in the right locations creating successful residential and business communities that are well-served by essential infrastructure whilst protecting and enhancing environmental resources.</p>
Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
<p>The draft plan has been developed through engagement with the public and key stakeholders such as infrastructure providers, Parish and Town Councils, residents' groups, interest groups and the development industry. This has ensured the draft plan and the evidence underpinning it has been shaped by an understanding of the key local issues.</p> <p>There have been two key consultations, the first on the scope of the local plan in July 2016 and the second on the key issues and options in April 2018, when we published a discussion paper titled: 'Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood'. There has also been engagement to inform the preparation of the evidence.</p>

The Charnwood Local Development Scheme 2018 sets out the programme for the next stages in preparing the new local plan which sees informal consultation on a draft plan in 2019 and publication of a Pre-Submission Draft Plan and Examination in Public of the plan in 2020.

Interested parties have been invited to make representations on the two consultations so far. This included the specific and general consultation bodies identified in the Regulations (see Appendix A) along with all Charnwood Borough Councillors whilst an email alert was sent to the people registered to receive alerts via the Charnwood Local Plan Email Alert service.

### **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

The Charnwood Local Plan will affect the whole community in Charnwood for which there is a substantial amount of information and data which exist. A short summary in relation to the protected characteristics is provided below:

#### Age

The population of Charnwood is approximately 182,600, of which 17.0% are under 15 years of age, 64.9% are aged 16 to 64, and 18.1% are of pensionable age 65 or more (ONS Mid-year estimates 2018). In terms of five-year age band, the Borough contains a large proportion of 20 to 24-year olds (especially males) compared to the East Midlands and UK averages.

#### Disability

In Charnwood 15.6% of the population suffer from a long-term health problem or disability. 6.7% of people have their day to day activities limited a lot whilst 4.2% consider their health to be “bad” or “very bad” (Census 2011).

Nationally, it is estimated that one in four people will experience a mental health problem each year, in Charnwood this would equate to 45,650 residents. Mental health issues can either be short or long term, the most common being mixed anxiety and depression (Mind 2016).

There are estimated to be 5,650 people living in Charnwood with site loss and another 8,850 with sight threatening eye conditions (RNIB 2018).

33,000 people in the Borough are estimated to suffer some form of hearing loss (Action on Hearing Loss 2019).

#### Gender reassignment

There are no accurate statistics available regarding the profile of those who identify as trans or transgender within Charnwood, Leicestershire or the UK as a whole. Gender identity is not incorporated into the Census or other official statistics.

#### Marriage and civil partnership

Within Charnwood 64,729 people are married, with 271 people in a registered same-sex civil partnership (2011 Census).

#### Pregnancy and maternity

There were 1,922 maternities in Charnwood in 2016 with 12 of these to mothers aged under 18 (ONS Live Births).

#### Race

The White British population accounted for 84.4% of the Borough's population with 12.6% Black and Minority Ethnic. The largest ethnic groups are Indian 6%, Other White 2.5% and Pakistani 1% and Chinese 1% (Census 2011).

#### Religion and belief

Some 56% of the population of Charnwood with 29% having no religion. The next largest groups are Hindus 5% and Muslims 2%, Buddhists, Jews and Sikhs combined make up just over 1% of the Borough's population.

#### Sex (Gender)

The total population of 182,600 comprises a broad split of 92,150 (50.5%) male and 90,450 (49.5%) female, with the 20 – 24 age group showing significantly more males (11.5%) than females (8.5%).

#### Sexual orientation

There are no accurate statistics available regarding the profile of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) population within Charnwood. Sexual orientation is not included in the Census; however, it has previously been widely acknowledged that approximately 6 – 10% of any population will be LGB. In Charnwood this would equate to between 3,043 and 18,260 people.

Having said that, in 2014 the Integrated Household Survey found that 1.6% of adults in the UK identified their sexual identity as LGB, equating to 2,922 people in Charnwood.

