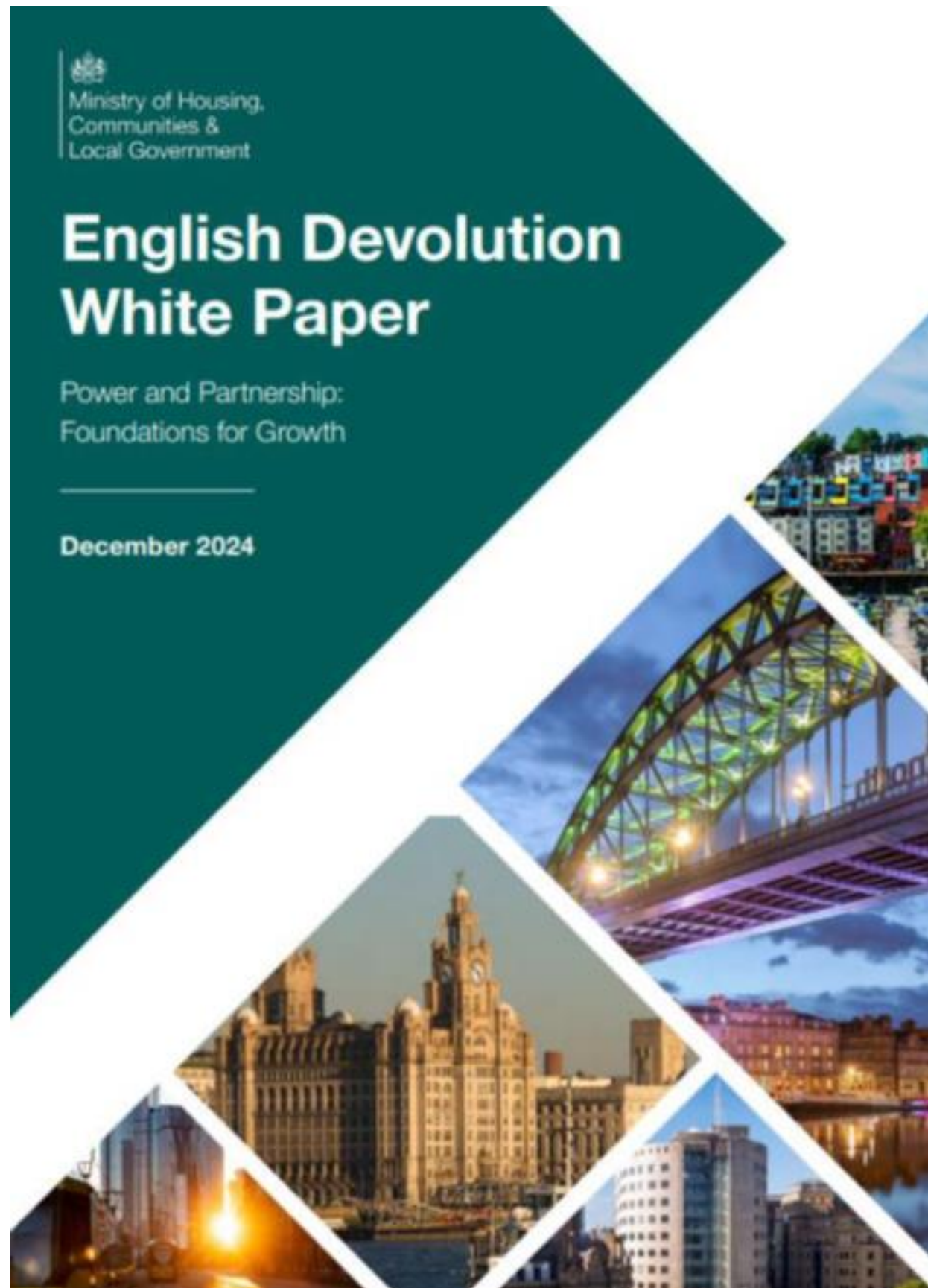


Devolution and local government reorganisation

Briefing

Interim LGR submission

March 2025



The Government's approach to devolution

Deepen devolution to all England over next 5 years

Rebalance power from central to local government

Universal coverage of strategic authorities – clear preference for a mayor with associated powers

Align public authority boundaries to strategic authority boundaries (eg. police and fire)

Local government reorganisation in two tier areas and for unitary councils where size and boundaries hinder delivery of sustainable services

Local government reorganisation to unlock devo

What Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland agreed and sent to the Minister – January 2025

“We are clear that any LGR option will need to address the boundaries of the City.”

“...expansion of the city boundary... will deliver the right conditions... to ignite growth of the local and sub-regional economy, [create] a more efficient and financially sustainable local government structure allowing more effective public service delivery.”

“...we collectively recognise that we are an area which needs reorganisation to unlock devolution.”

Government response Feb 2025:

- Formal invitation to councils to submit proposals
- Call for simpler, sensible and more financially sustainable unitary local government structures, complementing plans for devolution
- Interim plan to be submitted by 21 March
- Full proposal to be submitted by 28 November



Proposals should consider

- Single tier of local government
- Population of 500,000 or more
- Sensible geography
- Sensible economic areas
- Improvement to local services
- Efficiency savings
- Local identity, and cultural and historic importance
- Support to devolution
- Justification needed for not using existing district boundaries as 'building blocks'

What the Government asked for



Strategic authorities

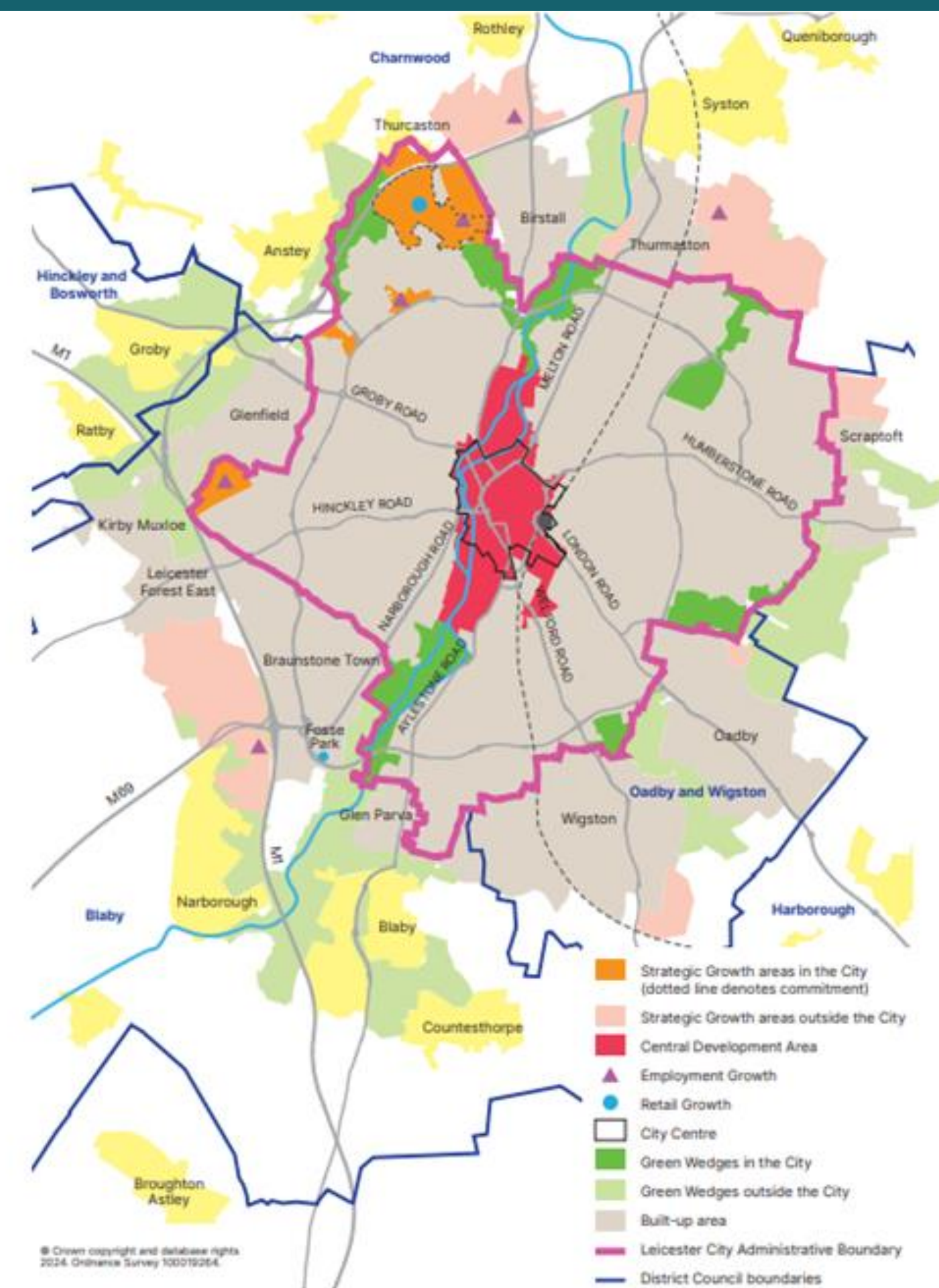
- Sensible population ratios between unitary local authorities and any strategic authority
- New strategic authorities – combined population of 1.5 million+
- In agreeing areas for strategic authorities, the government will consider:
 - Scale
 - Economies
 - Contiguity
 - No devolution islands
 - Delivery
 - Alignment
 - Identity

Government requirements



Existing city boundary

- Accident of history
- Illogical boundaries
- Heavily constrained – housing, employment land
- Constrained financially – low tax base
- Inefficient service delivery: waste collection, highway maintenance, education



City boundary context – boundary comparisons

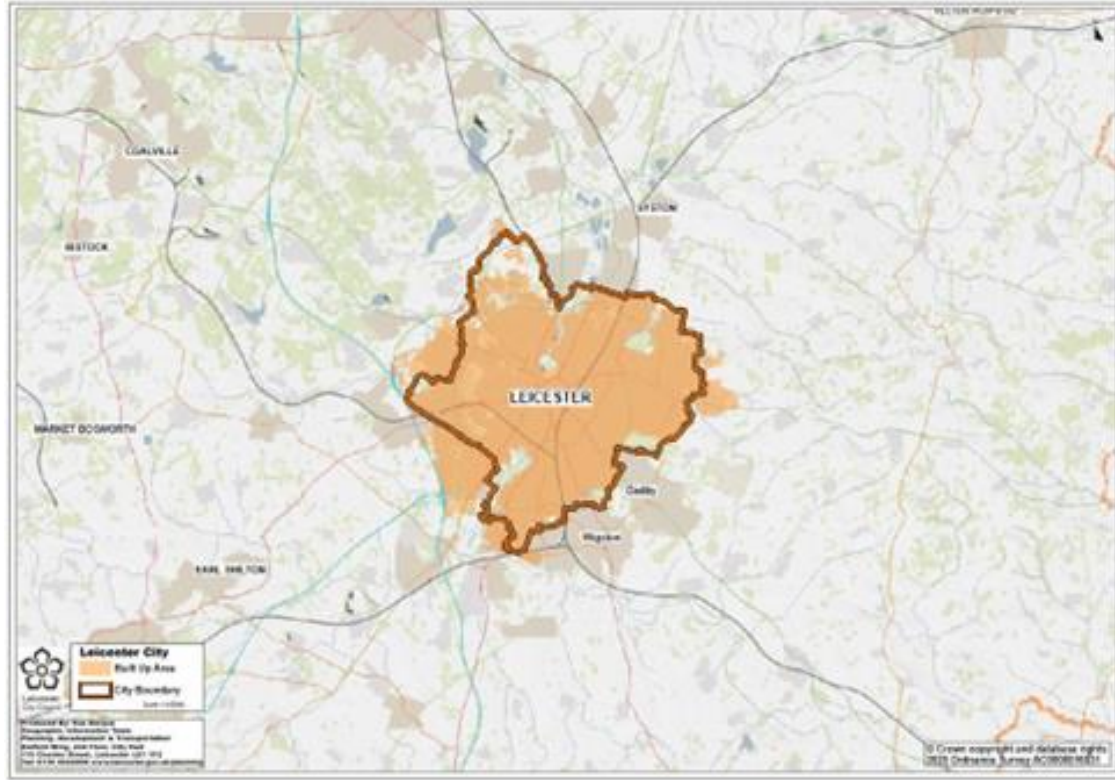
Leicester

Population: 372k

Area km2: 73

Population density
pop'n/km2:

5095



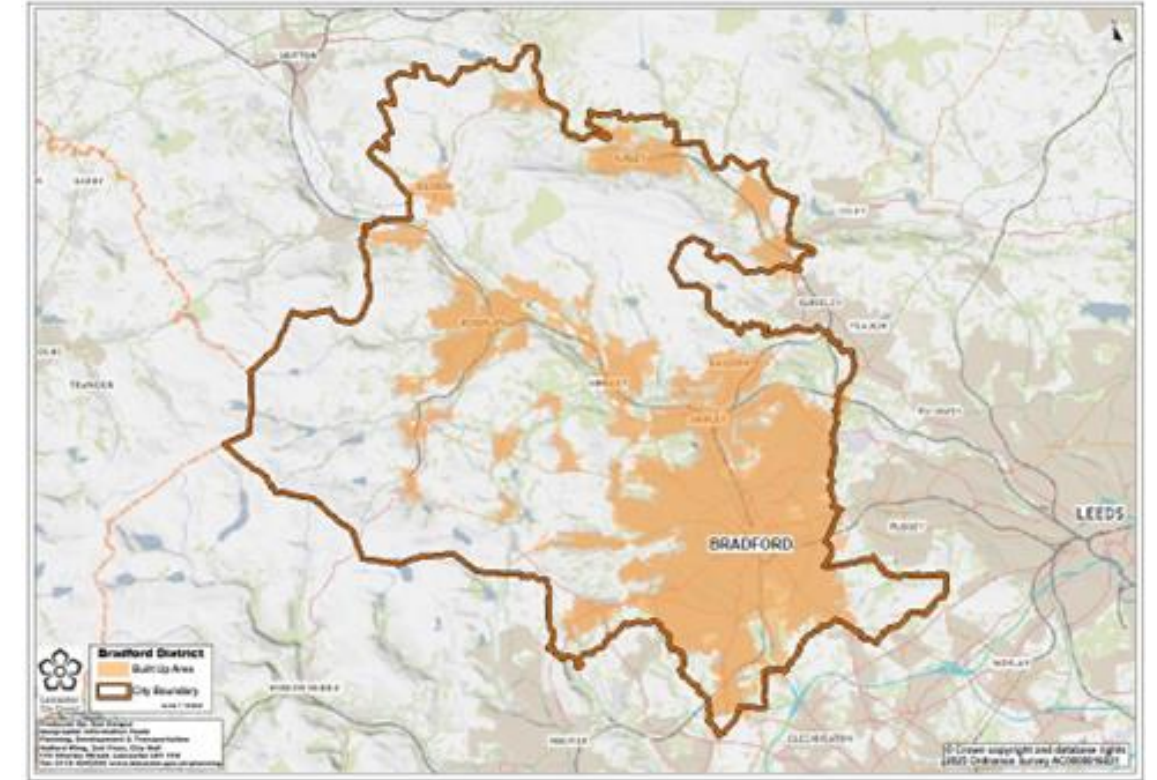
Bradford

Population: 553k

Area km2: 365

Population density
pop'n/km2:

1514



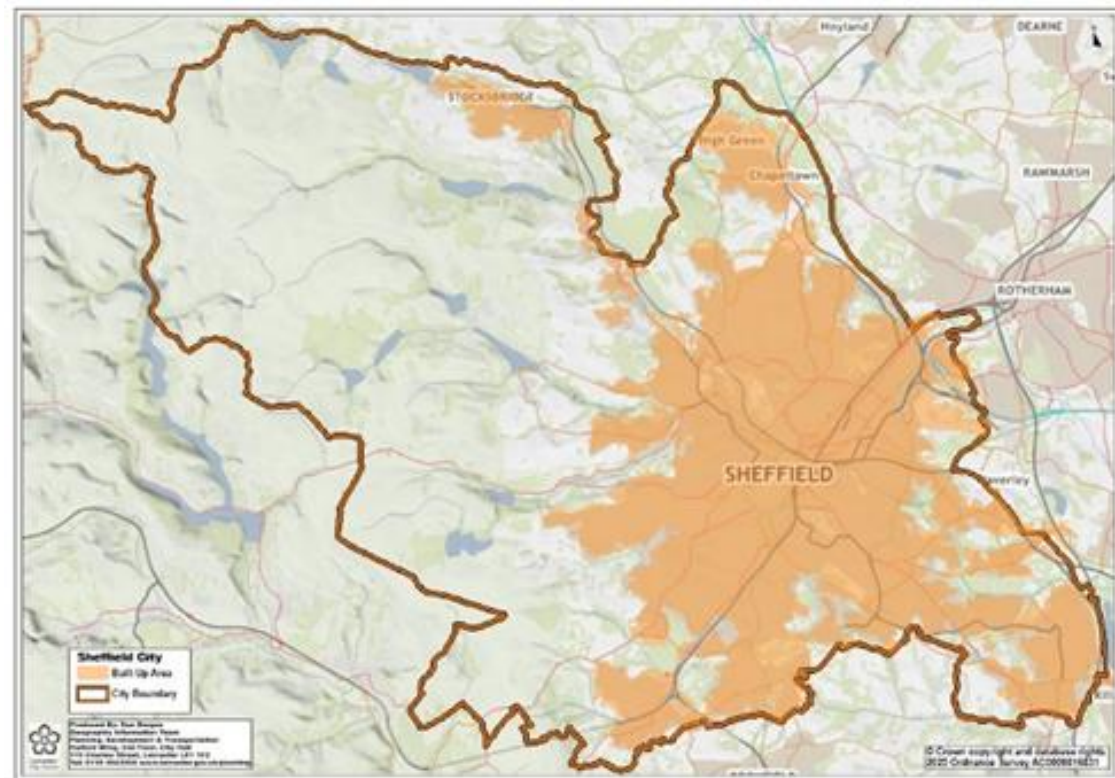
Sheffield

Population: 564k

Area km2: 367

Population density
pop'n/km2:

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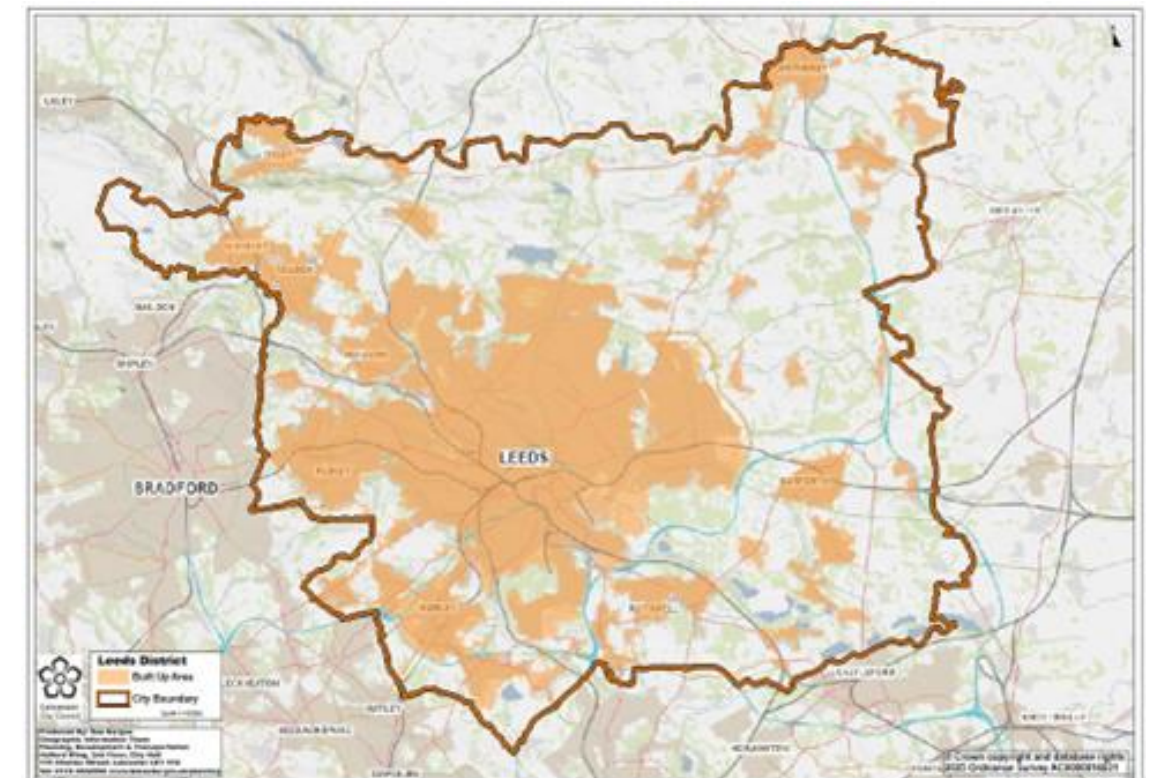
Leeds

Population: 820k

Area km2: 550

Population density
pop'n/km2:

