

**LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER AND
RUTLAND**

STRUCTURE PLAN

1996 TO 2016

WRITTEN

STATEMENT

Chapter 1: Introduction

The text to be inserted here will form part of the Explanatory Memorandum.

Chapter 2: The Strategy

Strategy Policy 1: Central Leicestershire Policy Area

In order to:

- make optimum use of the available urban capacity for development in the existing built-up areas within the Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area;
- balance housing and employment development within the Central Leicestershire Policy Area; and
- secure integration between land use and transport policy objectives,

provision will be made within the Central Leicestershire Policy Area for 31,500 dwellings and for 376 hectares of employment land for the period 1996-2016.

Strategy Policy 2A: A Sequential Approach towards the Location of Development

Land for development will be allocated in development plans in the following priority order:

- (a) previously developed land and buildings within or adjoining the central area of Leicester and the town centres of the Main Towns (Ashby, Coalville, Hinckley/Earl Shilton, Loughborough, Lutterworth, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray, Shepshed, Oakham and Uppingham);
- (b) previously developed land and buildings elsewhere within the Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area and the Main Towns;
- (c) other land within the Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area and the Main Towns;
- (d) land adjoining the Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area and the Main Towns, particularly where this involves the use of previously developed land;
- (e) land within or adjoining Rural Centres, or other settlements which are or will be well served by public transport, particularly where this involves the use of previously developed land, and
- (f) in other locations, subject where relevant to the considerations in Strategy Policies 5, 6 or 8.

Strategy Policy 2B: Suitability of Land for Development

In considering the suitability of land within the context of Strategy Policy 2A, the following criteria will also be taken into account:

- (i) the actual or potential accessibility of sites by non-car modes, including pedestrian, cycling and public transport links to central areas and district or local centres;
- (ii) the actual and potential capacity of existing public transport, utilities and social infrastructure to support further development;
- (iii) physical constraints on development, including ground contamination and stability and flood risk;
- (iv) the impact of development on natural resources and environmental and cultural assets;

- (v) the cost of development, the economic viability of sites and the availability of public and private resources to bring forward land and buildings for development;
- (vi) the need to secure a balance of land uses within the area, including by mixed use development; and
- (vii) the contribution that development could make towards the strengthening of a local community, supporting local services and meeting local needs, particularly within Rural Centres designated in local plans.

Strategy Policy 2C: Rural Centres

Rural Centres may be designated in local plans, which serve a rural hinterland and contain all or most of the following functions:

- (a) a primary school;
- (b) a post office;
- (c) a general store;
- (d) a general medical practice;
- (e) a pharmacy (if not within the general medical practice);
- (f) community and leisure facilities;
- (g) additional employment to that provided by (a) to (f) above;
- (h) a regular, six day a week return bus service.

Strategy Policy 3: Greenfield Development

Where, after applying the sequential approach in Strategy Policy 2A and the criteria in Strategy Policy 2B, it is necessary to consider new development on greenfield land, such land should generally be identified as urban extensions and allocated for development in local plans.

Any site thus identified should, unless exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise:

- (a) be of significant size and scale;
- (b) be of a form and character appropriate to the surroundings;
- (c) incorporate good quality mixed use development including employment uses, or be capable of integration with existing development to the same end;
- (d) incorporate open space to prescribed standards, and contribute to existing and proposed green networks;
- (e) be large enough to enable significant developer contributions to be made towards transport and other infrastructure provision;
- (f) be phased within the local plan period consistent with the principle of previously developed land being developed first; and
- (g) be capable of development in a phased sequence that enables new residents to have early access to local employment, public transport and other facilities.

Strategy Policy 4: Transport Objectives and Priorities

Integrated and sustainable travel and transport provision will be made in order to:

- (a) improve road safety and the environment and contribute to improving the quality of life;
- (b) minimise the need to travel;
- (c) maximise people's accessibility to facilities, services, opportunities and resources; and
- (d) support the local economy

Provision for and the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport will generally be given greater priority than provision for private transport. Travel demand management measures will be introduced wherever appropriate in order to help meet the objectives of this policy.

Strategy Policy 5: Green Wedges

Green Wedges may be designated in local plans in association with planned urban extensions proposed in such plans. The purposes of Green Wedges are:

- (a) Protecting structurally important areas of open land which influence the form and direction of urban development;
- (b) Ensuring that open land extends outwards between the existing and planned development limits of the urban areas;
- (c) Preserving strategic landscape and wildlife links between the Countryside and urban open spaces;
- (d) Preventing the coalescence and maintaining the physical identity of settlements adjoining the main urban areas;

Within Green Wedges uses will be encouraged that provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents and promote the positive management of land to ensure that the Green Wedges remain or are enhanced as attractive contributions to the quality of life of nearby urban residents.

The following land uses will be acceptable in Green Wedges, provided the operational development associated with such uses does not damage the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge:

- (a) agriculture, including allotments and horticulture not accompanied by retail development;
- (b) outdoor recreation;
- (c) forestry;
- (d) footpaths, bridleways and cycleways
- (e) burial grounds

The following development will only be acceptable if appropriate measures are taken to minimise severance and adverse effects on the amenity of the Green Wedge:

- (f) mineral extraction;
- (g) road proposals or dedicated public transport routes referred to in the Development Plan, or where there is no alternative route available outside a Green Wedge;
- (h) park and ride facilities, if no suitable site outside a Green Wedge is available.

Provision will be made in Green Wedges for the retention or creation of green links between urban open spaces and the Countryside, and for the retention and enhancement of public access facilities, particularly for recreation.