What does this information / data tell you about diverse groups? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

Age – The younger age groups can be seen as less well represented in the planning process and more difficult to engage. 17% of Charnwood's population is under 15 and there is a large proportion of 20 to 24 year olds in the Borough. An ageing population will require a variety of housing types to meet different needs such as sheltered housing, extra care accommodation, bungalows and homes for downsizing.

Disability – Disabled access should be provided for events and displays We will need to consider the public realm and access to the countryside for those with disabilities. The provision of suitable housing for those with disabilities should also be considered.

Pregnancy and maternity – Access to pre and post natal services and facilities should be considered.

Race – There may be language and cultural barriers which could restrict engagement with minority groups.

Religion and Belief – We will need to be aware of the inter-faith calendar organising events. We should consider the need for access to Places of Worship in new development.

Information is lacking in relation to gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

### **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

The Charnwood Local Plan will concern the whole community and there are minimum legal requirements regarding how the Council should consult on the plan which are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012). These regulations require as a minimum the Borough Council to inform by letter or e-mail certain Specific and General Consultation bodies at 'Preparation', 'Publication' and 'Submission' stages of plan production.

The Borough Council intends to carry out additional consultation involving local communities, businesses and other groups during the plan preparation process as set out in our Statement of Community Involvement.

There is potential for certain groups to be adversely impacted upon by policies in the Local Plan; however, there is also the potential for positive benefits to arise for certain groups. For example, there is the opportunity to provide a mix and type of house which better meets the needs of the community such as the elderly and the disabled.

## Step 5 – Assessing the impact

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

- ↑ - Positive Impact
- - Neutral Impact
- ↓ - Negative Impact

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
LP1	Development Strategy	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	↑	○	○	The overall spatial strategy for Charnwood, between 2019 and 2036, is urban concentration and intensification. This will take advantage of existing services and facilities in settlements and maximise accessibility using existing transport links.
LP2	High Quality Design	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	↑	○	○	The policy seeks to provide well-designed functional spaces which will support all users, encourage social interaction and community cohesion, and meet people's differing needs.

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
LP3	Housing Sites	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	↑	○	○	The housing sites seek to provide good access to services and facilities and maximise the potential to access sustainable forms of transport.
LP4	Affordable Housing	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	↑	○	○	The provision of affordable housing will enable better access to suitable accommodation for all lower income groups. Ensuring it is integrated with new development will provide good access to services and facilities.
LP5	Rural Exception Sites	↑	↑	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	The policy will enable provision of affordable housing in rural areas to meet an identified local need and will assist local residents access suitable accommodation.
LP6	Housing Mix	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	○	○	○	Seeks to provide a mix of house types, tenures and sizes having regard to housing needs. Wheelchair accessible bungalows and specialist accommodation are encouraged to address the needs of older people and the disabled.
LP7	Space Standards of Residential	↑	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	○	○	Expects new dwellings and changes of use to meet national space standards which will assist those requiring extra

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
	Properties										space to live.
LP8	Self Build and Custom Build Housing	↑	↑	○	○	○	↑	↑	○	○	Gives support to people wishing to build their own homes.
LP9	Houses in Multiple Occupation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Supports the well-being, character and amenity of our communities by managing the proportion of houses in multiple occupation. Will improve the social and physical character and amenity of an area for some but may disadvantage those living in such accommodation such as the young or migrant workers.
LP10	Campus and Purpose Built Student Accommodation	↑	↑	○	○	↑	○	↑	○	○	Encourages purpose-built student accommodation with good accessibility improving access to services and facilities for certain groups.
LP11	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	○	○	○	○	○	↑	○	○	○	Supports the provision of gypsy and traveller sites in accordance with need providing a positive benefit for this group.