1493



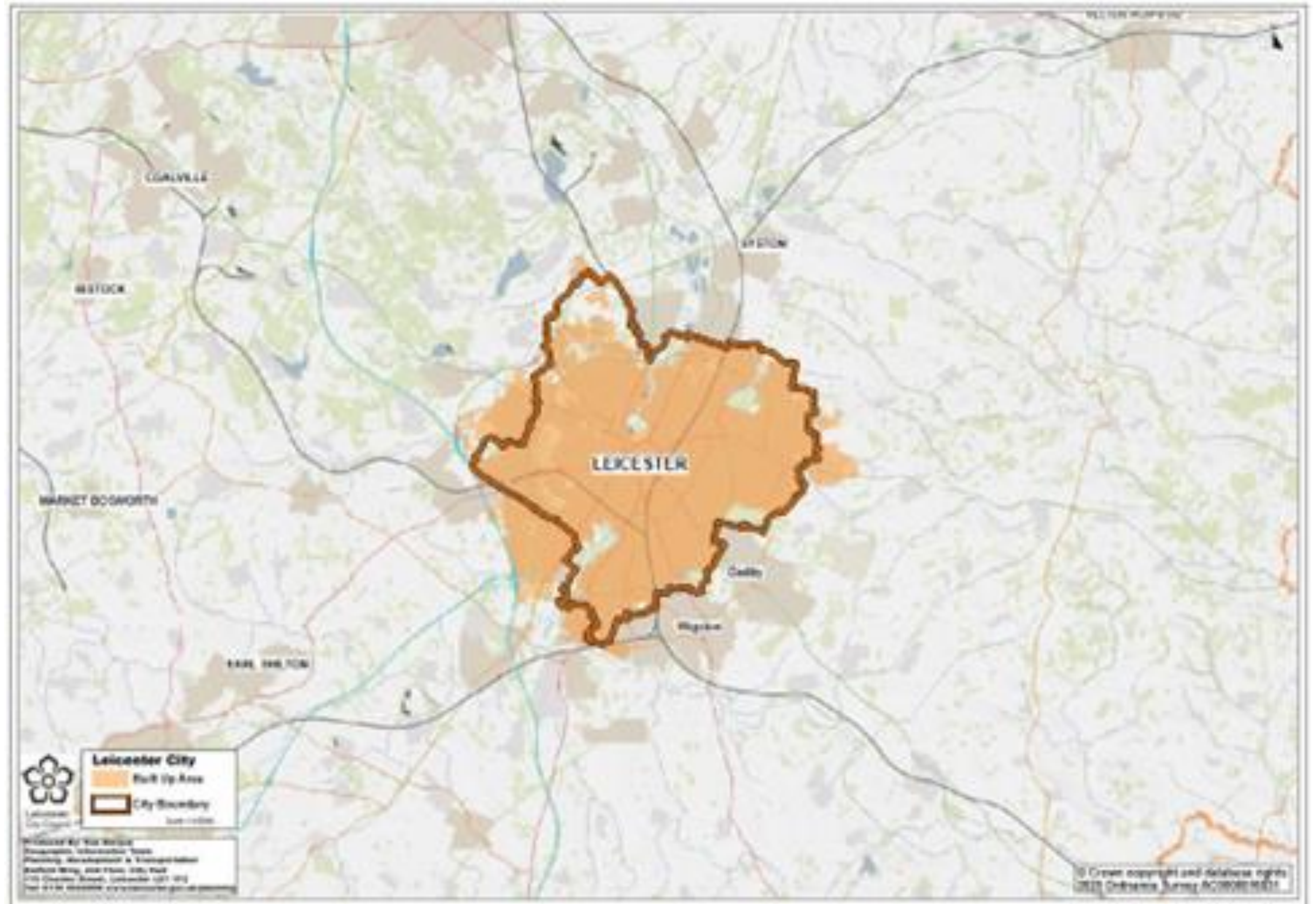
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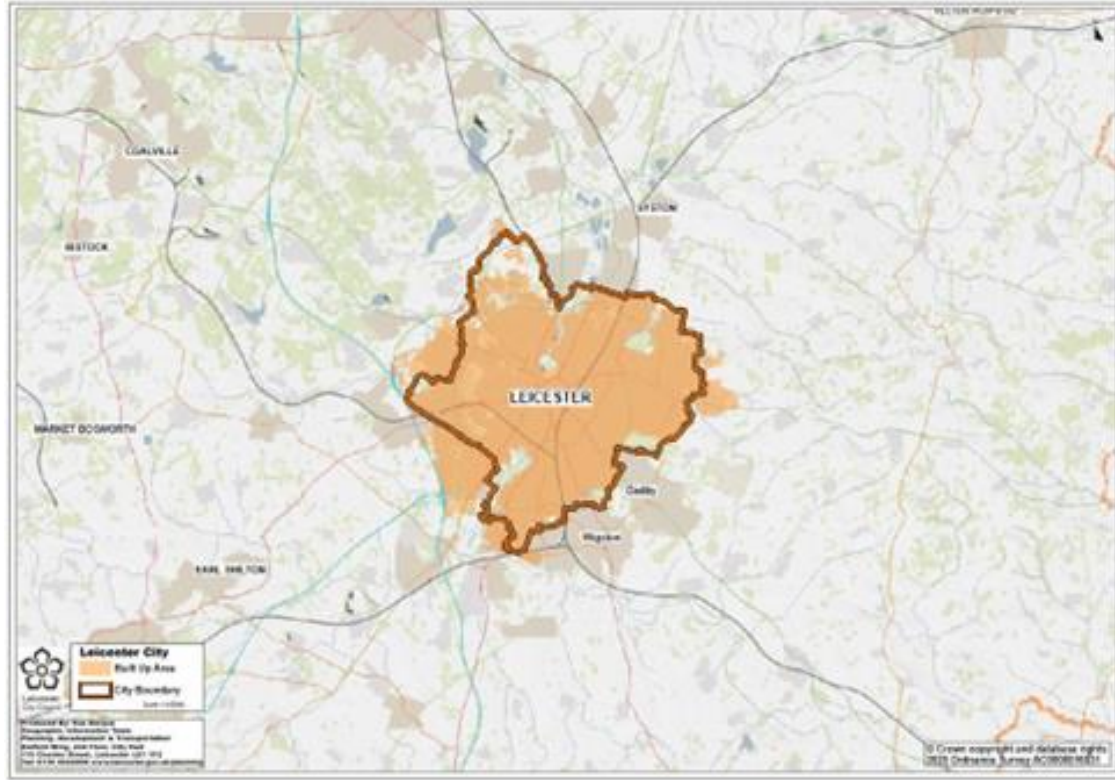
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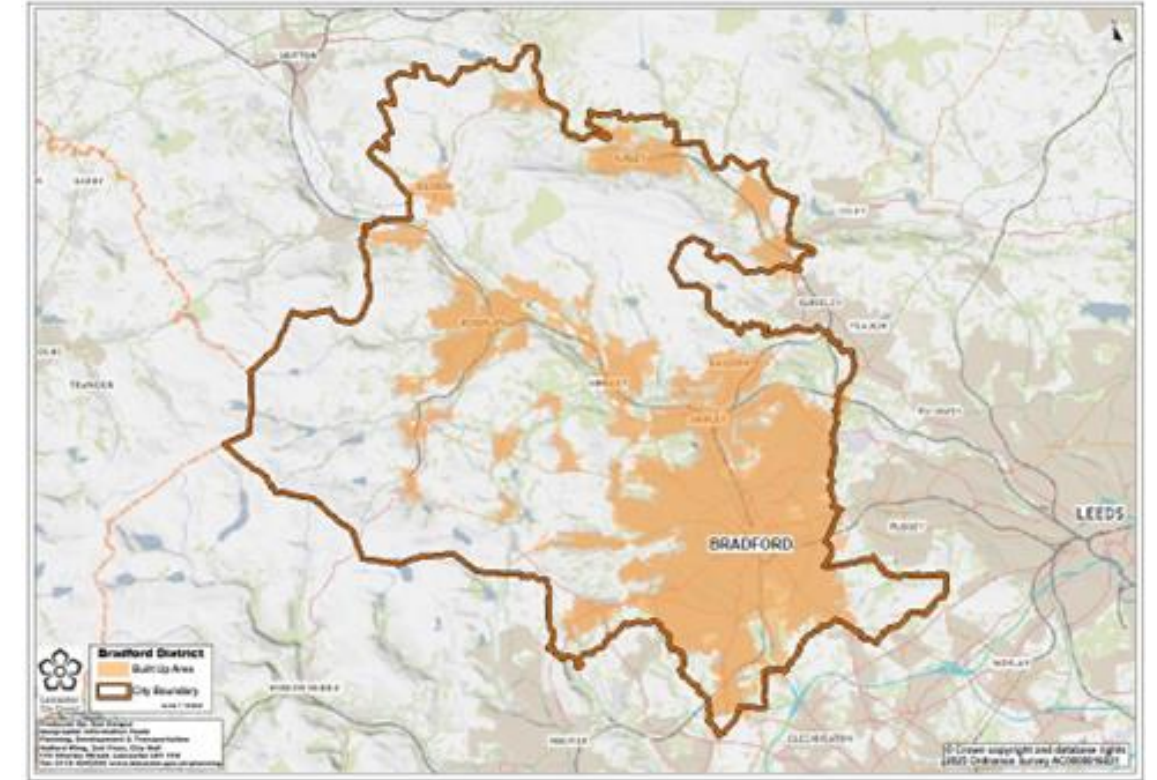
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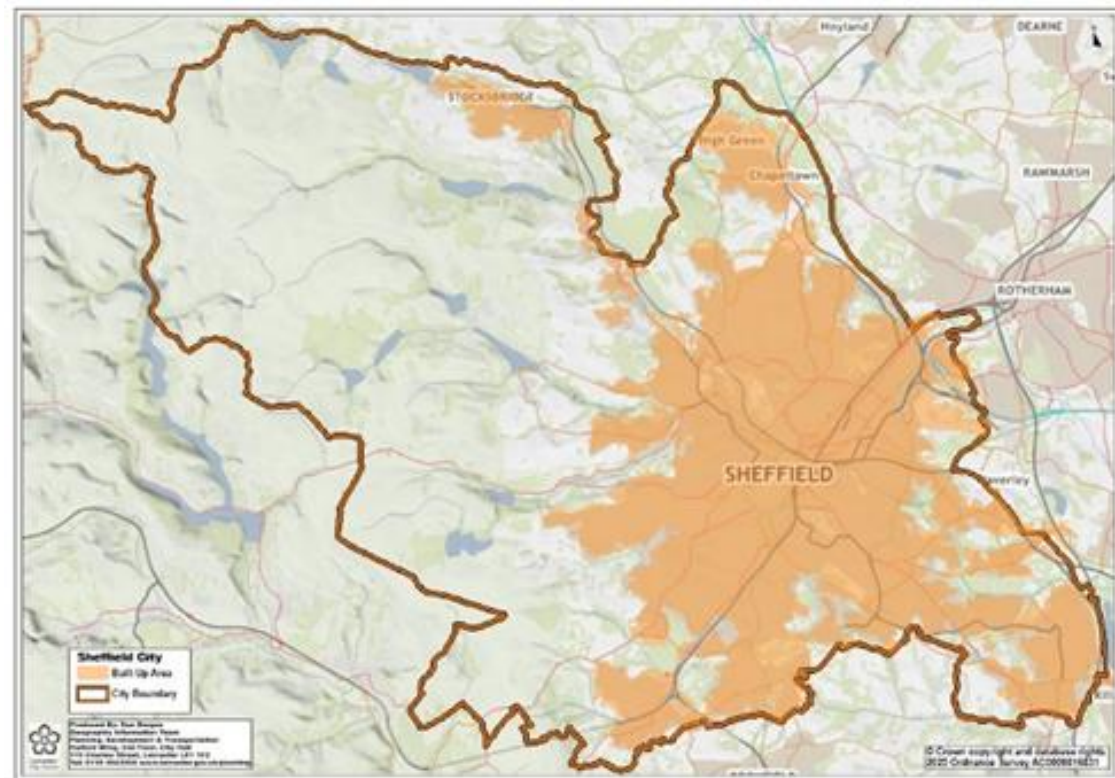
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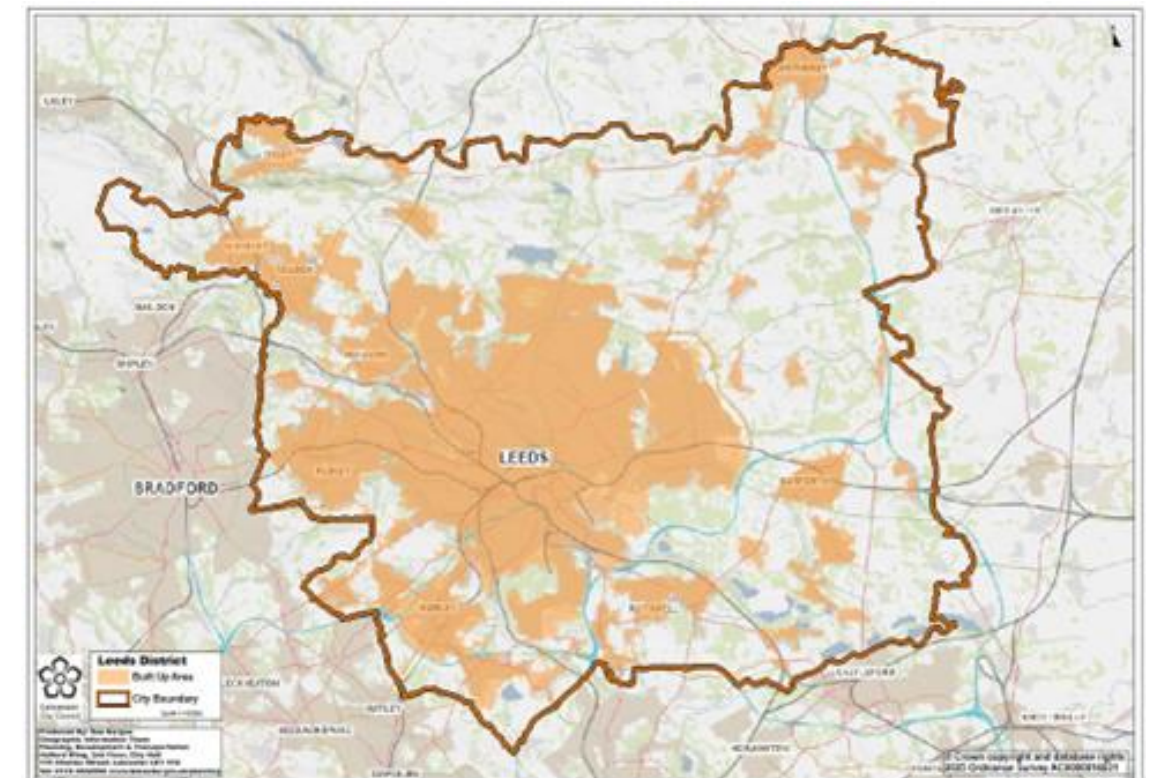
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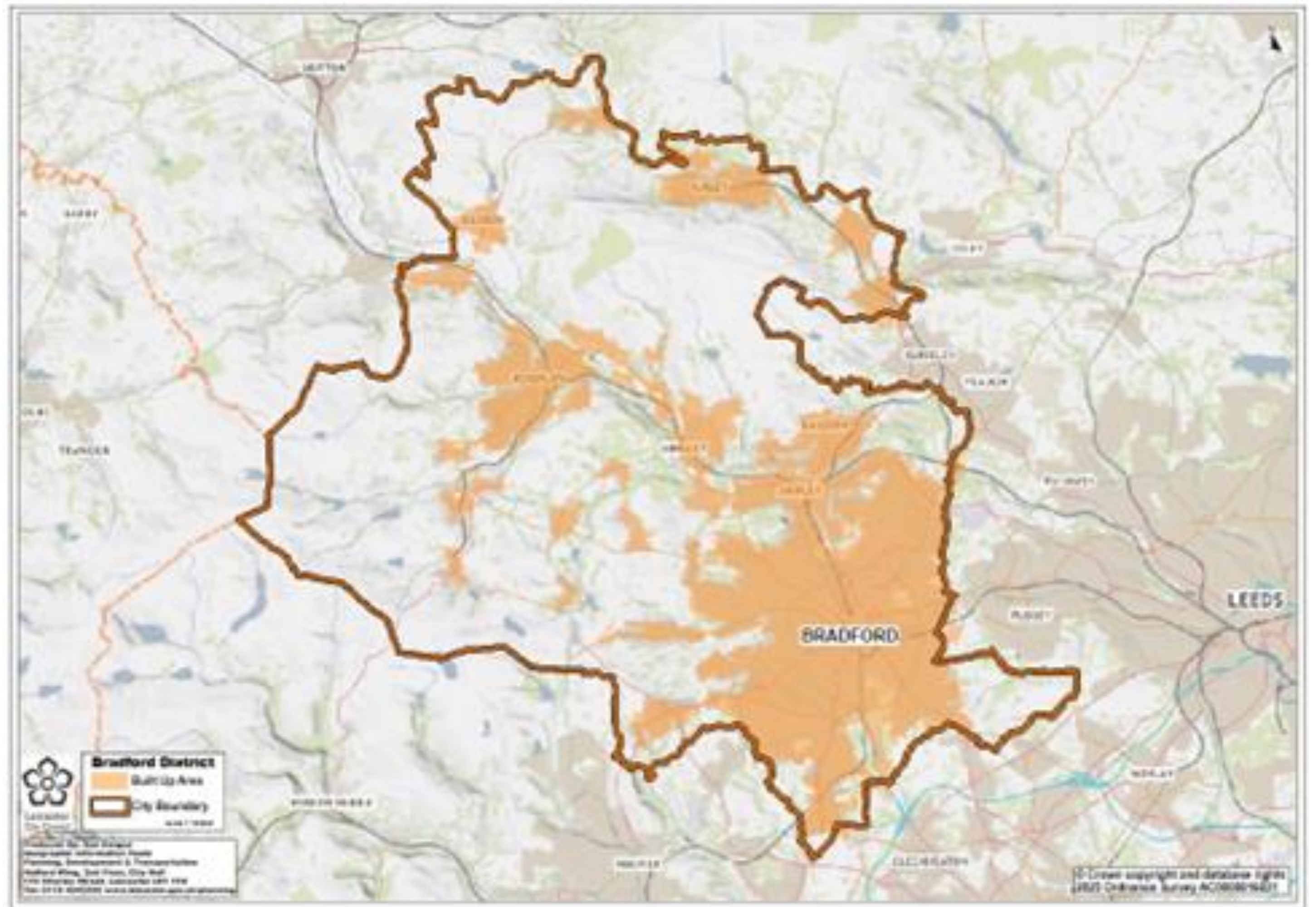
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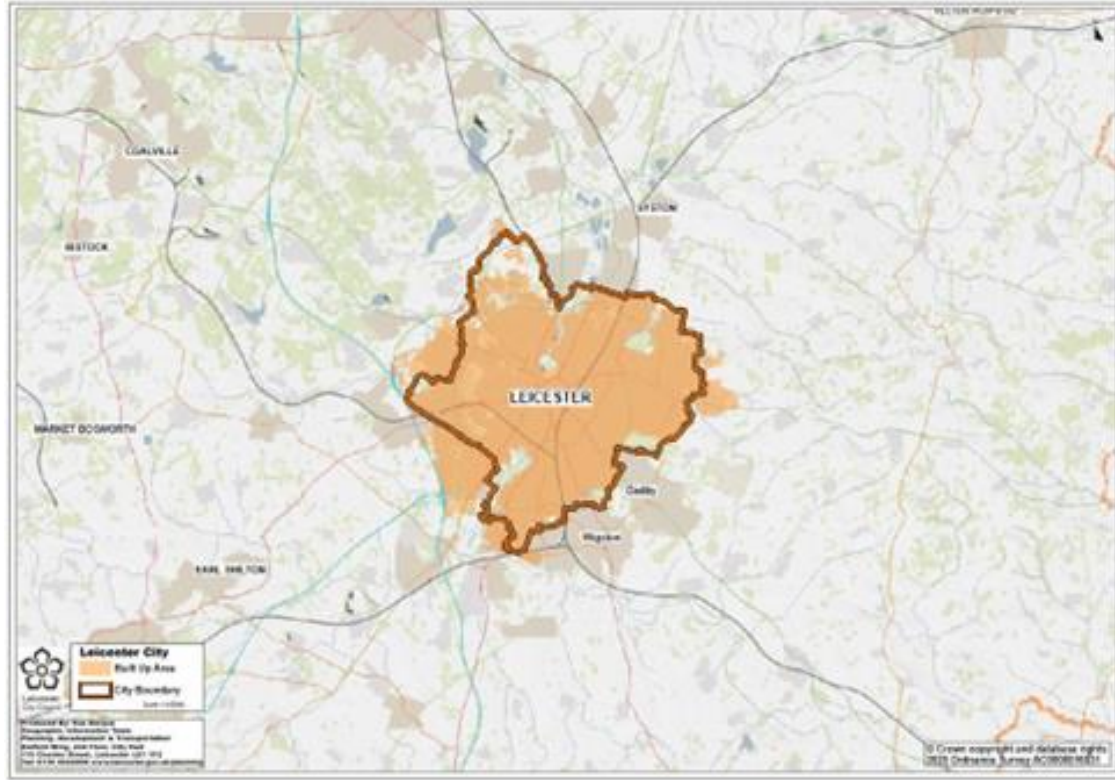