Strategy Policy 6: Review of Green Wedges

The defined boundaries of Green Wedges in the following general locations will be reviewed as part of local plan reviews, and such reviews shall have regard to the sequential approach to new development in Strategy Policy 2A and to the criteria in Strategy Policy 2B:

In and around Leicester:

- a) Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall/Thurcaston/Anstey Cropston ;
- b) Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston (Soar Valley North);
- c) Thurmaston/Syston;
- d) Hamilton;
- e) Leicester/Scraptoft;
- f) Thurnby/Leicester/Oadby;
- g) Oadby/Leicester/Wigston;
- h) Whetstone/Blaby/Countesthorpe;
- i) Blaby/Glen Parva (Sence Valley);
- j) Whetstone/Enderby/Glen Parva/Braunstone/Blaby/Narborough/Cosby (Soar Valley South);
- k) Ratby/Groby/Glenfield/Kirby Muxloe/Kirby Fields/Braunstone Frith;
- l) Beaumont Leys/Glenfield/Anstey/Groby;

Other Areas:

- m) Loughborough/Shepshed;
- n) Loughborough/Quorn;
- o) Loughborough/Hathern;
- p) Coalville/Whitwick/Swannington;
- q) Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton.

Strategy Policy 7: Separation of Settlements

Predominantly open land between the defined development boundaries of neighbouring settlements which is not part of a Green Wedge but performs an essential function in keeping the built-up areas of those settlements separate may be defined in local plans as Areas of Separation. Within such areas, development will be permitted only where it would not result in a material reduction in the degree of separation between the neighbouring built-up areas.

Strategy Policy 8: Development in the Countryside

Land beyond the existing and planned limits to the built-up areas of settlements which is not land comprising a Green Wedge will be designated as Countryside.

All development proposals in the Countryside will be considered against landscape character assessments featured in local plans.

The Countryside will be protected for its own sake. Development in the Countryside will only be acceptable if the general appearance and character of the landscape and the countryside is safeguarded or enhanced. Built development should be well integrated in relation to existing development and designed sympathetically to fit into the local surroundings. Existing buildings should be re-used where appropriate. Development will be limited to the following purposes:

- (a) small scale development for employment or leisure;
- (b) dwellings essential for agricultural or forestry needs;
- (c) affordable housing for local needs adjoining villages in accordance with rural exceptions policies in local plans;
- (d) land-extensive outdoor recreation uses that do not include substantial built development; and
- (e) agricultural or forestry buildings.

In addition, the following uses may be accommodated if: they cannot be satisfactorily located within the existing and planned limits to the built up areas of settlements; it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding need for the development to be located in the Countryside; and appropriate works of mitigation are to be undertaken:

- (f) telecommunications installations;
- (g) energy installations;
- (h) minerals extraction and waste management development; and
- (i) transport infrastructure.

Strategy Policy 9: Mixed Use Development

Good quality mixed use will be promoted through the provision and retention of :

- a) a mix of compatible land uses that take into account the scale of development proposed, the range of land uses in the vicinity of the proposal and existing need in the area;
- b) local character and distinctiveness of recognised importance, and its protection or enhancement where necessary;
- c) convenient, safe and secure walking and cycling networks with priority access;
- d) dedicated public transport routes;
- e) areas of open space and green linkages; and

- f) residential environments which are free from the nuisance of through traffic.

Such mixed use development is of particular importance to promote vitality in the regeneration of urban areas.

Strategy Policy 10: Good Design

Good design will be promoted by ensuring that development provides for the efficient use of land in a manner which satisfactorily acknowledges environmental and amenity interests and:

- a) protects or enhances the form and local character and distinctiveness of the built and natural environment;
- b) ensures that areas of open spaces and green linkages are reserved and provided in new development;
- c) incorporates comprehensive landscaping within and around the development on a scale appropriate to the scale and impact of the development;
- d) maximises conservation of natural resources through the siting, orientation, scale and layout of buildings and spaces;
- e) incorporates innovative design where appropriate, especially in respect of energy efficiency and particularly in urban areas;
- f) takes account of the access needs of all people, including people with disabilities;
- g) minimises traffic nuisance and develops a high quality walking and cycling network;
- h) enhances the feeling of personal safety and minimises the potential for crime;
- i) incorporates ecological sites;
- j) incorporates sustainable drainage systems wherever possible.

Strategy Policy 11: Developer Contributions

Developers should meet the requirements for, and costs of, relevant infrastructure and facilities and other resources required to support the development. A comprehensive assessment of these requirements will be made.

Strategy Policy 12: Regeneration Areas

Measures will be taken to improve the quality of life within those areas suffering relative deprivation and also to help achieve investment to create homes, jobs, services and other facilities within urban areas.

The primary focus of measures to achieve sustainable regeneration will be the Leicester Priority Area. Priority will also be given to:

- a) the sustainable regeneration of pockets of deprivation within Leicestershire and Rutland, particularly in Loughborough; and
- b) support the former Leicestershire coalfield areas in the completion of a forward strategy to consolidate the regeneration process.

Strategy Policy 13: The National Forest

Within the National Forest, provision will be made for the planting of woodlands with public access, subject to environmental constraints.

In appropriate locations within the rural area of the National Forest, development will be acceptable which facilitates its use for agriculture or as a sustainable natural resource. Development which involves new buildings, significant structures or other operations, will be required to be accompanied by proposals for creating an appropriate woodland setting. All substantial development proposals will be required to reflect the National Forest context in their accompanying landscaping and planting.