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
LP12	Meeting Employment Needs	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	○	○	○	Meets the economic needs of the community by providing employment land at various locations in the Borough, including the SUEs and promotes development which supports priority neighbourhoods. Seeks to reduce commuting. This will assist groups with difficulties accessing employment opportunities.
LP13	Protecting Existing Employment Sites	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Protects existing employment sites from alternative uses where they are no longer required for employment. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP14	Regeneration of Loughborough	○	○	○	○	○	↑	○	○	○	Supports the regeneration of Loughborough through specific sites and proposals. This includes enhancing the Industrial Heritage Quarter to the east of Loughborough where BAME community groups are concentrated in the town.
LP15	Regeneration of Shepshed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	The policy supports the regeneration of Shepshed through various schemes and proposals and is not considered to have a differential impact on people with

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
											protected characteristics.
LP16	Rural Economic Development	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Seeks to maximise the rural economy by supporting suitable development in the countryside. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP17	Town Centres and Retail	↑	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	○	○	Supports development for “town centre uses” in existing centres. This will improve accessibility by sustainable modes of travel assisting some groups.
LP18	Hot Food Takeaways	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Considers the impact of hot food takeaways on amenity and health and seeks to prevent clusters. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP19	Landscape, Countryside, Green Wedges and Areas of Local Separation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Protects the countryside for its intrinsic beauty and the open and undeveloped character of Areas of Local Separation and Green Wedges. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP20	Charnwood Forest	↑	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	○	○	Seeks to protect and enhance the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
	and the National Forest										support the aims of the National Forest Strategy, including better public access. This will benefit groups who may suffer issues with accessibility.
LP21	River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor	↑	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	○	○	Supports better access, tourism opportunities and protection and enhancement of the waterbodies. This will benefit groups who may suffer issues with accessibility.
LP22	Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Conserves and enhances the natural environment. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP23	Tree Planting	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment by increasing the number of trees in Charnwood. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP24	Heritage	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Conserves and enhances the heritage assets and the wider historic environment for their own value and the contribution they make to the community, environment

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
											and economy. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP25	Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	○	○	○	Seeks to protect and enhance facilities to support the health, well-being and cohesion of communities. The policy will support various groups including those with accessibility issues, poor health and young people.
LP26	Indoor Sports Facilities	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	○	○	○	Encourages the development of healthier lifestyles and physical activity. The policy will support various groups including those with accessibility issues, poor health and the young.
LP27	Burial Space	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Allocates sufficient burial space. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP28	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Installations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Supports wind and solar energy installations where impacts are fully addressed. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
LP29	Sustainable Construction	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Encourages sustainable design and construction techniques. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP30	Flood Risk Management	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Directs development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding and promotes mitigation. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP31	Sustainable Drainage Systems	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Requires SuDS to be included as an integral part of major development. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP32	Sustainable Transport	↑	↑	○	○	↑	↑	↑	○	○	Improves the sustainable transport offer in the Borough benefitting groups who may suffer issues with accessibility to services and facilities.
LP33	Local and Strategic Road Network	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Reduces congestion and improves efficiency of the road network. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.

Policy		Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex (Gender)	Sexual Orientation	Comment
LP34	Car Parking Standards	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Ensure new developments make appropriate provision for car parking. The policy is not considered to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
LP35	North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension	↑	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	○	○	Provides guidance on an allocation for development at land north of Birstall. The proposed development will form a sustainable community with access to jobs, services and facilities and good transport links. This will benefit groups who may suffer issues with accessibility.
LP36	Watermead Regeneration Corridor	↑	↑	○	○	↑	○	○	○	○	Supports the regeneration of Thurmaston village, employment provision and access to the Country Park. Improving connectivity to employment opportunities the Country Park will benefit groups who may suffer issues with accessibility.

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.

Please note:

- a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.
- b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.

No negative impacts on protected characteristics have been identified.

Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

### **Age**

The overall development strategy seeks to ensure that new development provides good access to services and facilities by public transport and non-car modes. Policies are also in place which aim to secure facilities and services from new development including open space, transport links, education and health care.