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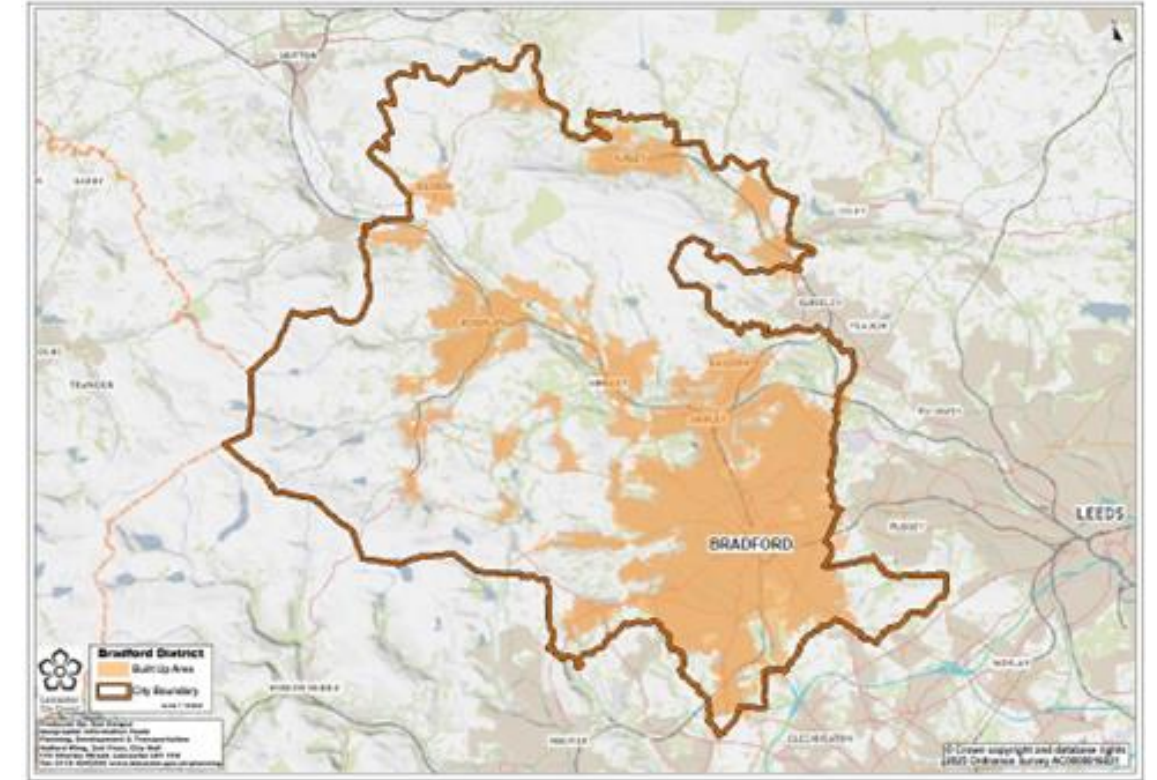
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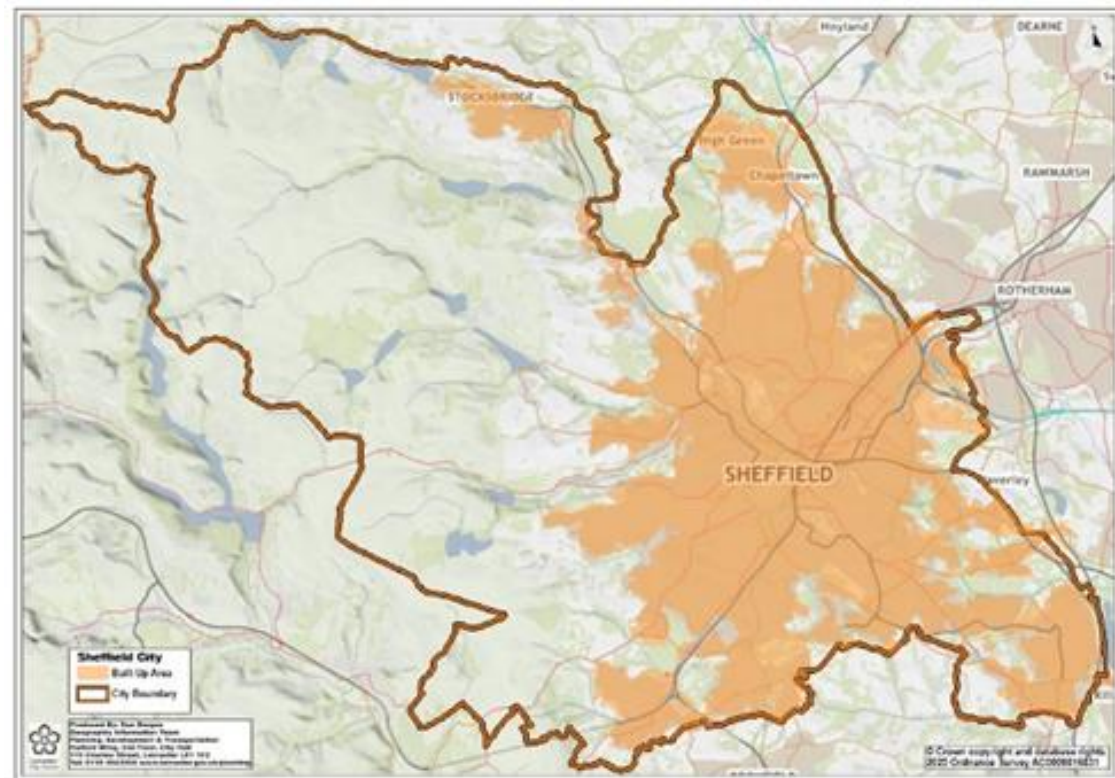
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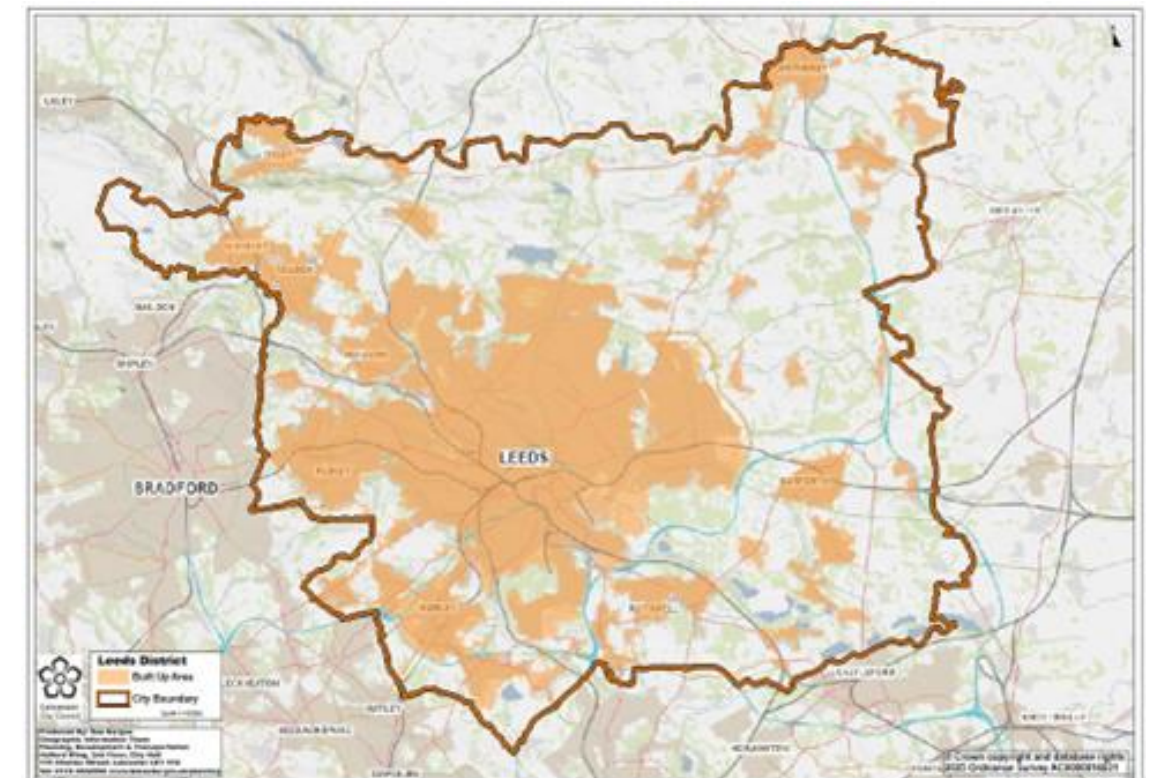
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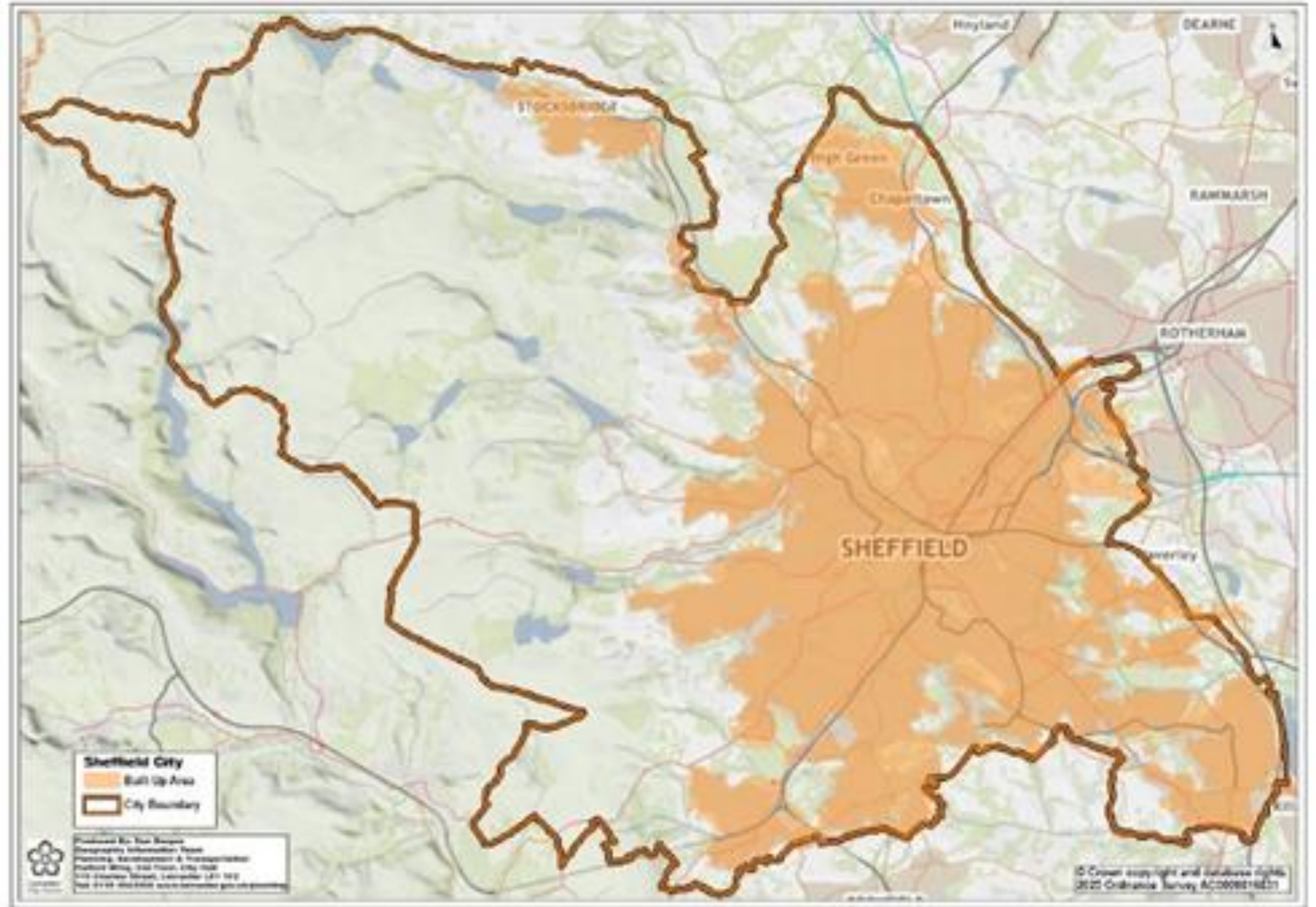
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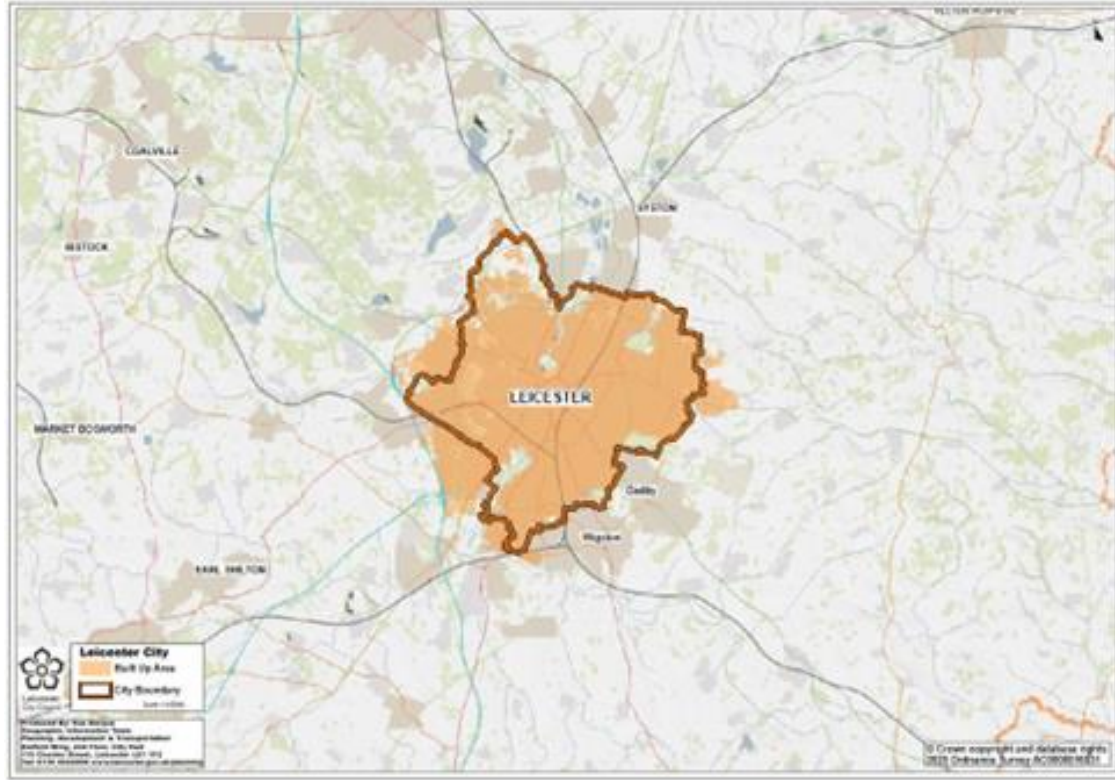
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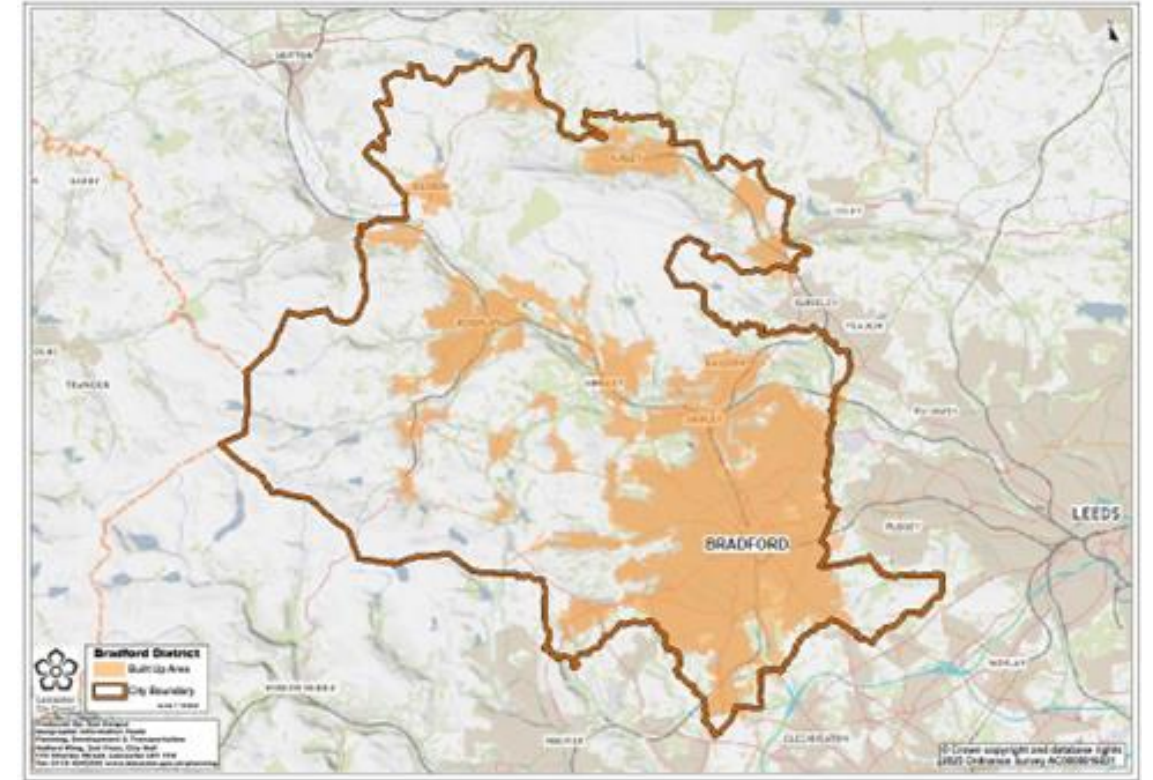
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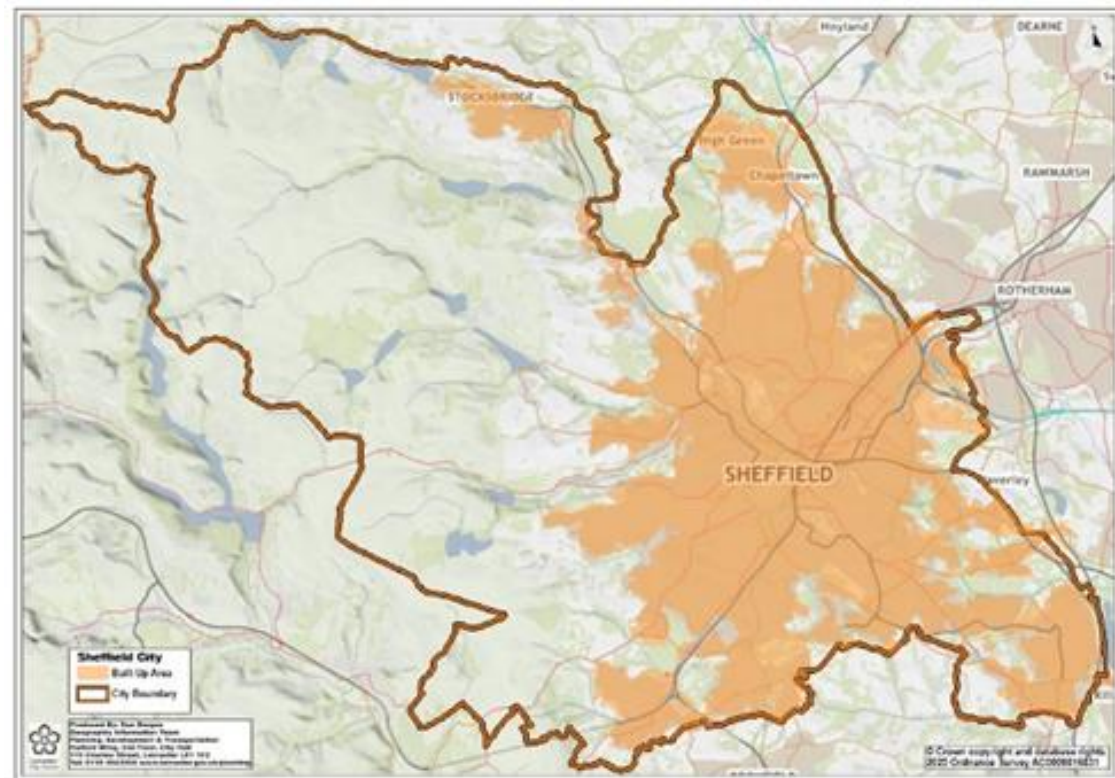