Within the National Forest beyond the boundary of the Charnwood Forest, provision will be made for the creation of new leisure and tourism facilities and for public access, subject to environmental constraints. Development will be acceptable which meets the objectives of the National Forest Strategy in:

- a) providing public access opportunities through the provision of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways;
- b) providing for appropriate sporting activities within a wooded setting, including golf, fishing and water sports;
- c) providing for leisure facilities that can only be established in a planned landscape;
- d) providing landscaped sites to create a mature woodland setting for long-term forest-related leisure development;
- e) promoting natural biodiversity and enhancing the wider ecological value of the environment by providing for habitat creation and nature conservation.

Restoration of mineral/waste disposal sites will be required to accommodate one or more of those uses.

Strategy Policy 14: Charnwood Forest

The defined boundary of the Charnwood Forest Policy Area will be shown on local plan proposals maps.

Development within or which affects the Charnwood Forest Policy Area will be acceptable where it can be demonstrated to conserve or enhance the character of Charnwood Forest, including its landscape, ecology, cultural heritage, built heritage and recreational value.

The siting, scale, design and materials of the development should reflect and complement the character of the surrounding landscape and minimise any harm.

Where development may adversely affect the special qualities of the Charnwood Policy Area, it will only be allowed where:

- a) it can be demonstrated that there is a clear and overriding need for the development, and;
- b) any harm must be adequately compensated for with respect to the conservation and enhancement of the Charnwood Forest Policy area.

Strategy Policy 15: Rutland Water

Proposals for recreation, sports and tourism development will be permitted within the Rutland Water Area, subject to such development:

- (a) not harming the conservation objectives underlying the designation of the Ramsar site and the Special Protection Area at Rutland Water;
- (b) not detracting from the landscape character of the area;
- (c) being focussed on existing areas of recreational development, with the remainder of the area remaining largely undisturbed;
- (d) complementing existing facilities; and
- (e) not diminishing the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water as a water supply and recreational and ecological resource.

Strategy Policy 16: Junction 23a/24/24a Area

Beyond the boundaries of the Airport in the vicinity of junctions 23A/24/24A of the M1 further large concentrations of employment development or other travel intensive uses will not be acceptable.

Strategy Policy 17: Green Belt

Green Belt will be designated to include land lying to the south of the River Trent. The detailed boundary should follow clear physical boundaries and be continuous with the Nottingham and Derby Green Belt established in adjoining counties.

Within the Green Belt land should remain open in order to fulfil Green Belt purposes. Only appropriate development, located and designed so as not to compromise the open character of the Green Belt will be permitted.

Strategy Policy 18: Strategic River Corridors

The strategic importance for flood relief and biodiversity of the Rivers Soar, Trent, Welland, Wreake, Chater, Gwash, Mease, Eye, Sence (eastern) and Sence (western) and their floodplains will be recognised. Measures will be taken along these corridors through an integrated approach to protect and enhance:

- (a) their capacity to function as natural floodplains;
- (b) their linear continuity in the interests of biodiversity; and
- (c) the form, local character and distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment.

Proposals for improving access, recreation and tourism along these corridors will be encouraged where they do not have an unacceptable effect on the above interests.

Chapter 3: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic and Natural Environment

Environment Policy 1: Historic Environment

Measures will be taken to identify, protect, preserve and enhance areas, sites, buildings and settings of historic or architectural interest or archaeological importance. Development within Conservation Areas will be required to preserve or enhance the character and/or appearance of the area.

Proposals for development on, in, or adjacent to archaeological or other historic sites and buildings will be considered against the need to ensure their preservation and setting.

Development will only be acceptable where it would not adversely affect any scheduled ancient monument or other nationally important archaeological site, or its setting or amenity value.

Where a known site of county or local significance is to be affected, development may be acceptable if it allows its preservation in situ, or, where this is impractical, its investigation and recording.

Development will only be acceptable in areas of archaeological potential if proper evaluation of the archaeological implications of the proposed development has been undertaken and taken into account.

Environment Policy 2: The Natural Environment in Urban Areas

Important areas of open space and green linkages within built up areas will be identified, protected and enhanced. Open space deficiencies will be identified and opportunities taken to overcome them.

Environment Policy 3: Biodiversity Enhancement

Measures will be taken through development opportunities to

- a) protect, maintain and enhance natural biodiversity, having regard to the objectives of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan;
- b) protect, conserve and manage sites of ecological importance and protected species and their habitats;
- c) identify locations for habitat restoration and creation schemes, especially where they would link corridors, link isolated habitats or create buffer zones; and
- d) maintain and enhance the wider ecological value of the environment.

Environment Policy 3A: Protection of Important Species and Habitats

- i) **Habitats of International Importance**

Development will only be acceptable where it would not adversely affect designated or proposed Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation or Ramsar sites, unless there are no alternative solutions available and the development is needed for imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

ii) Habitats of National Importance

Development will only be acceptable where it would not adversely affect designated or proposed National Nature Reserves, or Sites of Special Scientific Interest designated because of their ecological interest, unless an overriding national need for the development can be shown to outweigh the sites' ecological interest and there are no alternative solutions available for that development.

iii) Habitats of Local Importance

Development will only be acceptable where it would not adversely affect:

- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation;
- Local Nature Reserves;
- priority habitats identified in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan that do not benefit from statutory protection; or,
- landscape features of importance to wild flora and fauna by reason of their function as a wildlife corridor, link or stepping stone between habitats,

unless an overriding national or local need can be shown to outweigh the ecological interest.