Policies seek to ensure that new housing will be designed to meet the needs of the whole population, including those with mobility issues, and specialist housing for older people is also encouraged. Affordable housing provision is sought which will allow younger generations to enter the housing market.

Improved access to facilities and sites for leisure activities is promoted which will benefit all sections of the community, including older people. Town centre and regeneration policies seek to improve accessibility to goods and services.

### **Disability**

The development strategy includes the focus of new development in locations where a range of services and facilities are relatively accessible by public transport and non-car modes to make developments more accessible to people of all abilities.

Policies seek to ensure that new housing will be designed to meet the needs of the whole population, including those with mobility issues, and wheelchair accessible bungalows or other single level properties are encouraged as part of the overall mix of homes. Affordable housing provision is sought which will allow younger generations to enter the housing market.

Improved access to facilities and sites for leisure activities is promoted which will benefit all sections of the community. Town centre and regeneration policies seek to improve accessibility to goods and services.

### **Gender Reassignment**

No equalities impact identified.

### **Marriage & Civil Partnership**

No equalities impact identified.

### **Pregnancy & Maternity**

The overall development strategy seeks to ensure that new development provides good access to services and facilities by public transport and non-car modes. Policies are also in place which aim to secure facilities and services from new development including health care. Town centre and regeneration policies seek to improve accessibility to goods and services.

**Race**

The development strategy supports the regeneration and economic success of urban areas which tend to hold higher concentrations of BAME groups. Policies seek to regenerate the Industrial Heritage Quarter in the east of Loughborough where BAME groups are concentrated.

**Religion or Belief**

The development strategy includes the focus of new development in locations where a range of facilities, including places of worship, are relatively accessible by public transport and non-car modes.

**Sex (Gender)**

No equalities impact identified.

**Sexual Orientation**

No equalities impact identified.

### Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?

The findings of this assessment will be reviewed by Cabinet in considering the proposal to publish the draft Local Plan for consultation. The plan is a “preferred option” version with opportunity to make changes before the plan is submitted for examination.

Further, more specific analysis will be undertaken following the consultation, taking into account the representations received. This will form part of the next Equality Impact Assessment accompanying the submission version of the Local Plan and will allow for more detailed analysis of individual policies where necessary and a specific Equality Impact Assessment on each policy identified as appropriate.

The Local Plan is informed by a separate Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan which considers the social, economic and environmental effects of the plan and ensures, as far as possible that it accords with the principles of sustainable development. A number of the sustainability objectives relate to relevant issues, such as improving access to affordable housing and ensuring an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures within local communities; reducing poverty and deprivation; promoting healthy and active lifestyles in the Borough; and, increasing access to a wide range of services and facilities. Policy approaches can be changed or adapted, and mitigation measures can be identified where potential adverse impacts are raised or identified.

The policies in the final Local Plan will have had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and support relations between different groups and individuals.

A general monitoring framework to check the implementation of the plan will be included in the submission version of the plan. This will enable the Borough Council to monitor implementation and the impact of the Local Plan policies through the Annual Monitoring Report.

How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.

The Local Plan is reviewed through the Annual Monitoring report and through the implementation of the policies it contains. On-going community engagement through the planning process will help

provide a greater understanding of any impacts upon groups with protected characteristics.

There is a requirement to review policies in local plans at least once every five years to assess whether they need updating; they should then be updated as necessary.

**Step 7- Action Plan**

**Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan:**

The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan

Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date

**Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees	X	The Equality Impact Assessment will be published as a supporting document during the consultation of the Local Plan and the relevant persons and groups will be informed accordingly.
Service users	X	
Partners and stakeholders	X	
Others	X	
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?		Hard to Reach groups are identified and more focussed consultation is to be progressed.

**Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service Head)**

<b>Please delete as appropriate</b>	
I agree / <u>disagree</u> with this assessment / action plan	
If <i>disagree</i> , state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:	
Signed (Service Head):	
Date:	16/8/19.

Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.