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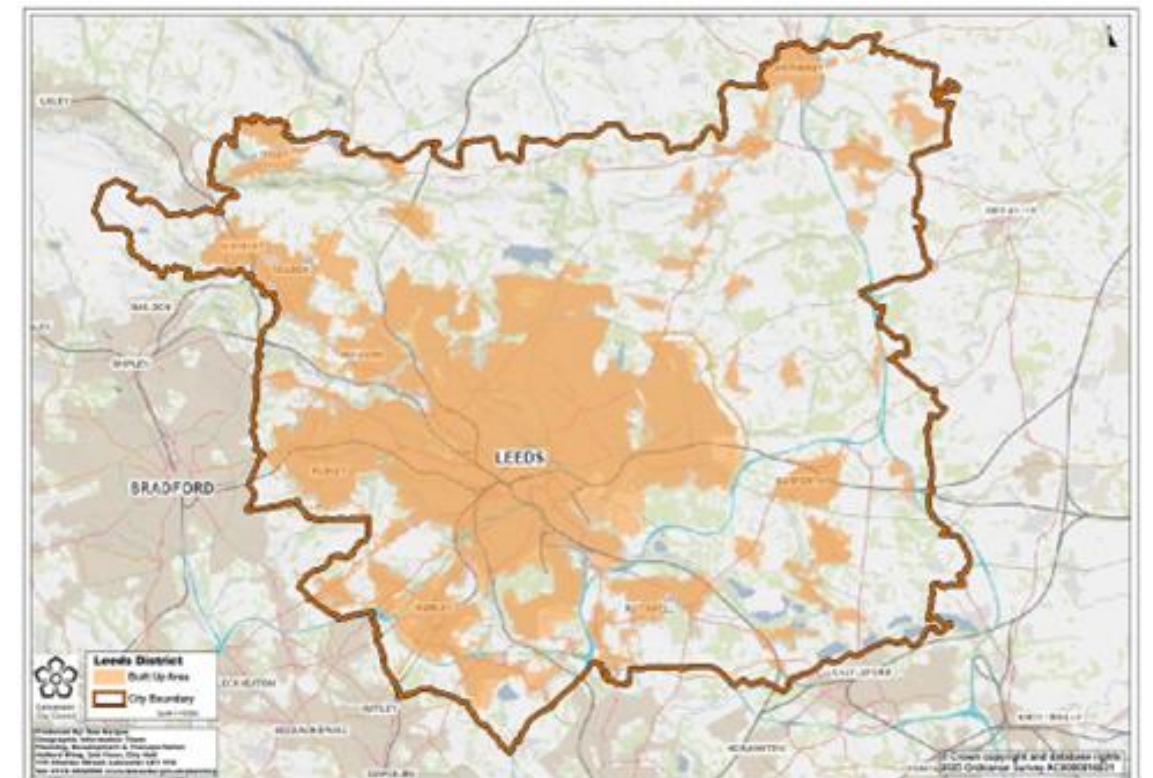
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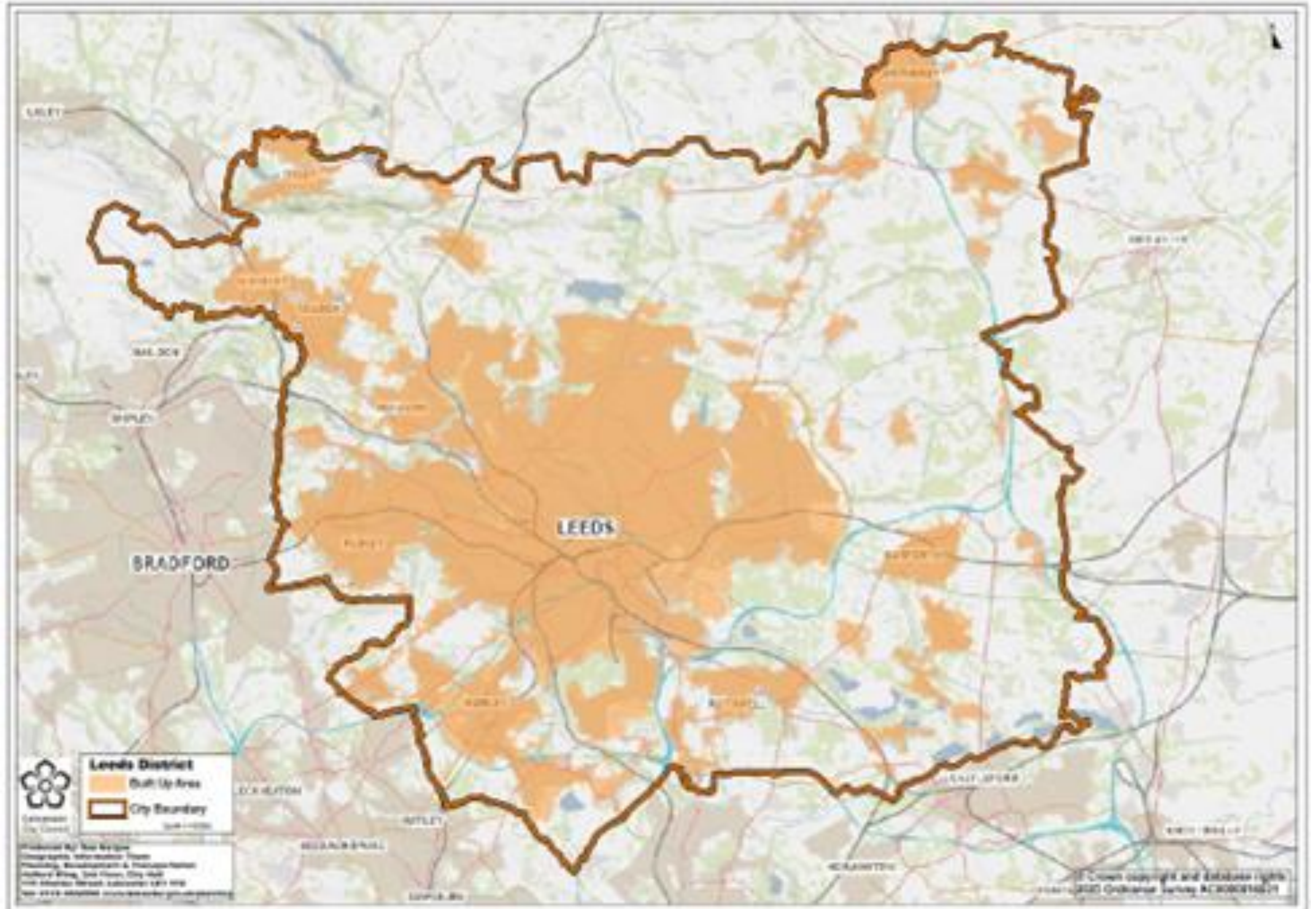
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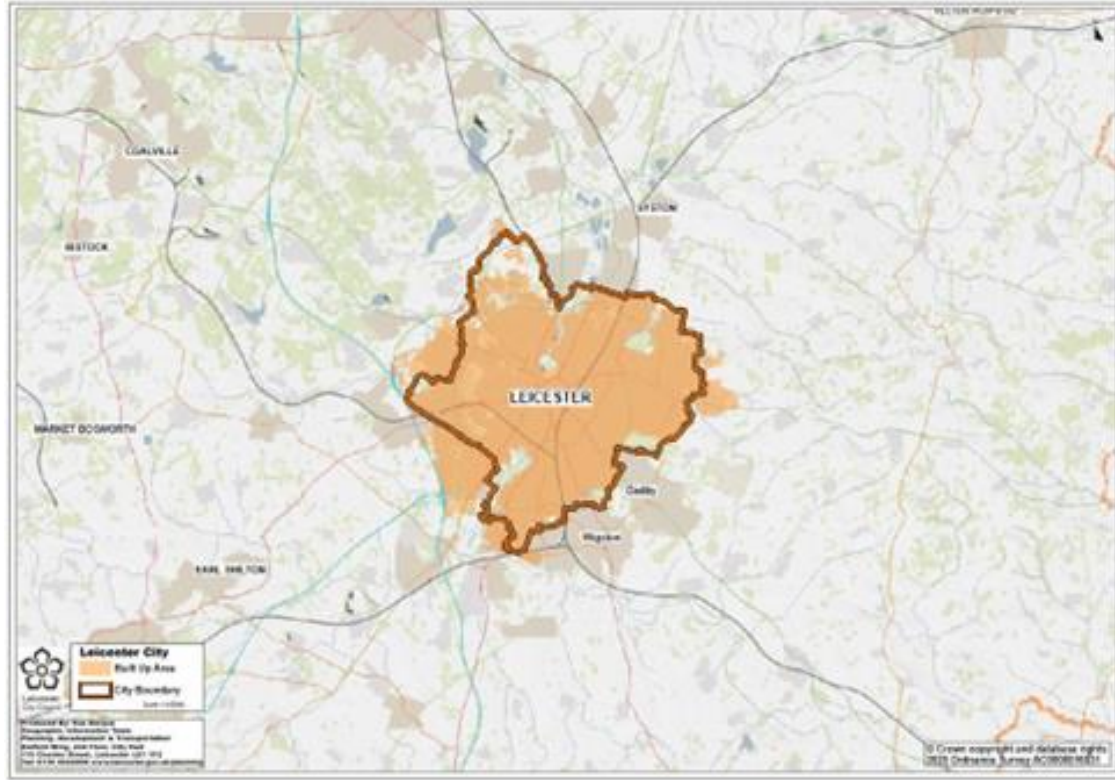
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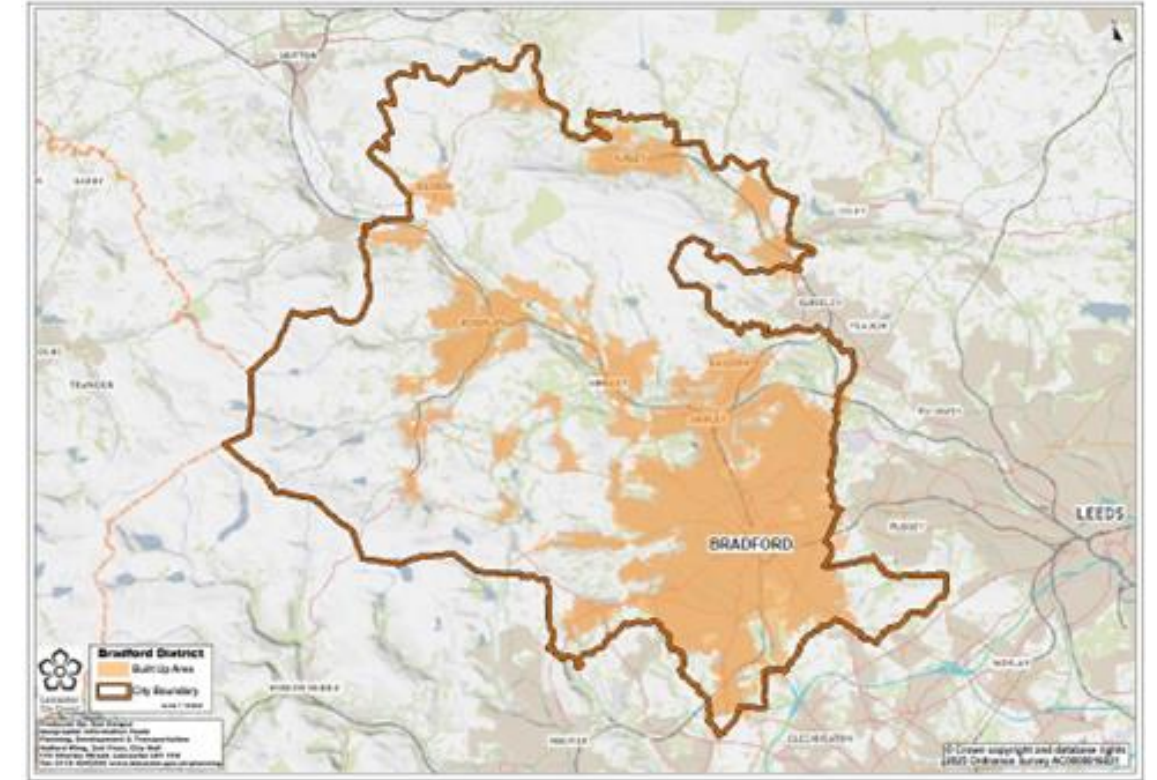
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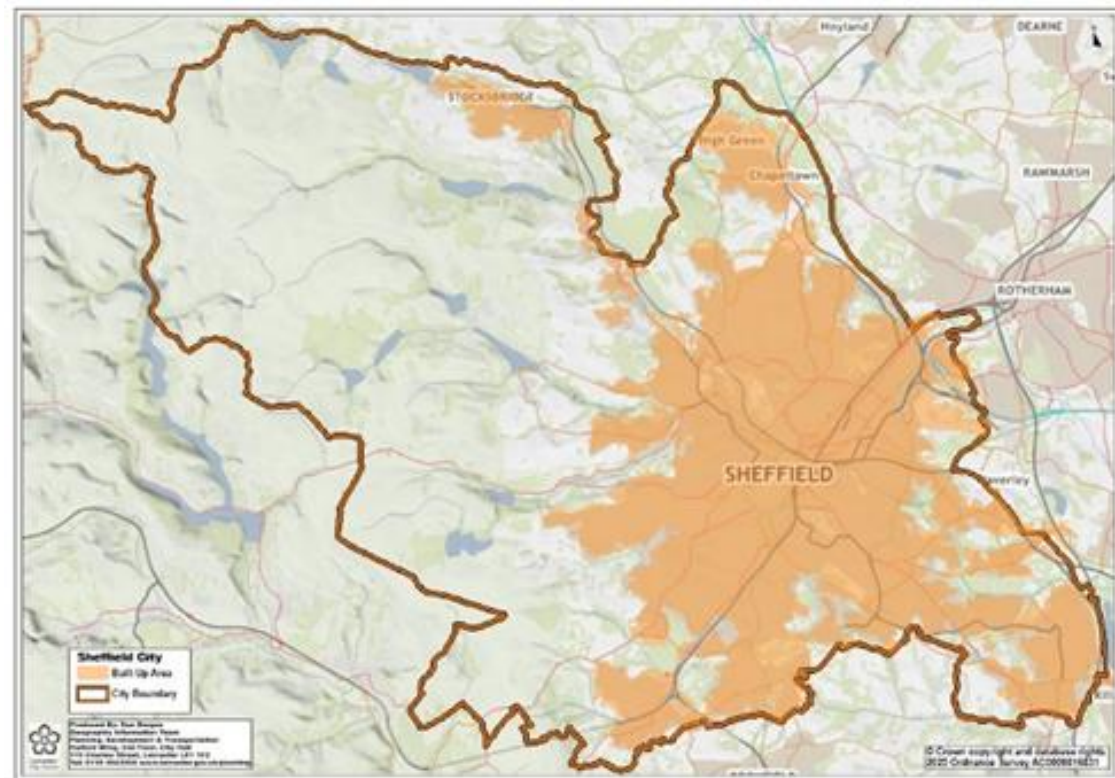
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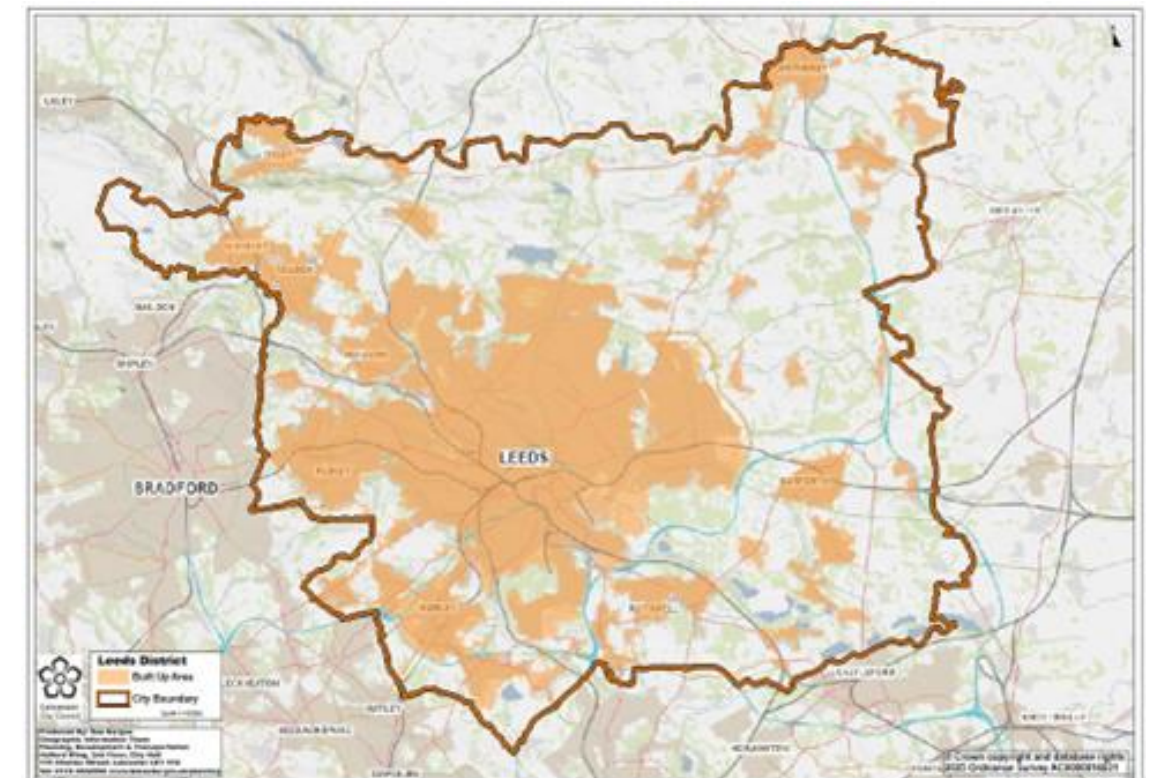
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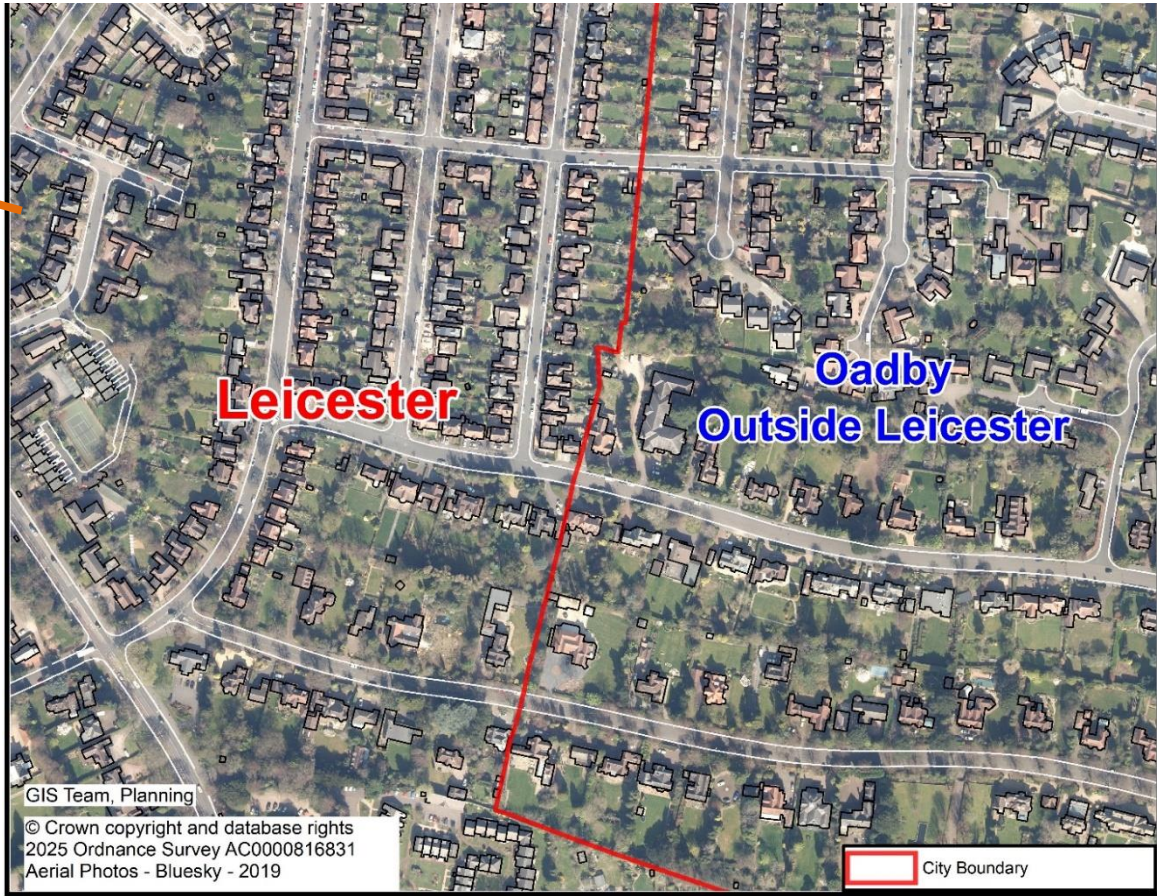