iv) Species of Acknowledged Importance

In considering proposals that would have an adverse effect on a species of acknowledged importance account will be taken of:

- the level of protection afforded to that species;
- the sensitivity of the species and the habitat on which it depends to any potential adverse effects caused by the proposals; and,
- the importance of the species and its habitat in the context of national and local Biodiversity Action Plans,

and development will not be permitted unless an overriding interest can be proven and there are no alternative solutions.

v) Mitigation and Compensation

Where development is allowed which could adversely affect a site or habitat of ecological importance, or a protected species, conditions will be imposed and/or planning obligations sought to:

- a) minimise disturbance;

- b) conserve and manage its ecological interest as far as possible;
- c) where appropriate, contribute towards the objectives of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan; and,
- d) where damage is unavoidable, provide new or replacement habitats and resting places so that the total ecological resource remains at least at its current level.

Environment Policy 4: Geology

Measures will be taken to protect and conserve sites of geological significance.

Development will only be acceptable where it would not adversely affect any designated:

- (a) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or National Nature Reserve (NNR) designated because of its geological interest; or,
- (b) Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS).

Unless, respectively:

- (a) An overriding national need; or,
- (b) An overriding local need can be shown to outweigh the geological importance, or a substitute site of equal or greater value can be provided and there is no other less geologically important site available for that development.

Where development is allowed which will affect any site of geological importance, conditions will be imposed to:

- a) Minimise damage;
- b) Conserve its geological interest as far as possible; and,
- c) Where damage is unavoidable, provide an acceptable substitute site.

Environment Policy 5: Woodlands

Measures will be taken to encourage improved management of woodlands and to increase the total woodland cover of the Plan Area, where appropriate in forms which respect and enhance local landscape character and local biodiversity.

Development will only be acceptable where it will not result in the loss of, or damage to ancient woodland.

Chapter 4: Resource Management

Resource Management Policy 1: Pollution

All new development will minimise or avoid air, noise, water, land and light pollution.

Regard will be given to the individual and cumulative impact of potentially polluting development in considering whether it would have an unacceptable effect on the environment.

Decisions concerning new sites for environmentally sensitive development will take account of the detrimental effects of existing and proposed sources of pollution.

Resource Management Policy 2: Energy Efficiency

All proposals for development of individual buildings, mixtures of land uses and land use patterns will be expected, through design, layout, use of materials, and relationship of different land uses, to take full account of their ability to:

- a) minimise the consumption of energy resources, particularly non-renewable energy;
- b) promote a more efficient use of energy resources;
- c) promote walking, cycling and the economic operation of public transport, rail freight and waterborne transport and
- d) reduce the need to travel by car.

Resource Management Policy 3: Energy Installations

Proposals for energy generating installations will be permitted provided that:

- any adverse impact is minimised and outweighed by the wider benefits that the proposal may bring;
- they do not adversely affect designated environmental assets or designated landscape features;
- they meet high environmental standards;
- they can demonstrate that they meet energy requirements;
- they are, as far as practicable, well located in relation to the existing electricity transmission network and;
- they offer, where possible, scope for heat recovery for example by the use of combined Heat and Power technology.

The generation of energy from renewable sources will be encouraged and particular account will be taken of the wider environmental benefits of using renewable energy sources.

Resource Management Policy 4: The Water Environment

Development will only be acceptable:

- a) if measures to maximise efficient use of water, including grey water, have been taken into account;
- b) where it will not have an unacceptable impact on the source of the water supply, the supply of water for navigation, or the role of the natural watercourse system for providing essential drainage of land, valuable wildlife environments and amenity areas;
- c) in locations where adequate water resources exist, or where resources can be provided in a sustainable manner;
- d) if surface water run-off is minimised by incorporating and maintaining sustainable drainage systems or retention systems, where appropriate.

Development will not be acceptable if it would be at unacceptable risk from flooding or, if alone or together with existing and committed development, it would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, unless provision is made for adequate measures to mitigate the effects on the flooding regime.

Resource Management Policy 5: Agricultural Land

Development affecting agricultural land which is irreversible will only be acceptable where it would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a), except where there is an overriding need for the development and where greater weight should be given to sustainability considerations in respect of alternative sites on poorer quality land.

Resource Management Policy 6: Safeguarding Mineral Resources

Land will not be allocated and planning permission will not be granted for surface development which could sterilise important, economically workable deposits of minerals. Where development of land is considered essential, and proven resources would be permanently sterilised, planning permission will be granted for the prior extraction of the mineral, provided any adverse environmental impacts can be kept to an acceptable level.

Resource Management Policy 7: Land Release - Minerals

When allocating land and considering planning applications for the extraction of minerals, consideration will be given to the need to release sufficient land to:

- a) maintain an adequate supply of minerals to contribute to local, regional and national needs, while minimising the effect on the environment and agriculture;
- b) maintain an appropriate land bank of permitted reserves of construction aggregates in accordance with guidelines for aggregate provision in England and Wales and the findings of the East Midlands Regional Aggregates Working Party; and
- c) maintain a sufficient stock of permitted reserves for limestone (used for non-aggregate purposes) and clays, having regard to the needs and nature of the particular industry concerned.

Resource Management Policy 8: Land Release: Waste Management

When allocating land or considering planning applications for the management of waste, sufficient provision will be made to meet needs, based upon the following principles:

- i) Consideration of the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO);
- ii) Regional Self-Sufficiency;
- iii) The Proximity Principle; and,
- iv) The Waste Hierarchy.

Resource Management Policy 9: Environmental Impact of Mineral Extraction and Waste Management

When allocating land and considering planning applications for the extraction of minerals or for waste management development or related development, account will be taken of its likely impact on the environment and the need for the development when it is a material consideration. Where development would cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance, planning permission will only be granted where the need for the development outweighs such demonstrable harm.

Resource Management Policy 10: Igneous Rock Extraction

Planning permission for igneous rock extraction will be granted where the proposal is to extend an existing operational quarry to ensure continuity of supply, provided that the environmental impact of the proposed development can reasonably be kept to an acceptable level.

New quarries will only be considered if the continuity of supply could not be met from existing quarries, or extensions to them, and provided that the environmental impact of the proposed development can reasonably be kept to an acceptable level.

Resource Management Policy 11: Coal Mining and Colliery Spoil Disposal

Planning permission will not normally be granted for the extraction of coal or for the disposal of colliery spoil unless:

- a) the adverse environmental impact of the proposed development can be kept to an acceptable level; or
- b) in other cases, the likely impacts of the proposal are outweighed by the benefits.

In the case of proposals for opencast coal extraction, particular regard will be given to the potential for cumulative impact, including the potential impact on existing businesses and opportunities for future investment, and any potential environmental improvements and other benefits which the development would bring about.

Resource Management Policy 12: Transportation of Minerals and Waste

When allocating land and considering planning applications for the extraction of minerals and waste management operations, account will be taken of the transportation implications of the proposed development. Rail, canal and pipeline as a means of transporting minerals and waste should be used wherever reasonably practicable. Where road borne transportation is involved, associated heavy lorry movements will be restricted from using unsuitable roads.

Resource Management Policy 13: Restoration Aftercare and Afteruse

When granting planning permission for mineral working or the use of land for the disposal of waste materials or related development, restoration to an acceptable use will be required at the earliest opportunity. Priority will be given, where appropriate, to restoration to forestry, water recreation or nature conservation uses. After restoration has been completed a programme of aftercare will be required. The best and most versatile agricultural land will be restored to a standard that ensures its long term potential for agricultural use.

Resource Management Policy 14: Recovery of Waste

Waste management proposals for the recovery of waste will be permitted, provided any adverse environmental impacts of the development can be kept to an acceptable level.

Chapter 5: Accessibility and Transport

Accessibility and Transport Policy 1: Development and the Transport System

Developers will be expected to maximise the potential for access to and from new development by walking, cycling and public transport, and to take other appropriate measures to minimise the traffic generated by that development, including the formulation and implementation of travel plans. If, despite the above measures, the remaining traffic generated by the development, together with that from existing and committed development would:

- (a) impair road safety;
 - (b) have an unacceptable effect on the environment; or
 - (c) exceed the capacity available in the local highway system,
- further adequate and environmentally acceptable road improvements should be undertaken, at the developer's expense, to mitigate the impact of the development.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 2: Walking

Provision for walking will be made by:

- a) encouraging pedestrian priority and traffic free zones in central areas and other appropriate locations;
- b) maintaining and enhancing existing pedestrian routes which link day to day activities and by promoting the development of new routes where deficiencies exist; and
- c) ensuring that all development proposals include attractive, convenient and safe pedestrian access and facilities, including those suited to people with mobility impairments.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 3 : Cycling

Provision for cycling will be made by:

- a) identifying, safeguarding and augmenting a network of safe, direct and convenient cycle routes which facilitate cycle access within and between major journey attractors; and
- b) ensuring that development proposals provide convenient and safe cycle access and facilities, including parking provision.

Links with the existing or proposed network of cycle routes will be made or maintained.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 4: Buses

Development will be acceptable provided that:

- a) access for buses is provided such that all parts of the development are within convenient walking distance of an actual or potential bus stop, with maximum distances as specified in local plans.

In identifying new sites for development, preference will be given to the siting of the development in locations best able to support bus services of an adequate frequency to a realistic alternative to the private car.

Measures will be taken, in partnership with the bus companies, to assist the efficiency and quality of the bus services by investment in bus priorities, information systems and improved bus terminals and stops.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 5: Development of Rail Passenger Services

Land for stations and infrastructure for local rail passenger services, including extra track along existing trackbeds, will be safeguarded from other development.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 6: Freight

The potential of rail or waterway connections will be fully explored for any development which generates significant freight movements. If rail or waterway movements are not possible, provision for this development should be made in locations where access to the principal road network is via roads suitable to take the predicted heavy goods vehicle traffic.

Land with potential for rail or waterway freight connections should be identified in local plans and protected from other development. Development will be permitted providing the development or associated activities do not have an unacceptable effect on:

- a) residential amenity;
- b) the general appearance and character of the countryside; and
- c) the biodiversity of the waterway corridor, particularly where a Site of Special Scientific Interest has been designated.

Rail or waterway based proposals that do not satisfy the above criteria may be permitted if there is an overriding sustainability benefit, provided that the main justification for the development is the need for rail or waterway access for the movement of goods or raw materials.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 7: Parking Provision in New Development

Maximum standards for car parking relating to developments above defined threshold sizes will be specified that accord with the circumstances and declared objectives of local plan areas.

Parking provision above the maximum will only be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate by a Transport Assessment or other appropriate evidence that a higher level of parking is needed.