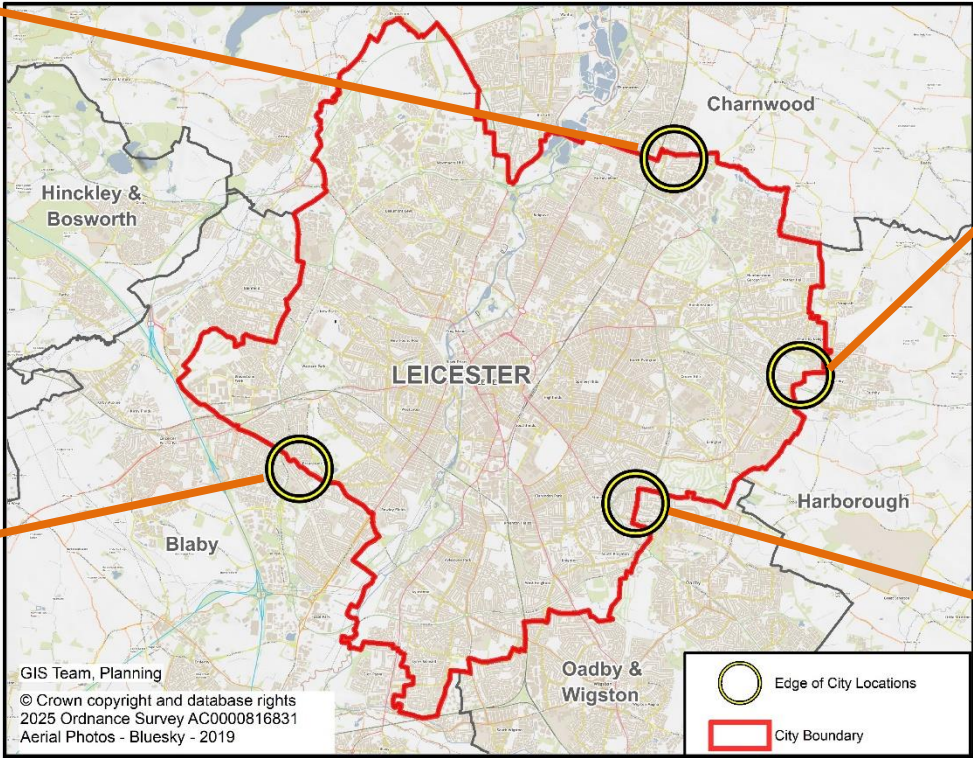
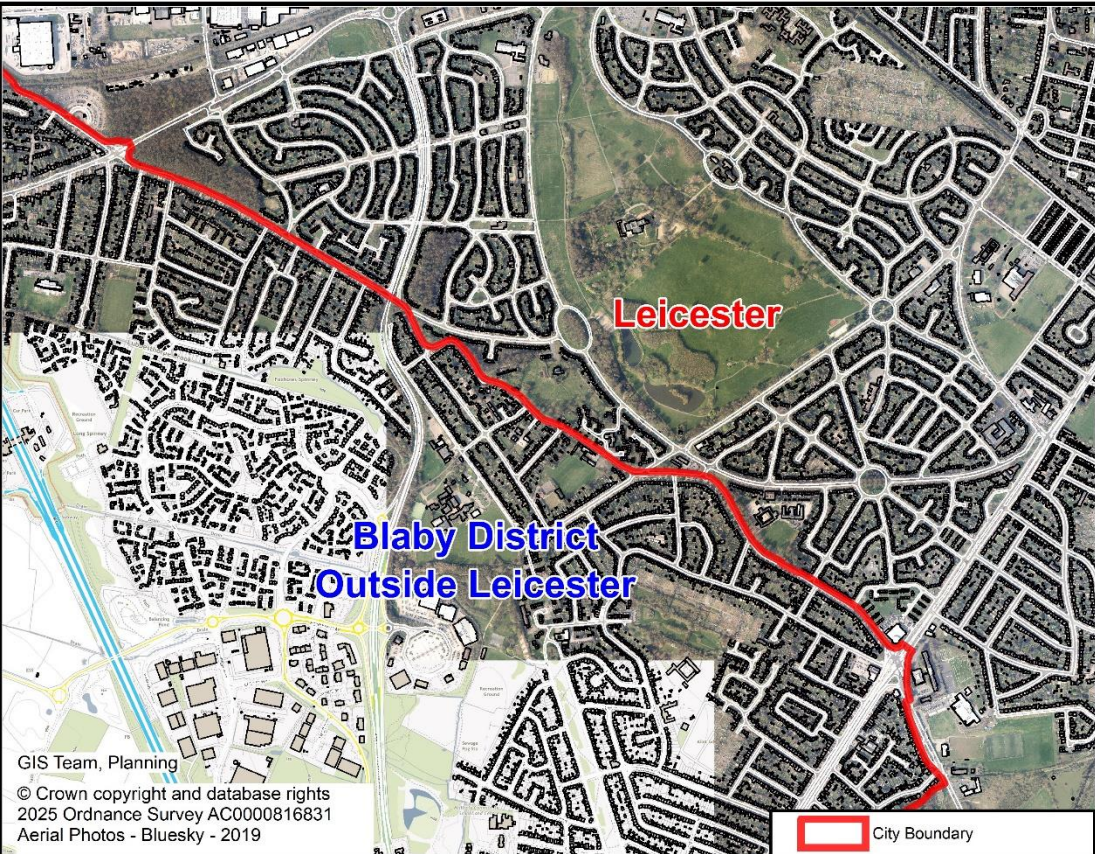
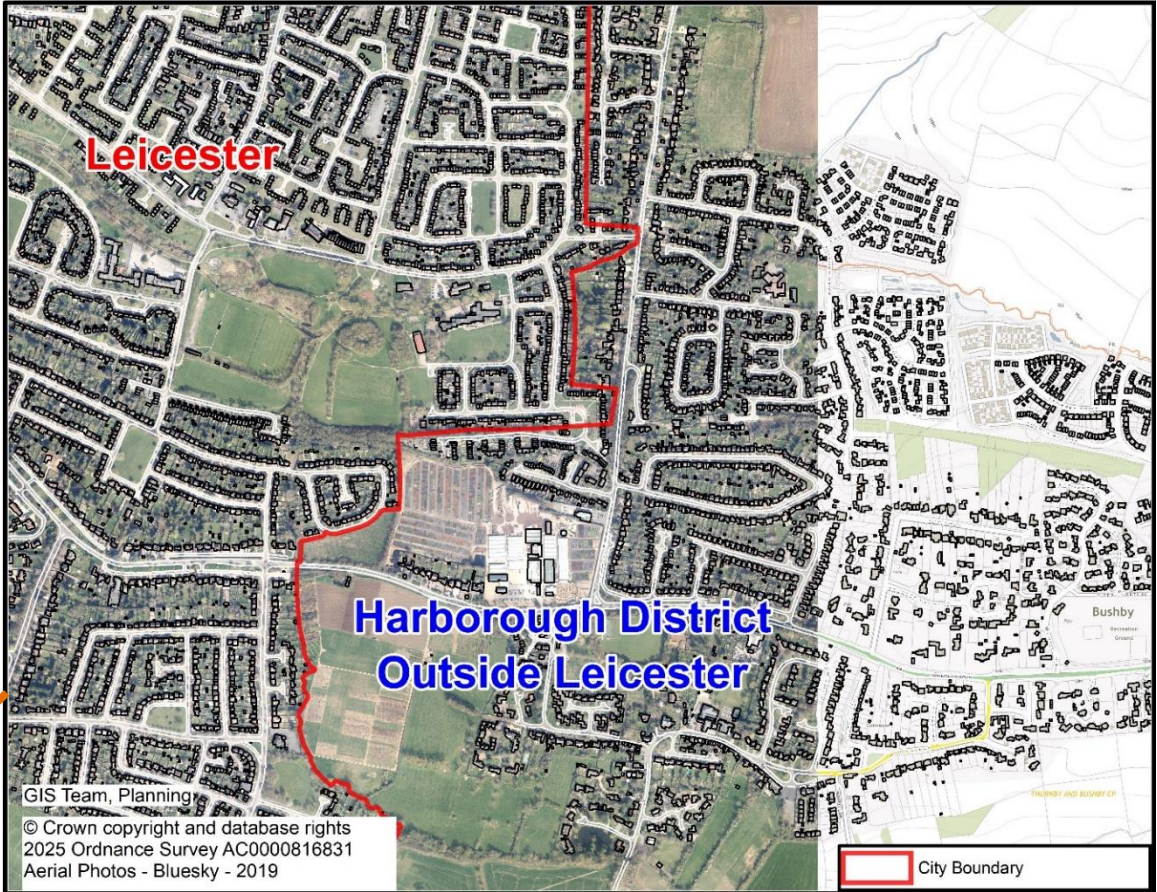
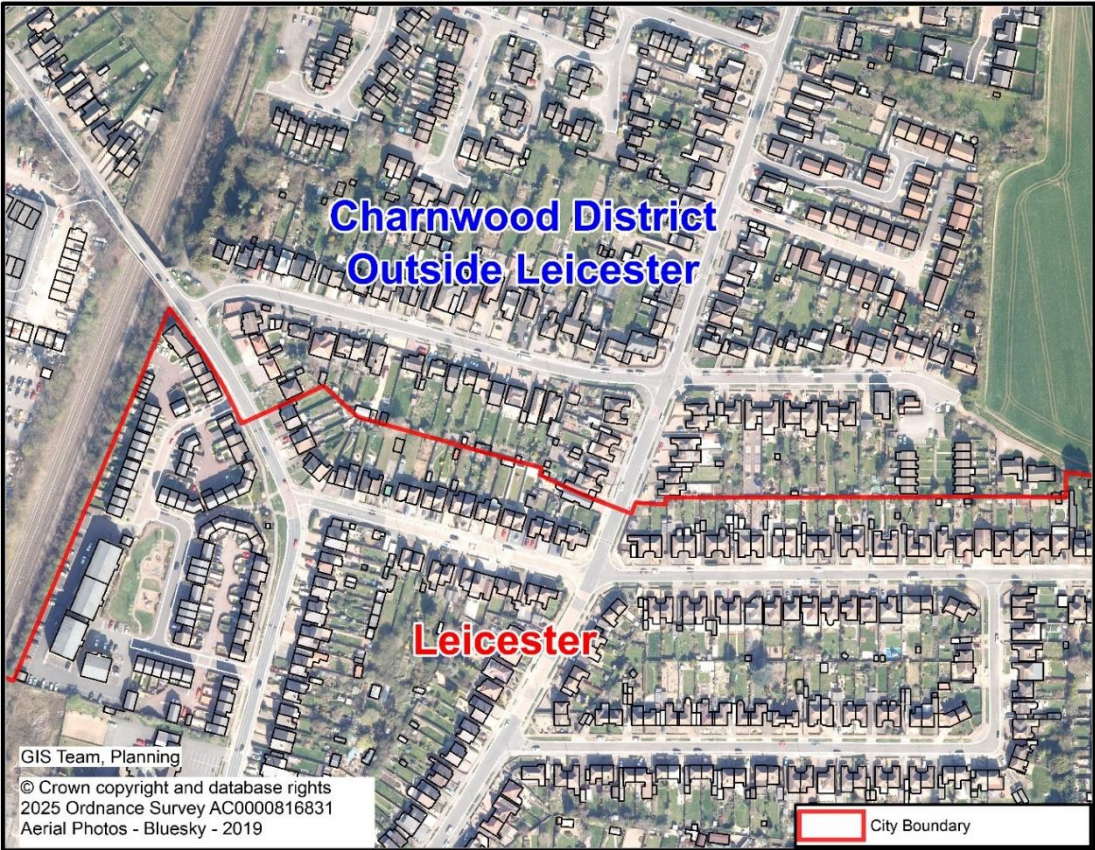
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Population density
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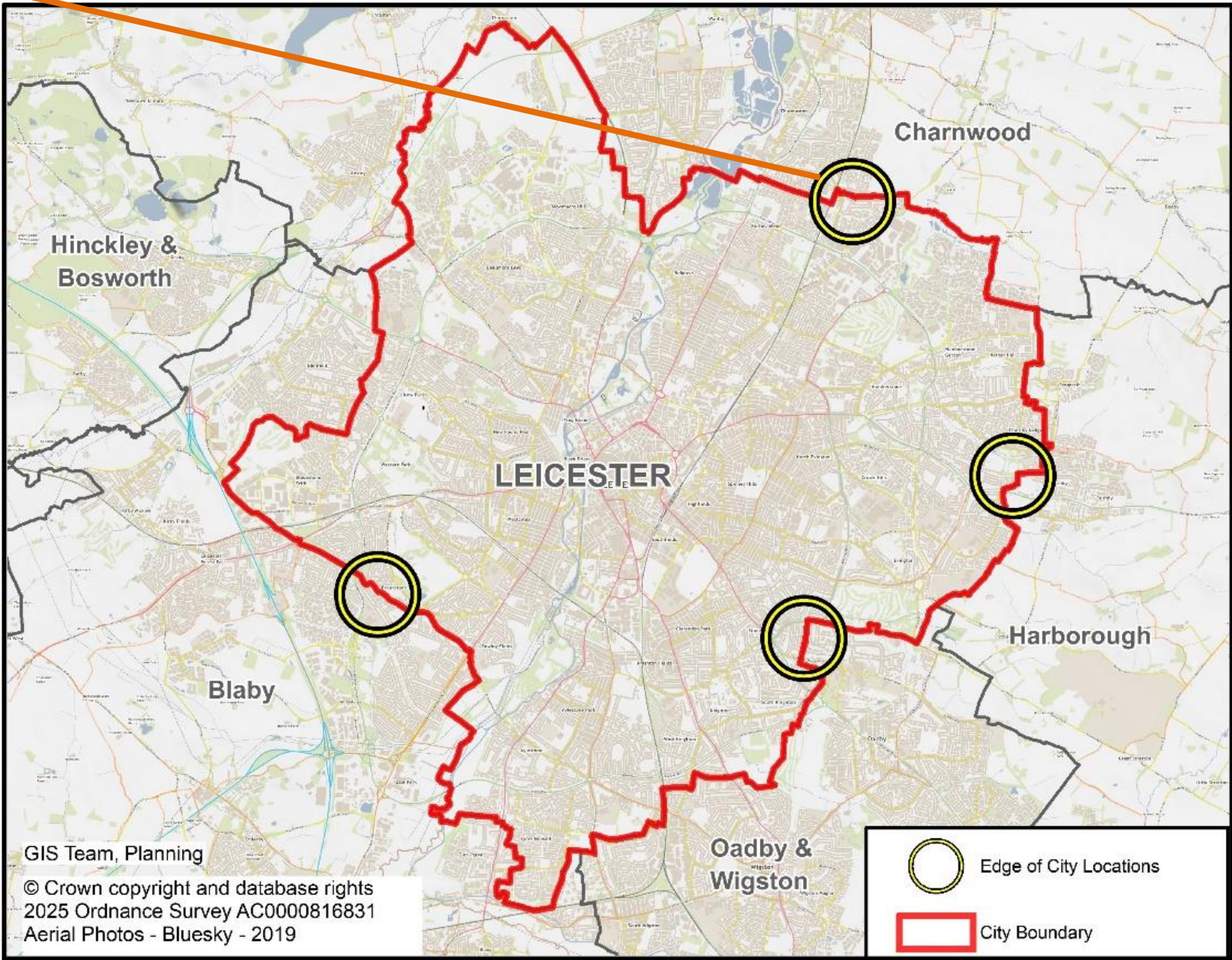
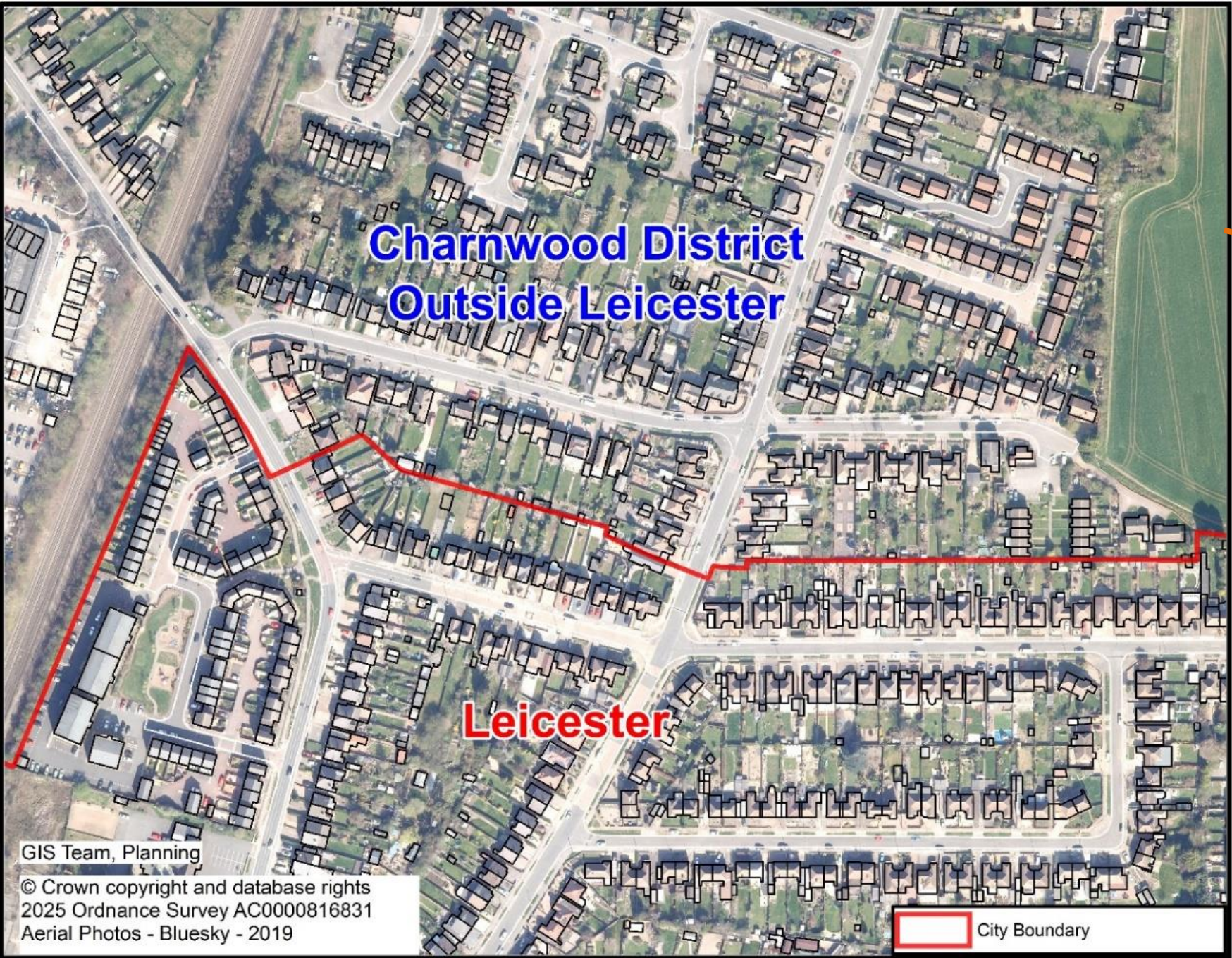
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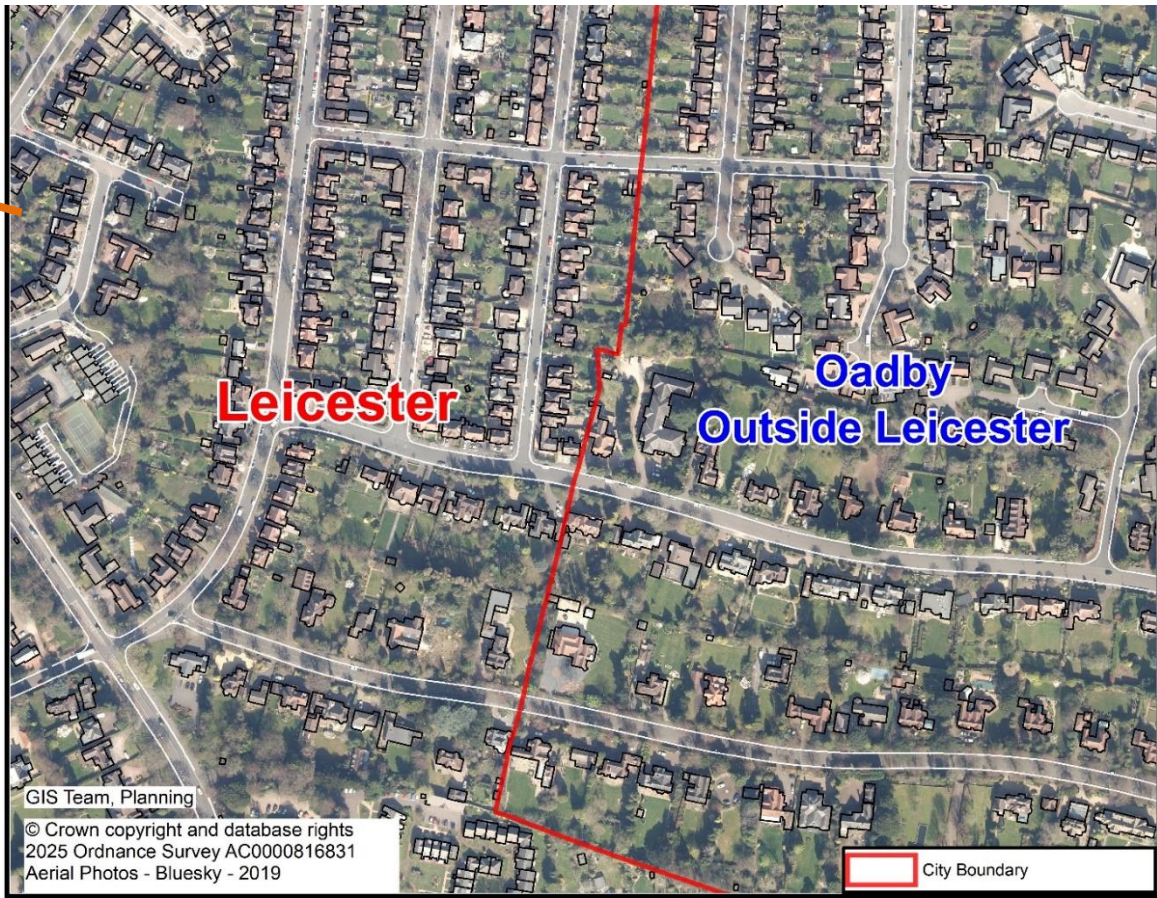
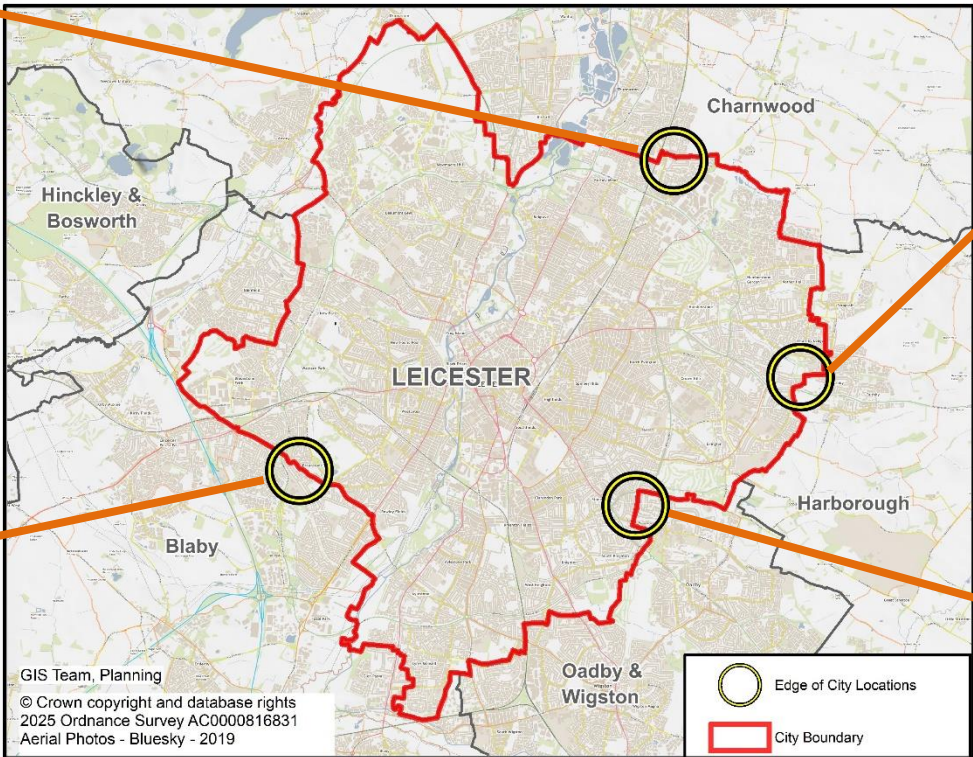
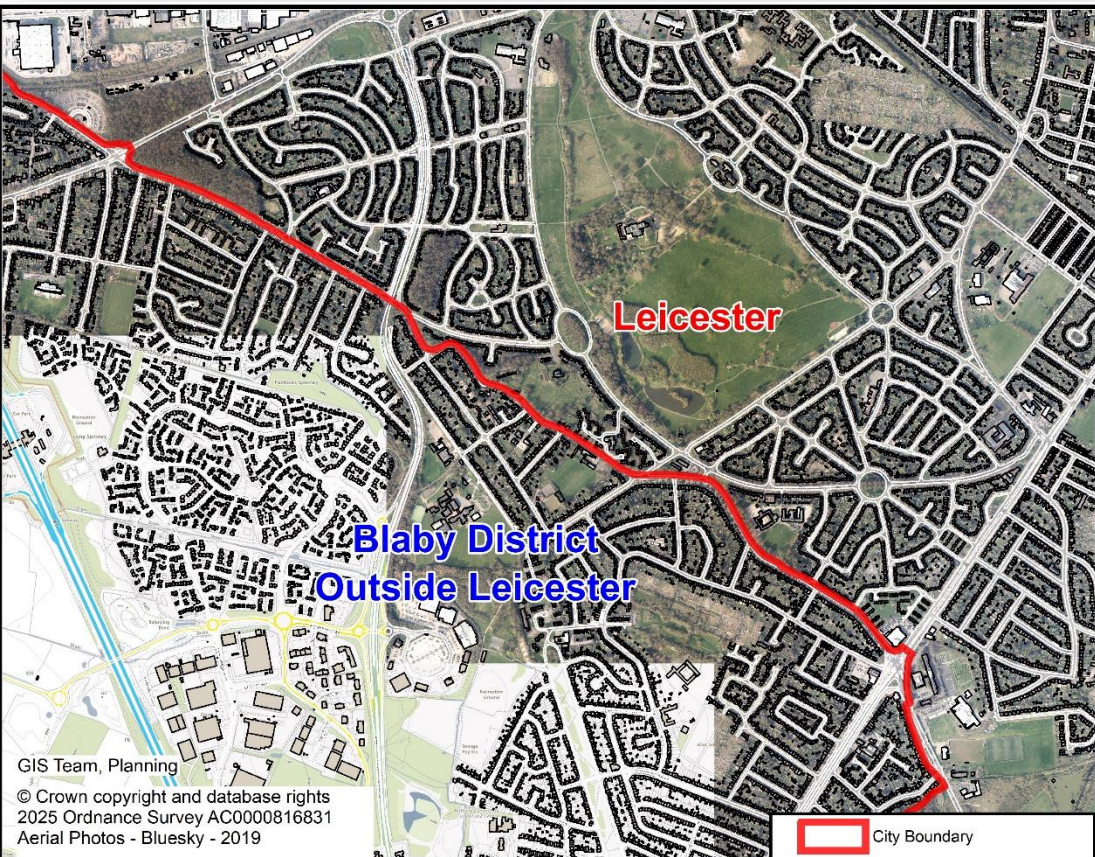
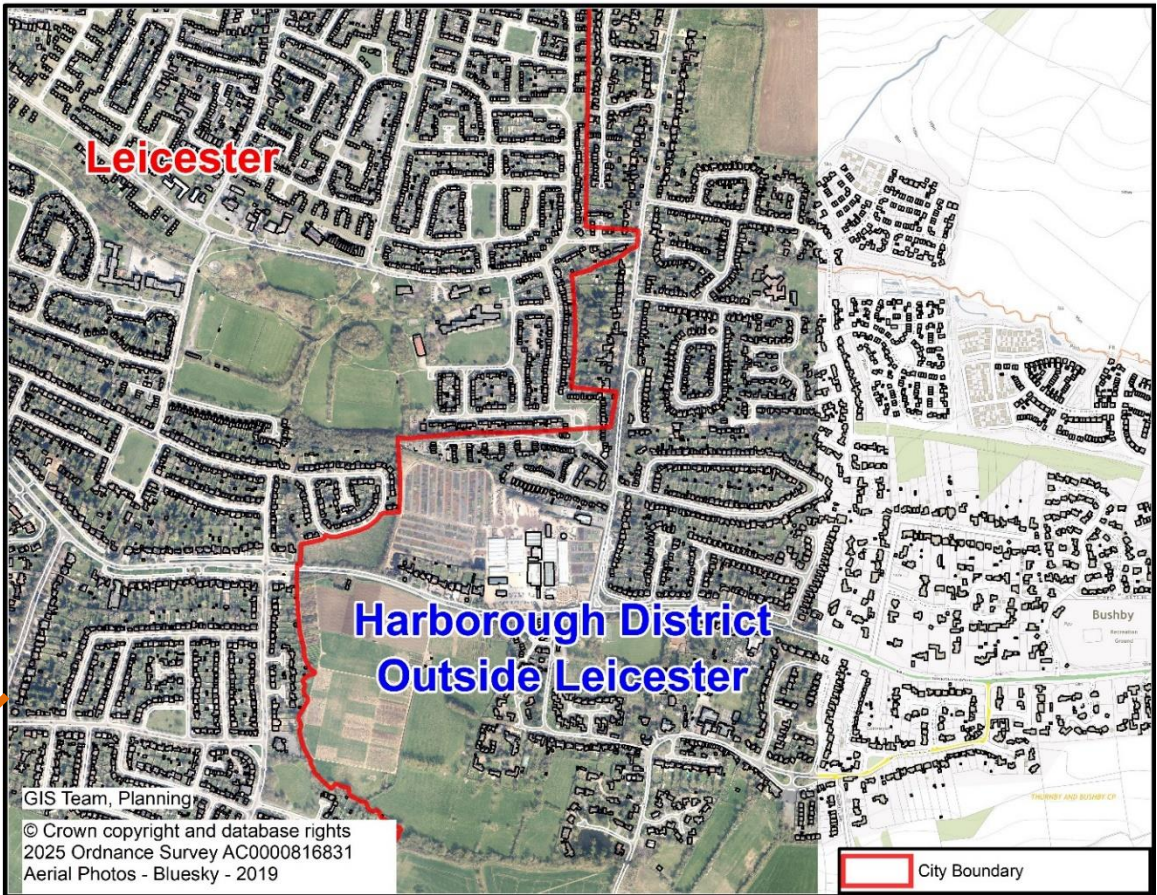
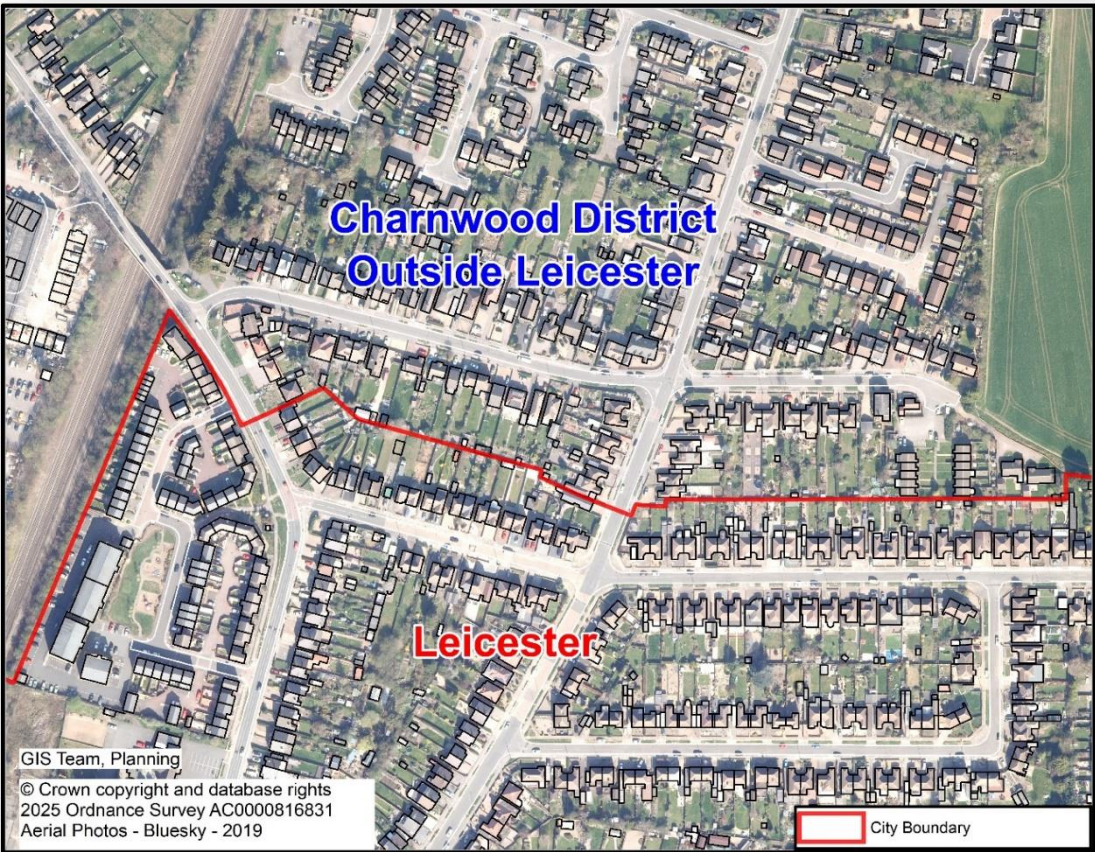
Illogical city boundary: examples