Sufficient secure cycle and motorcycle parking will be required to accommodate the anticipated demand, including modal split targets, where appropriate.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 8: Public Car Parks

In the central areas of Leicester, the main towns, district and local centres, further public car parking not associated with new development will be permitted only if it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- a) a shortage of short stay parking is detracting from the vitality and viability of the centre and that shortage cannot be met in any other way; or
- b) excessive on-street parking is having an adverse effect on highway safety and amenity which cannot reasonably be resolved by any other means.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 9: Park and Ride

Provision will be made and land safeguarded for bus and rail based park and ride sites at locations within and adjoining Leicester and adjoining settlements and, if appropriate, within and adjoining the main towns.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 10: New Roads, Road Improvements and Traffic Management

Where justified as part of an integrated and sustainable transport solution, bypasses and other new roads will be constructed where the environmental and road safety benefits to the locality bypassed exceed the environmental disbenefits of road construction to a degree which justifies the investment.

Alterations to existing roads and traffic management schemes will be carried out to:

- a) improve the local environment;
- b) encourage walking and cycling;
- c) provide better operating conditions for public transport; and
- d) improve road safety.

The following road schemes costing more than £5 million and as identified in current LTPs will be implemented during the Plan period:

- (i) A511 (A50) Ashby Bypass Stage 2;
- (ii) A47 Earl Shilton Bypass;
- (iii) A606 Oakham-Langham Bypass (completion); and
- (iv) A607 Rearsby Bypass.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 11: Transport Routes

Land reserved for routes for walking, cycling, buses, railways, light rapid transit or highways will be identified in local plans and safeguarded from other development.

Development will not be acceptable if it is likely to impair the

continuity of disused railway lines which have potential for re-use as routes for walking, cycling, buses, railways or light rapid transit.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 12: Road Related Service Facilities

Road related service facilities will only be acceptable to achieve an appropriate level of provision at selected key sites which minimise the impact on the environment and local amenity.

Accessibility and Transport Policy 13: Airports and General Aviation

Provision will be made for the operational needs of the East Midlands Airport and for improved surface access to the Airport, subject to an evaluation of the potential benefits of any such development to the Leicestershire and East Midlands economy against the environmental harm associated with the expansion of air transport.

The establishment or physical expansion of other commercial airports will not be acceptable.

The potential economic and other benefits of proposals for expanded facilities for General Aviation, including leisure and small scale business flying, will be balanced against the likely impact on the local environment of any proposals, including in particular, aircraft noise, access traffic and visual intrusion.

Chapter 6: Housing

Housing Policy 1: The Quantity of Housing Land

Provision will be made for 63,000 dwellings within the Plan Area between 1996 and 2016, of which about 31,500 dwellings shall be located in the Central Leicestershire Policy Area. Provision by district and unitary authority area, including an element for the Central Leicestershire Policy Area, will be as follows:

<i>Dwellings (figures rounded)</i>			
<i>Local Authority Area.</i>	<i>Central Leics.</i>	<i>Rest of Plan Area</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Blaby</i>	<i>4,200</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>4,650</i>
<i>Charnwood</i>	<i>2,950</i>	<i>6,450</i>	<i>9,400</i>
<i>Harborough</i>	<i>2,700</i>	<i>4,850</i>	<i>7,550</i>
<i>Hinckley&Bosworth</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>5,850</i>	<i>6,800</i>
<i>Leicester</i>	<i>19,000</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>19,000</i>
<i>Melton</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>4,200</i>	<i>4,200</i>
<i>NW Leicestershire.</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>7,350</i>	<i>7,350</i>
<i>Oadby&Wigston</i>	<i>1,700</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1,700</i>
<i>Rutland</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2,350</i>	<i>2,350</i>
<i>Total Plan Area</i>	<i>31,500</i>	<i>31,500</i>	<i>63,000</i>

Housing Policy 2: Strategic Greenfield Housing Sites

No more than 50 hectares of new greenfield housing land should be allocated on Strategic Greenfield Housing Sites in Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth and Oadby and Wigston. Development of these sites will be phased as follows:

<i>2011 – 2016 (hectares)</i>			
<i>Local Authority Area</i>	<i>Central Leics</i>	<i>Rest of Plan Area</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Charnwood</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Harborough</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Hinckley&Bosworth</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Oadby&Wigston</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Total Plan Area</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>50</i>

Housing Policy 3: New Housing Provision on Previously Developed Land and through Conversions.

At least 50% of additional dwellings in the Plan period should be provided on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings.

Local plans should put in place policies and select sites to maximise the re-use of previously developed land and conversions of existing buildings,

setting appropriate targets in the light of these policies and allocations and the findings of urban capacity studies.

Housing Policy 4: Affordable Housing

Provision will be made in local plans for affordable housing for households unable to purchase or rent adequate housing on the open market, to a level identified as a result of local needs surveys and assessments. Policies and proposals to provide for the identified need will be designed to reflect variations in local circumstances in both urban and rural areas.

Housing Policy 5: Density and Design

Housing development should be of a type and design to achieve as high a net density as possible, taking account of:

- (a) proximity and accessibility to centres;
- (b) the provision of a mix of housing types to establish socially mixed communities;
- (c) good principles of design and layout which make the most economical use of land and respect the local context;
- (d) green space and landscaping requirements.

Subject to the considerations set out above, housing developments on sites of 0.3 hectares or more should attain the following net densities:

Within other main town centres, local centres and other locations well served by public transport and accessible to services and facilities	A minimum of 40 dwellings per hectare
<i>Other locations</i>	A minimum of -30 dwellings per hectare
Within and adjoining the centres of Leicester and Loughborough	A minimum of 50 dwellings per hectare

Housing Policy 6: Gypsy Caravan Sites

Provision for both permanent and transit gypsy caravan sites should be:

- a) in areas where there is an identified need;
- b) in areas frequented by gypsies;
- c) reasonably accessible to community services and facilities; and
- d) capable of sympathetic assimilation into their surroundings.

Chapter 7: Employment

Employment Policy 1: Quantity of Employment Land for New Development

Provision will be made for the development of about 1244 hectares of land for employment in the industrial, office, warehousing and distribution sectors (B Use Class) in the Plan Area between 1996-2016; to be distributed as follows:

Local Plan Area	Hectares		
	Central Leicestershire	Rest of Plan Area	Total
Blaby	144	2	146
Charnwood*	72	134	206
Harborough	28	142	170
Hinckley & Bosworth	19	103	122
Leicester	89	0	89
Melton	0	125	125
N W Leicestershire	0	326	326
Oadby & Wigston	24	0	24
Rutland	0	37	37
Total Plan Area	376	868	1,244

* The provision figure for Charnwood includes 50 hectares to be allocated for a science and technology park in Loughborough.

The provision of a range of sites for employment uses in terms of size, quality and location will be sought, having regard for local needs.

Employment Policy 2: Strategic Employment Sites

In meeting the employment land provisions in Employment Policy 1 provision will be made in local plans for Strategic Employment Sites for B1, B2 and B8 uses as appropriate. They will be within Leicester, Blaby District (close to Leicester), Charnwood District (one close to Loughborough and one close to Leicester), Harborough District (close to Leicester and Oadby and Wigston), Hinckley and Bosworth District (close to Hinckley) and Oadby and Wigston District. Development of these sites will be phased as follows:

Local Plan Area	1996-2011		2011-2016	
	Central	Rest of	Central	Rest of
	Leics	Plan Area	Leics	Plan Area
Baby			25	
Charwood	20	20	10	
Harborough	20		5	
Hirley & Bosworth		25		20
Leicester*	20			
Cadby & Wigston	15			
Total Plan Area	75	45	40	20

* This could include a number of smaller sites that are strategic in nature

Strategic Employment Sites should be:

- a) in locations within or adjoining the urban areas with good access to the road network;
- b) in locations which are capable of being made accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- c) of a good standard of design, layout and landscaping.

“Stand alone” B1 (a) major office development should accord with Employment Policy 3.

Local Plans may provide for the phasing of development on Strategic Employment Sites, having regard to the sequential approach underlying Strategy Policy 3A.

Other sites may also be brought forward which meet the needs of the Plan Area from the general supply of employment land.

Employment Policy 3: Office Development

Major office development should be located within Leicester City Centre or central areas that are well served by public transport.

Edge-of-centre sites well served by public transport will only be considered where there are no central area sites available.

Out-of-centre sites well served by public transport will only be considered where there are no central area or edge-of-centre sites available.

Employment Policy 4: Science and Technology Parks

Provision will be made for a hierarchy of sites for high technology firms and technology transfer. These should include:

- a) incubator facilities as close as possible to related research institutions;
- b) well managed, ready built small units for existing high technology, small to medium size enterprises;

c) at least one substantial science park development.

Land for one substantial science park, up to a maximum of 50 hectares, should be allocated in Loughborough close to the University.

Development on these sites will be required to provide a high standard of design and layout commensurate with a high quality business environment.

Restrictions limiting the use of such sites primarily to B1(b) of the Use Classes Order should be negotiated.

Employment Policy 5: Review and Protection of Employment Land and Buildings

Existing employment site allocations will be reviewed as part of the local plan process. An assessment will be made of the quality and quantity of land allocated, in the light of the Structure Plan employment land requirement for that area, trends in take-up, and the sequential approach and criteria in Strategy Policies 3A and 3B. Key existing and proposed employment sites will be identified and safeguarded in local plans from other development proposals.

Development of other existing and proposed employment sites or the re-use of employment buildings for other uses or for mixed development will be permitted if:

- (a) the change would not result in a shortage of employment land or buildings in the area; or
- (b) the land or buildings are no longer suitable for employment purposes; or
- (c) the site would make an important contribution towards improving the environment; or
- (d) the proposed use is ancillary to an existing or proposed employment use.

Employment Policy 6: Storage and Distribution

The use of employment land for storage and distribution purposes (Use Class B8) will be permitted on sites with good access to the Principal Road Network and provided that:

- a) development would not cause unacceptable environmental consequences; and
- b) any potential for development to be served by rail or water freight, to meet current needs and those which may emerge in the future, is maximised.

Employment Policy 7: The Rural Economy: Employment in Rural Settlements

Provision for employment development will be made within and adjoining rural centres, and will be permitted in other rural settlements, either in the form of new development or from the conversion of existing buildings, subject to the development individually or cumulatively with other development:

- a) being of a scale and type that is appropriate to the form, character and setting of the settlement; and
- b) not having an unacceptable impact in terms of traffic generated, access or parking arrangements.

Employment Policy 8: Hazardous Installations

Proposals for hazardous installations will only be permitted if:

- a) there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on the population and the environment; and
- b) adequate access arrangements are made on to the rail network or the Principal Road Network for the transportation of hazardous materials.

Chapter 8: Central Areas and Shopping

Central Areas and Shopping Policy 1: Existing Centres for Shopping and Other Services

The role of Leicester's Central Area as a regional centre will be sustained and increased through the provision of retail, leisure, cultural, tourist and other central area facilities, major office development and mixed use developments.