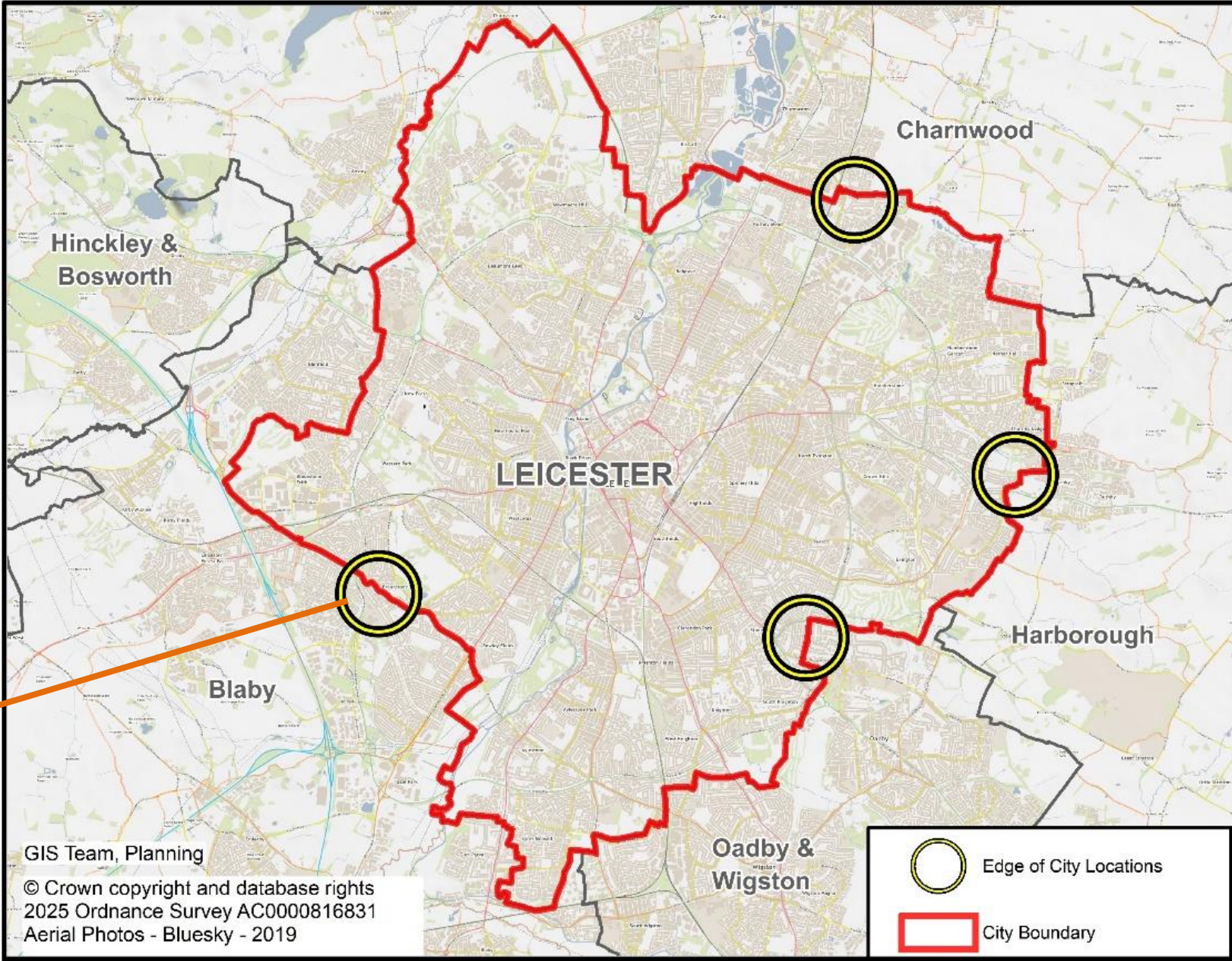
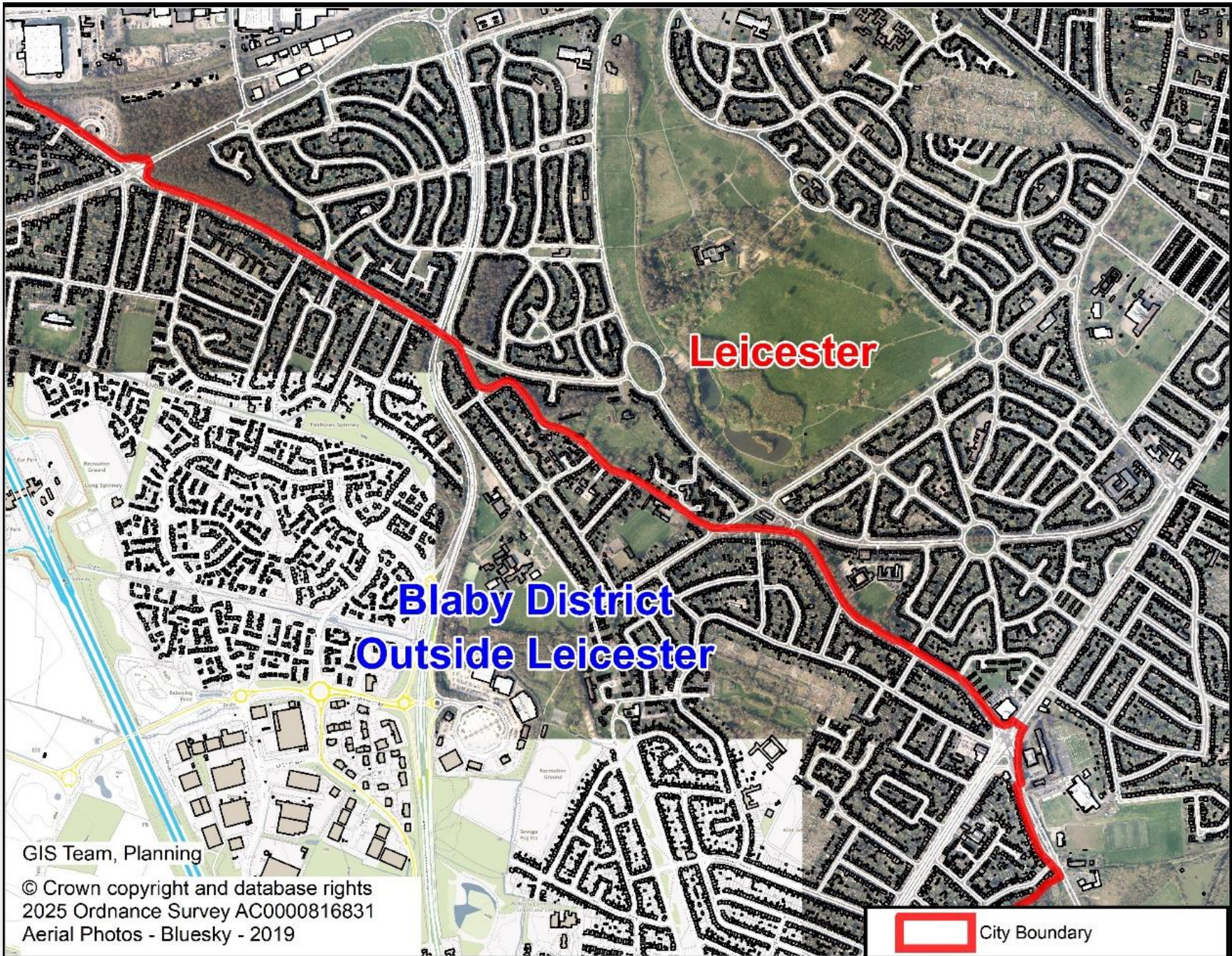
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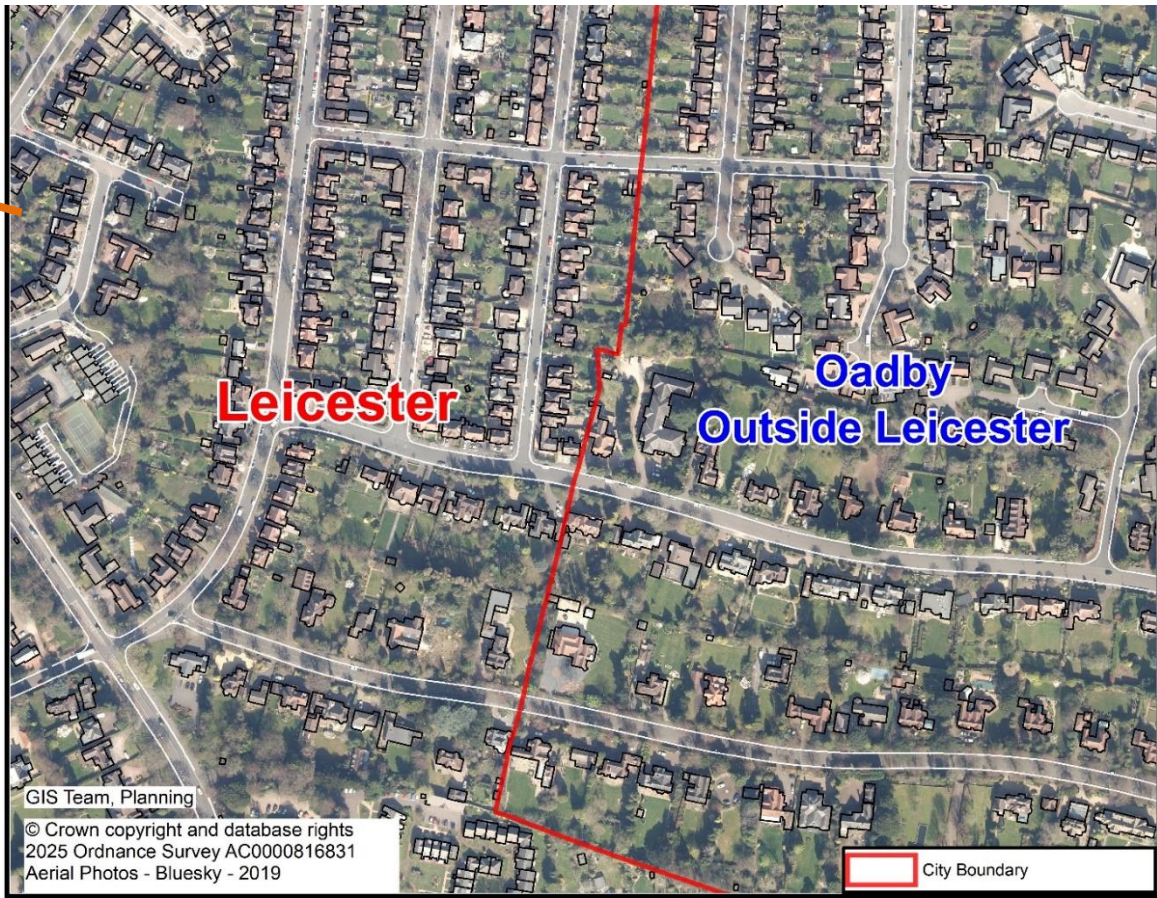
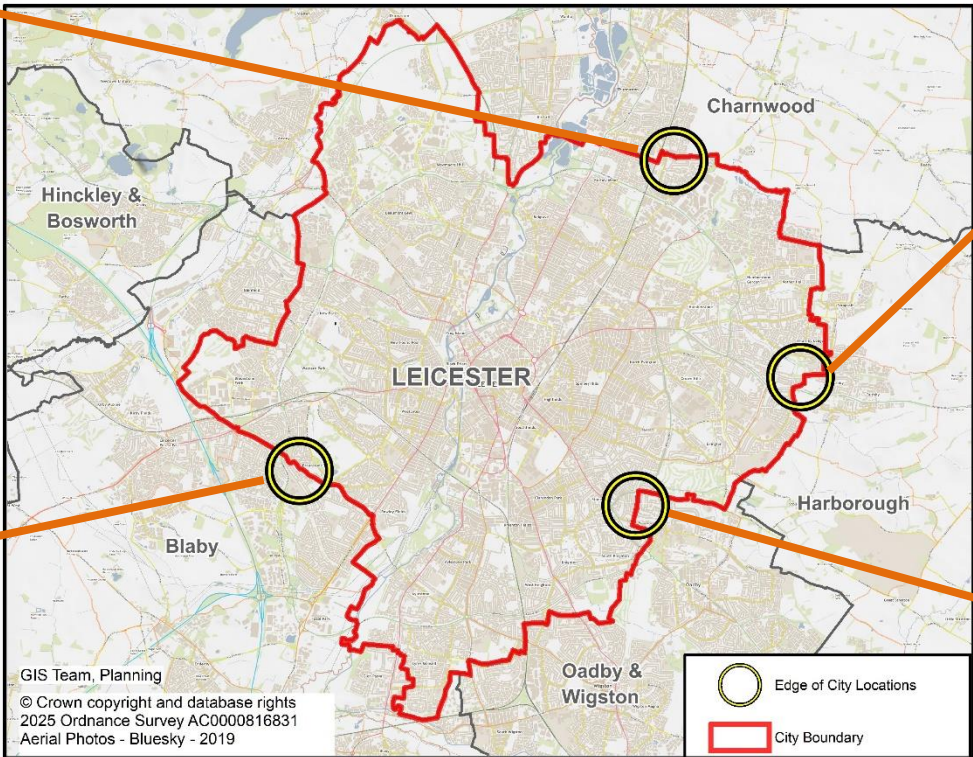
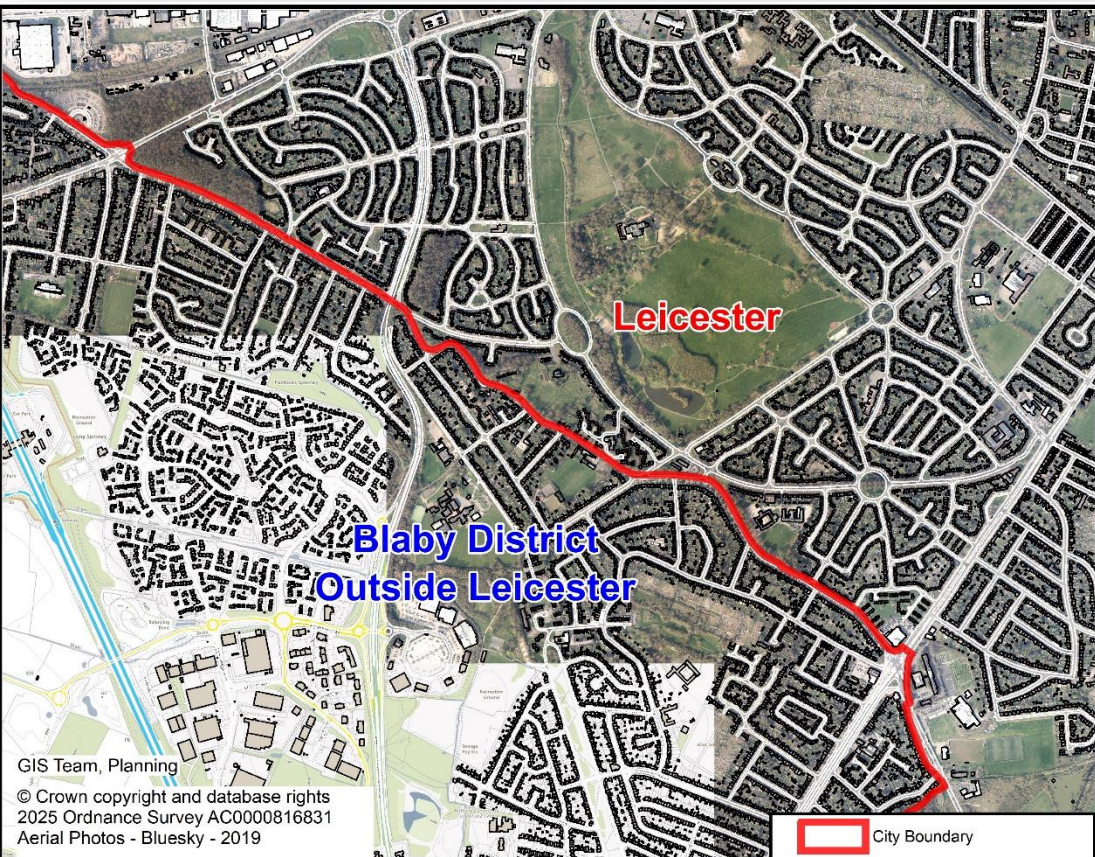
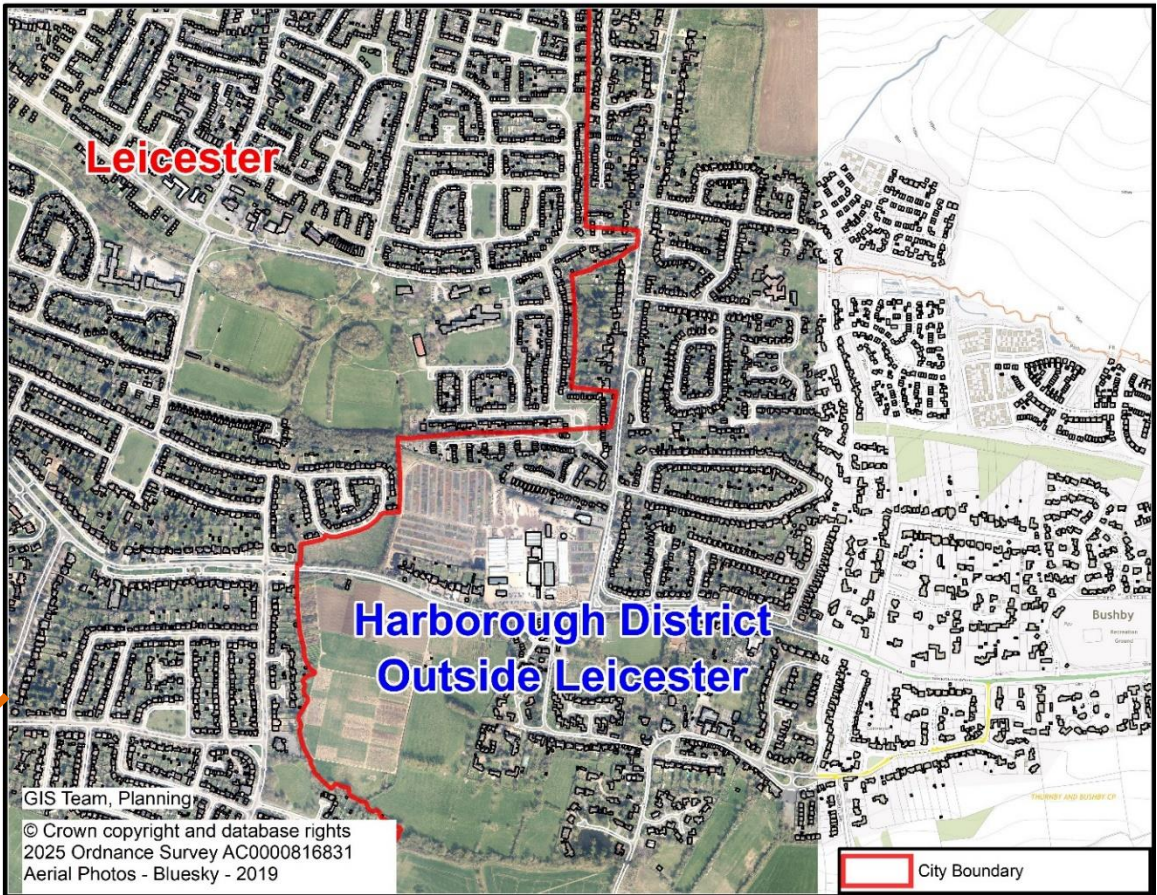
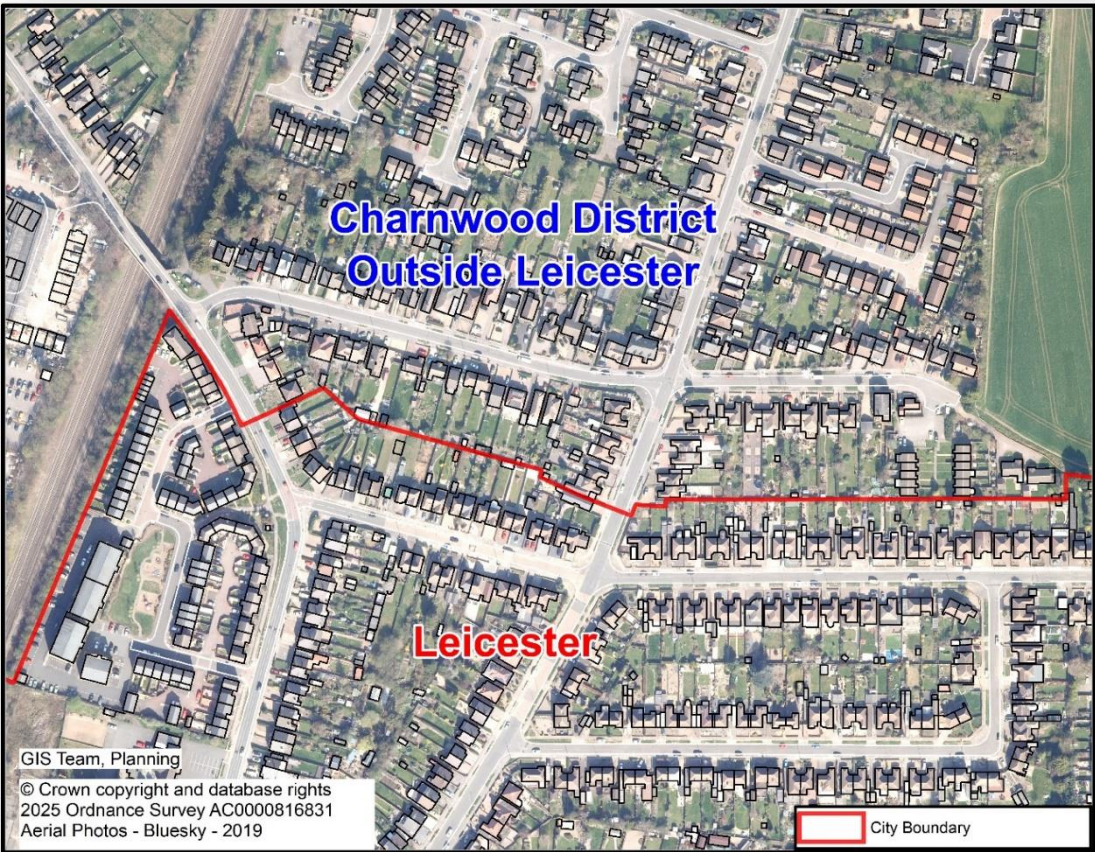