The role of the central areas of Ashby, Blaby, Beaumont Leys, Coalville, Hamilton, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray, Oadby, Wigston, Oakham and Uppingham will be sustained and increased, and where appropriate expanded, through the provision of retail, leisure, cultural, tourist and other central area facilities, office development and mixed use developments.

Provision will also be made for measures to improve the accessibility of the above centres, particularly by public transport, and for improvements to the quality, safety, convenience and attractiveness of their environments.

Central Areas and Shopping Policy 2: Retail Development and Community Facilities to Serve Local Needs

Where their demise would result in an identified need not being met locally or a deficiency arising, existing shops, services and facilities in centres not named in Central Areas and Shopping Policy 1 will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Adequate provision will be made for new shops, services and other facilities in new developments, and such facilities will also be permitted where these relate reasonably to local needs in existing residential, employment and mixed use development. Proposals should be of an appropriate scale and nature. Pedestrians and cyclists should have priority access to any new developments, which should also be easily accessible by public transport.

Central Areas and Shopping Policy 3: Out-of-Centre Retailing

New, or significant incremental expansion of retail or leisure and entertainment development should not be permitted in out of centre locations unless:

- a) there is a clearly defined and agreed need for the proposed development;
- b) no suitable sites are available in the sequentially preferred locations set out in Strategy Policy 3A (with the exception of Shepshed) or in district or local centres providing the development is consistent with the scale and function of that centre;
- c) the proposal would not prejudice the development of sites allocated for these or any other purpose;
- d) the flow of investment to established centres can be shown to be of a level that will enable their vitality and viability to be maintained and enhanced

- taking into account the cumulative effect of the impact of other development proposals and outstanding planning permissions;
- e) easy, convenient and safe access for the population of the catchment area on foot or by a realistic choice of transport can be secured;
 - f) impact on car use and car parking provision is acceptable;
 - g) historic and natural environments are not adversely affected; and
 - h) appropriate conditions on the type of goods sold can be applied.

There is no requirement for a new regional or sub regional shopping centre within the Plan Area.

Central Areas and Shopping Policy 4: Residential Development in Central Areas

In central areas, provision will be made for residential development.

Residential uses in central areas should be permitted through:

- a) good quality mixed use schemes; and/or
- b) greater use of vacant accommodation on upper floors above shops and offices, and conversion of sustainably located unused commercial and industrial buildings (or parts thereof) which are unlikely to be redeveloped for commercial, industrial or mixed use.

The net loss of existing housing through change of use or demolition will not be permitted.

Central Areas and Shopping Policy 5: Shopping and Other Facilities in Rural Areas

Proposals for new shops, services and other facilities needed to meet local needs or for recreation and tourism in rural centres and villages will be approved subject to the development being of a scale, size, form and character appropriate to the settlement.

Proposals for farm shops and/or shops ancillary to rural petrol stations will only be permitted where the development:

- a) is of an appropriate scale, size, form and character;
- b) will not have an adverse effect on the viability of nearby shops; and
- c) will not have an unacceptable adverse impact in terms of traffic generated, access or parking arrangements.

Conditions will be imposed to ensure that such shops do not sell goods which are unrelated to the reasonable needs of the communities and users which they are intended to serve.

Chapter 9: Leisure

Leisure Policy 1: Leisure Provision and New Development

Provision will be made for suitable formal and informal leisure facilities as part of new built development.

Leisure Policy 2: Leisure and Tourism Development

Provision will be made for:

- a) sustainable forms of tourism such as walking and cycling;
- b) proposals which reduce pressure on areas presently experiencing the greatest leisure and tourism demand;
- c) the improvement and establishment of sports facilities which provide for a local, regional or national need;
- d) large scale spectator facilities which demonstrate effective management of the peaks of demand and minimise the effect on residential areas;
- e) development which supports the heritage of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland;
- f) opportunities to create employment and achieve investment in the Regeneration Areas; and
- g) land extensive leisure and recreational facilities on the fringe of urban areas.

Leisure Policy 3: Protection of Recreation Land and Buildings

It will not be acceptable for land or buildings in recreation use and serving a particular community to be developed for non recreational use unless:

- a) suitable alternative provision results in at least the equivalent community benefit and is made close enough to serve the same community;
- b) the site no longer provides open space or other facilities which are required for private or public use; or
- c) the benefits to the community arising from the development would outweigh the loss of the land or building.

Leisure Policy 4: Public Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

Where development proposals affect a public right of way, the development must ensure the existing or diverted route is both convenient and safe in order to encourage its future use.

Advantage will be taken to secure appropriate, improved access into the countryside, including opportunities presented by development schemes.

The creation of new routes for leisure cycling, walking and horse riding will be encouraged.

Leisure Policy 5: Water Recreation

The development of new areas of water for recreational use will be encouraged where they do not cause unacceptable damage to the existing water supply.

The development of related recreation facilities in the vicinity of the waterways network on sites in or adjoining settlements will be encouraged.

Development to enable the use of the waterways for public transport will be encouraged.

Leisure Policy 6: Caravan and Camping Sites

Provision will be made for static holiday and touring caravans and camping on sites that are not visually intrusive, which respect the character of the area and which have good access to the road system.

Leisure Policy 7: Noisy Sports

Where existing facilities are inadequate to meet demand, sites for noisy sports will be identified by the Local Planning Authority which would not cause an unacceptable disturbance to residential areas or other environmentally sensitive areas.

These areas will be defined, recognising that demand stretches beyond the immediate area of individual Local Plans. The sites should be accessible to their potential users and in areas of low conservation value where the ambient noise level is already high, or on sites with adequate noise shielding.