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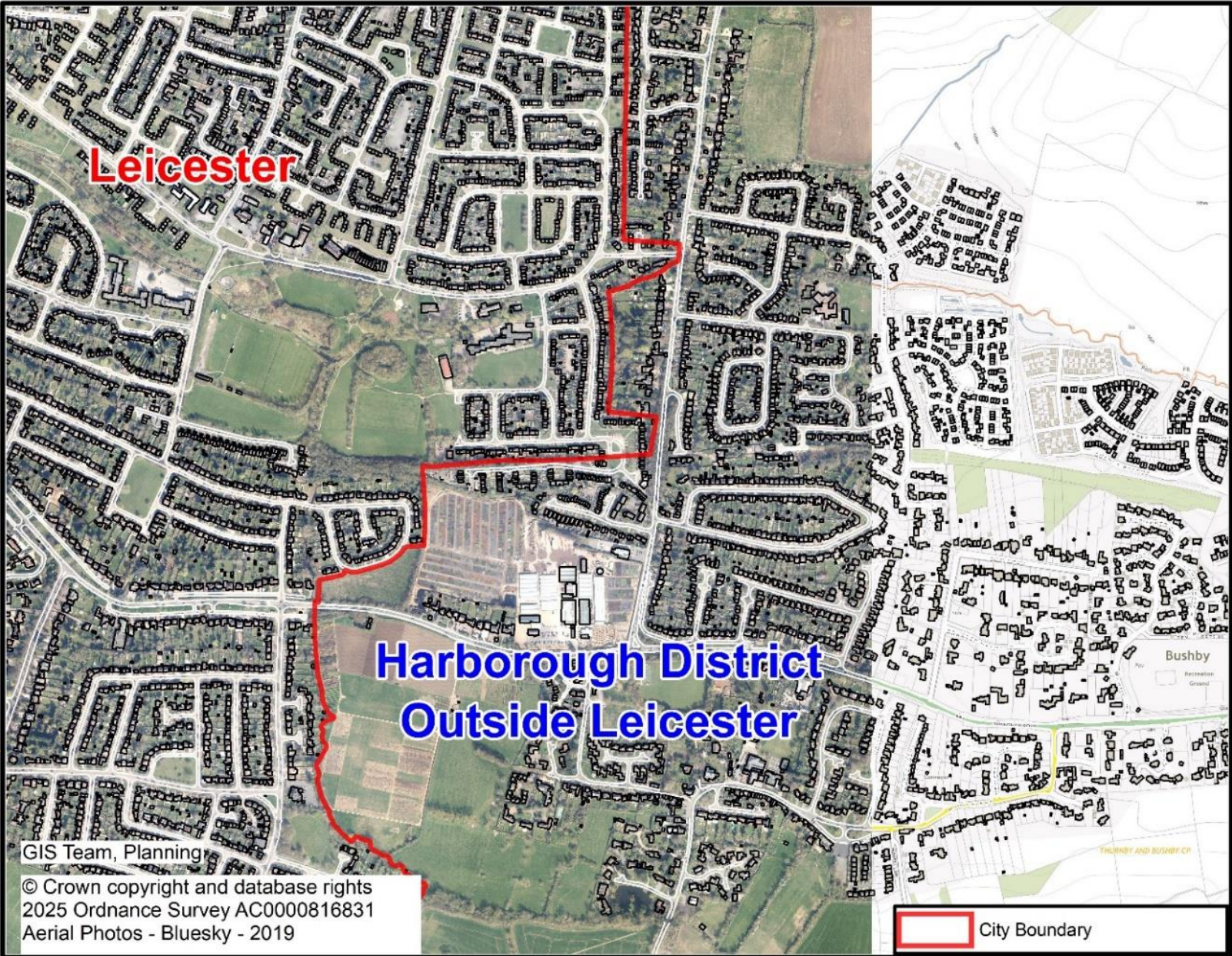
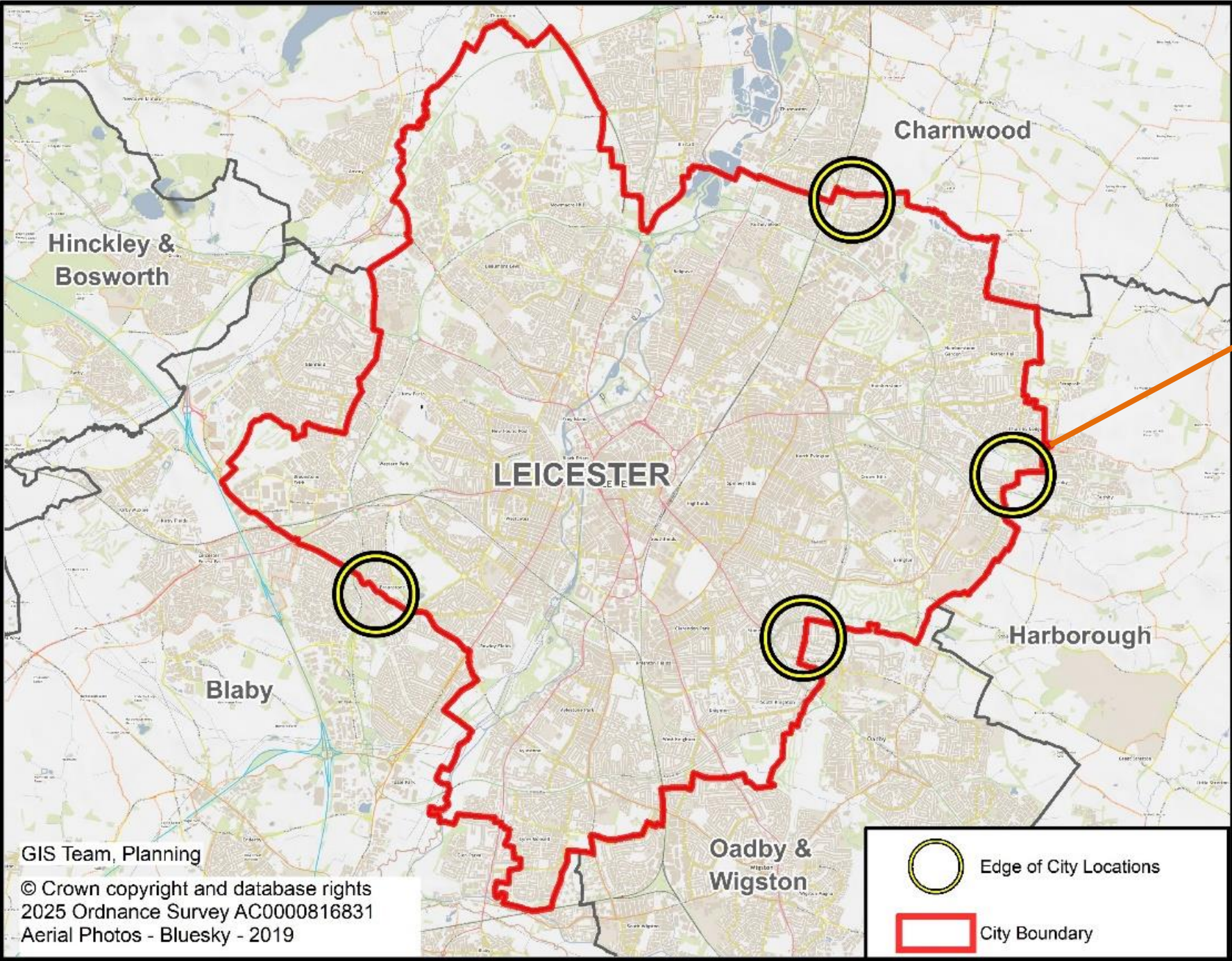
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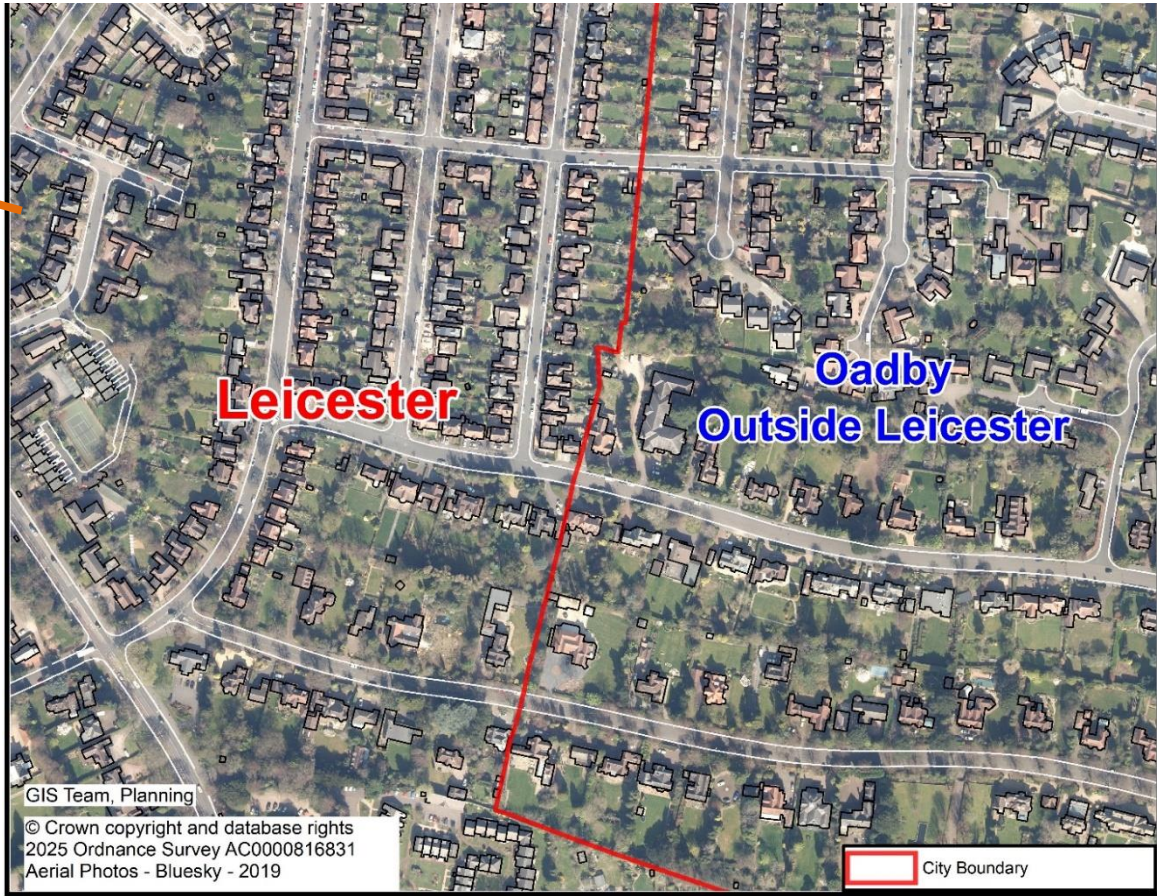
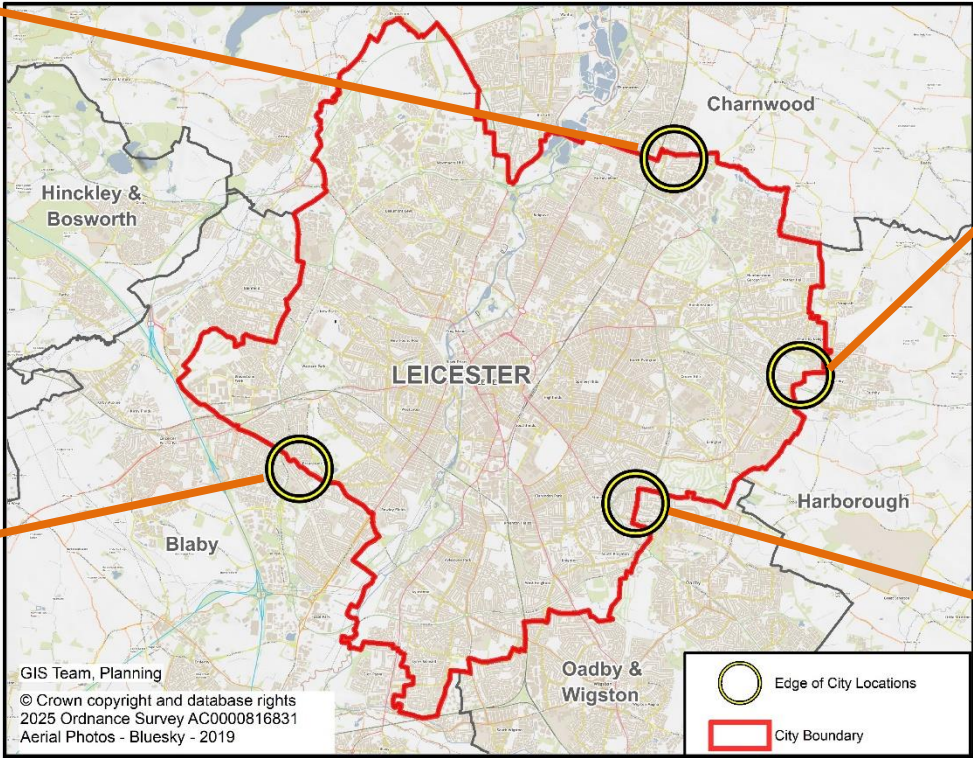
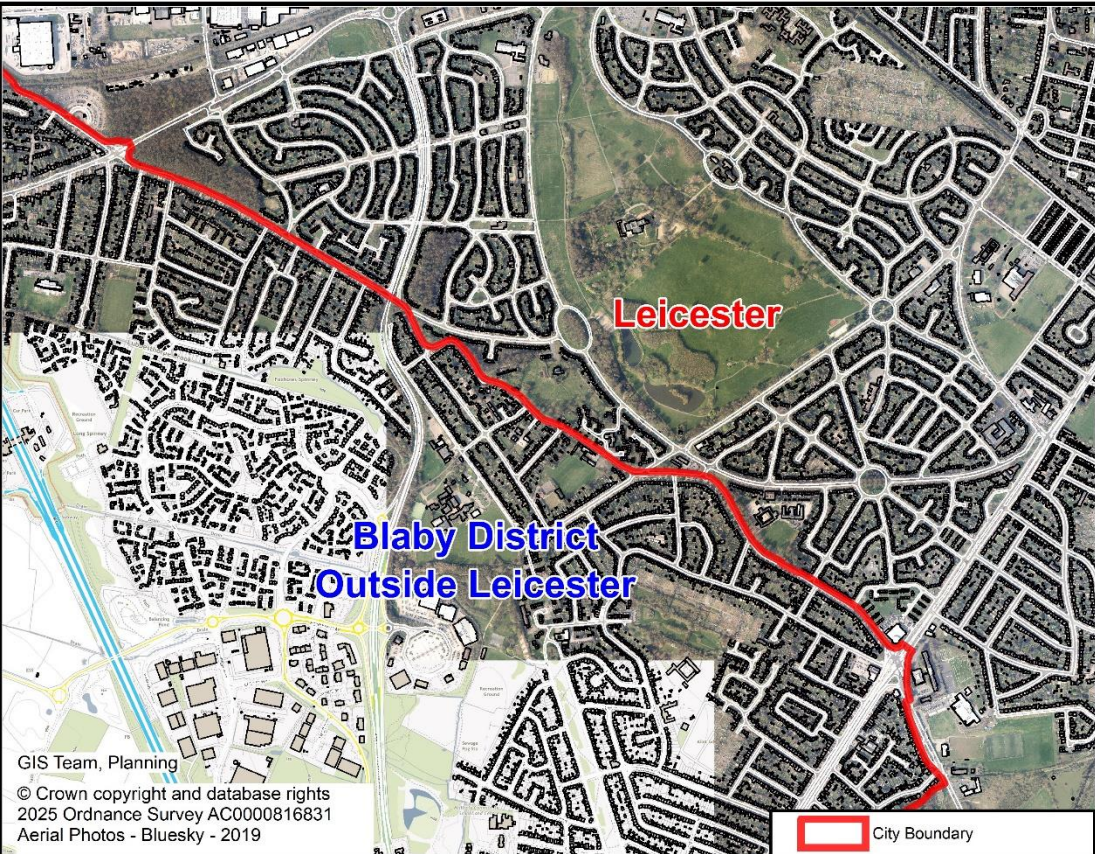
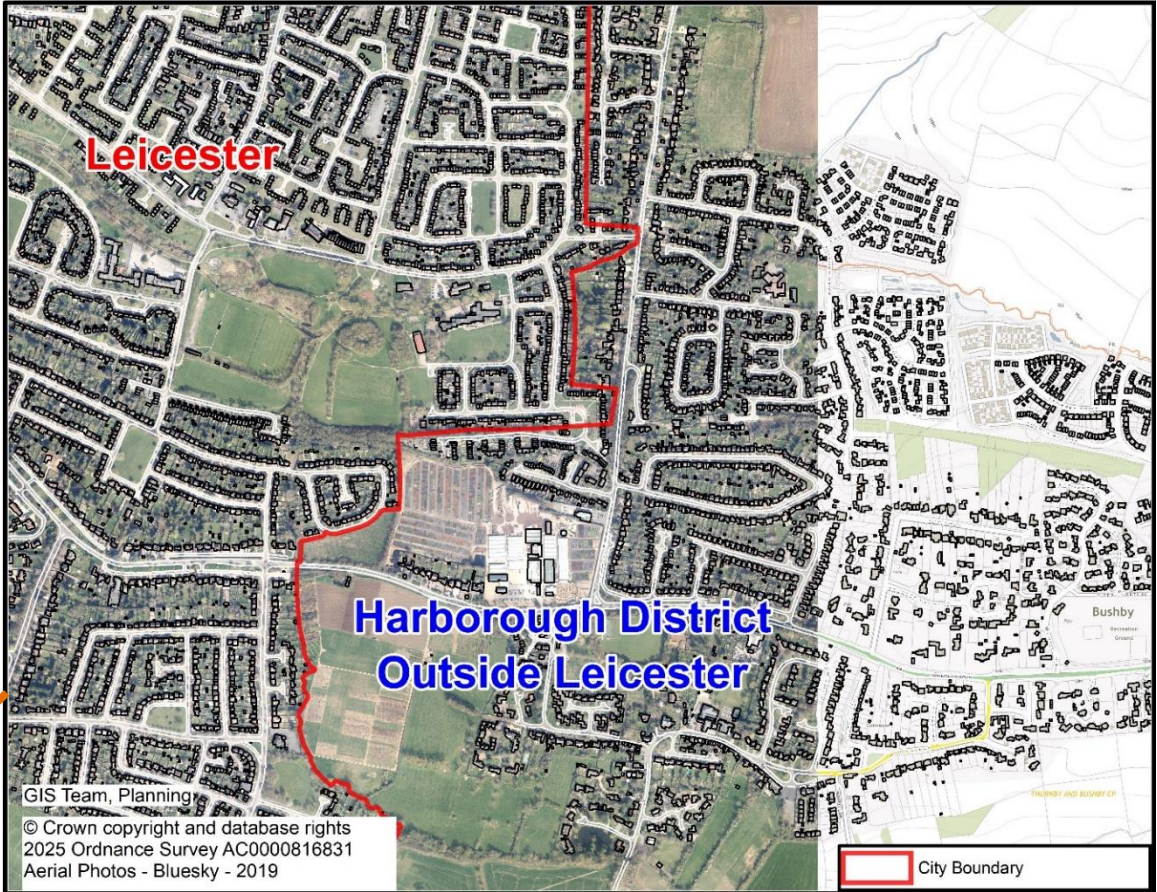
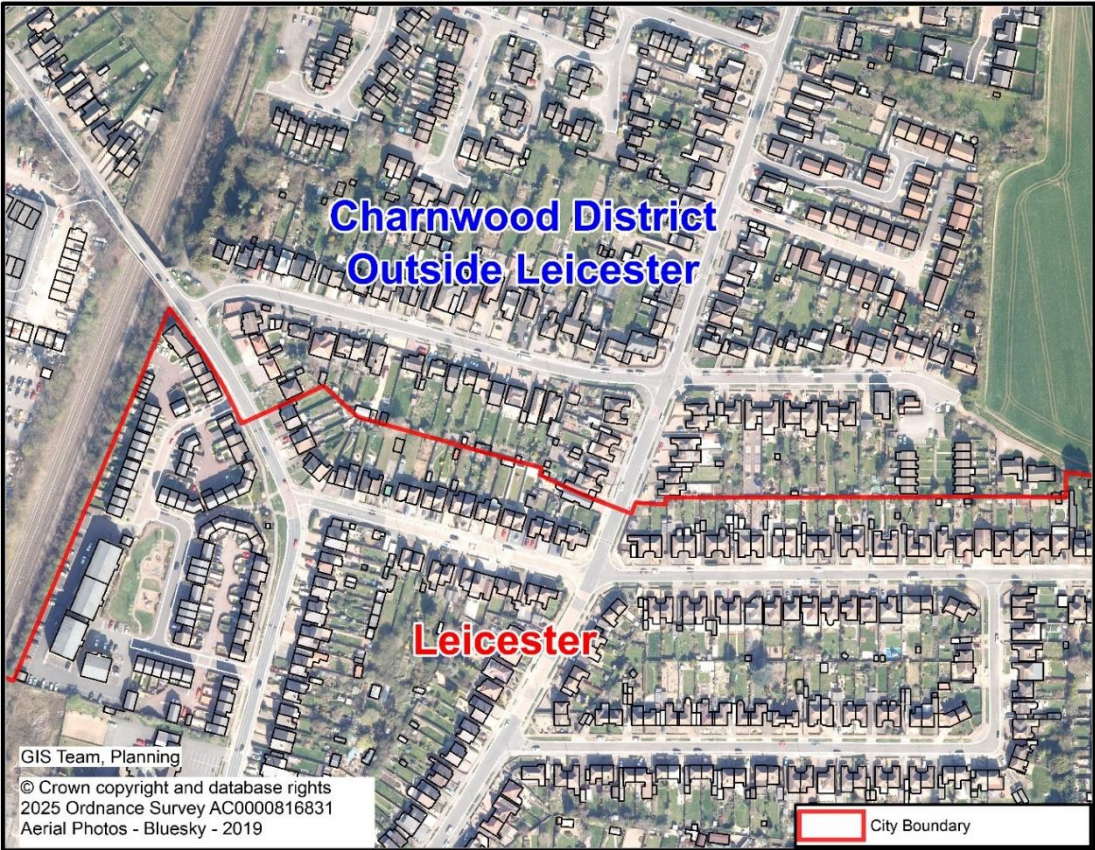
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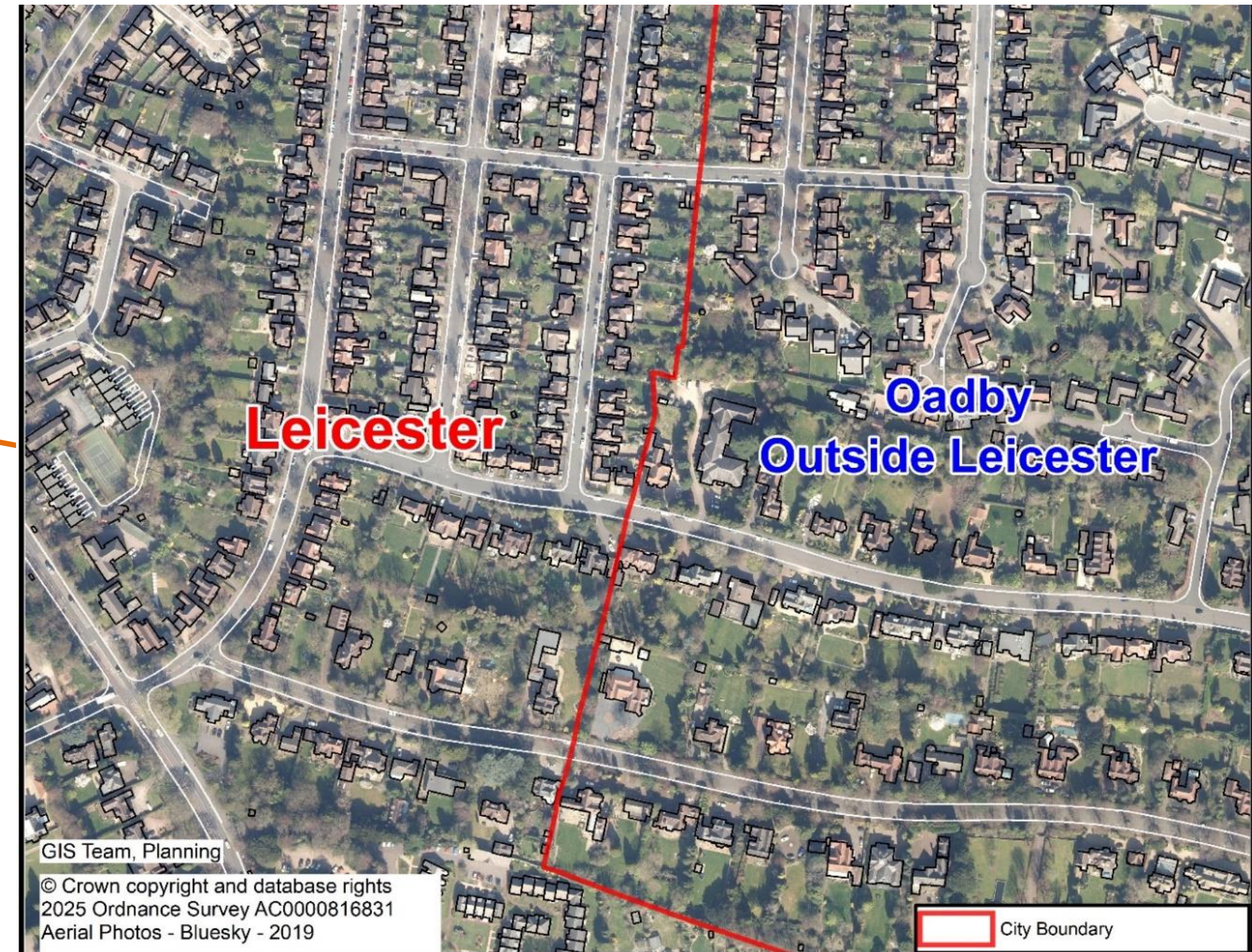
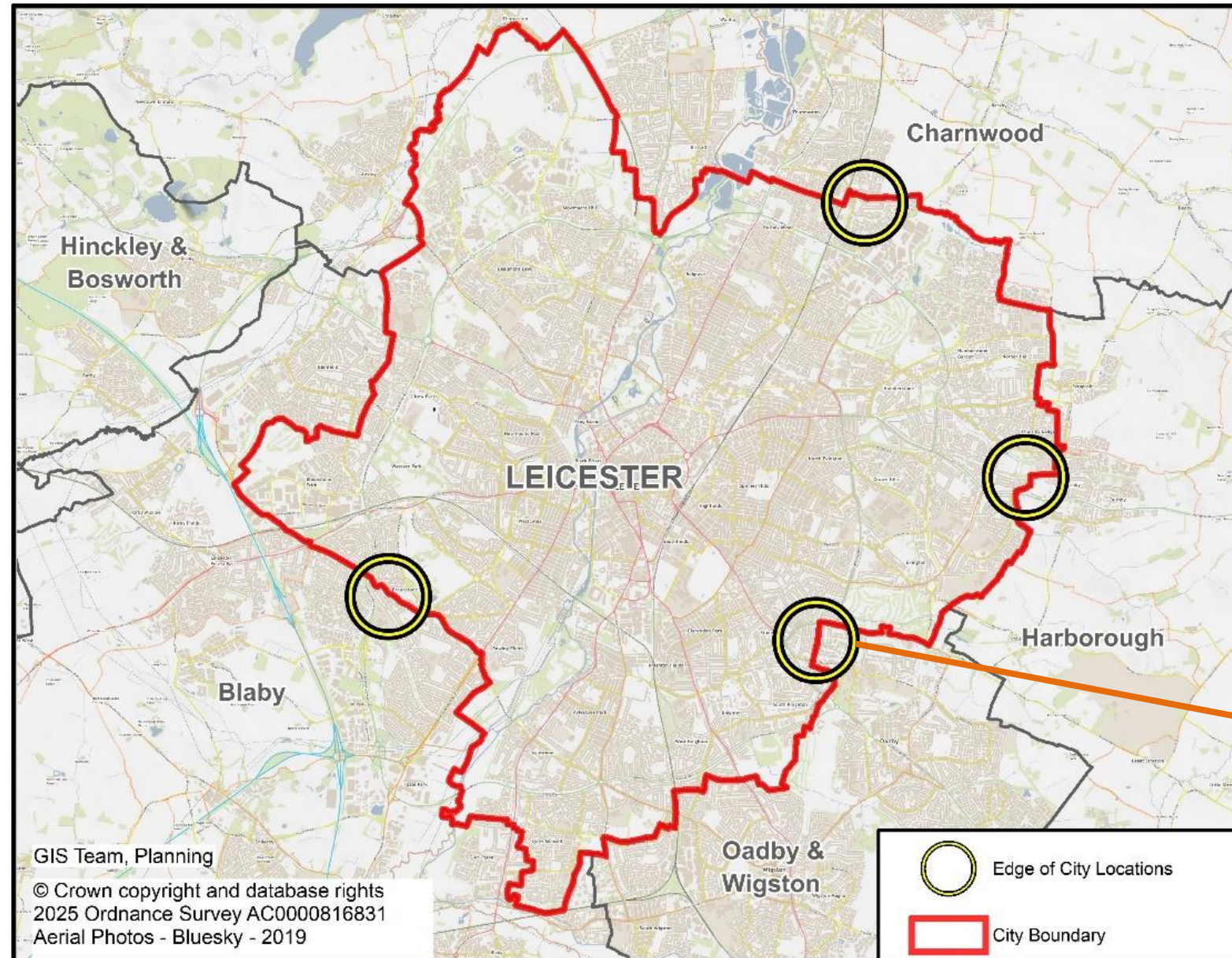
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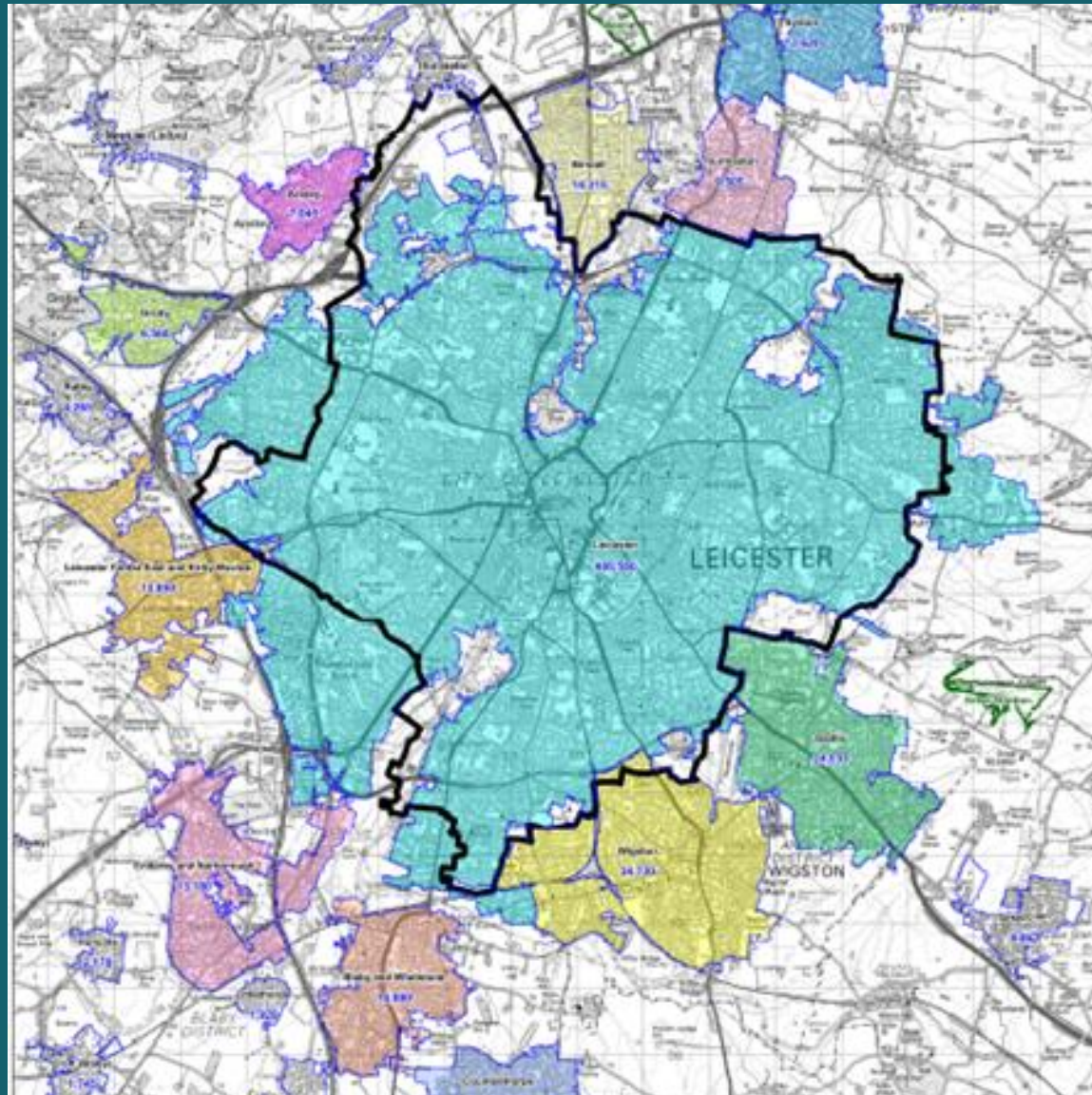
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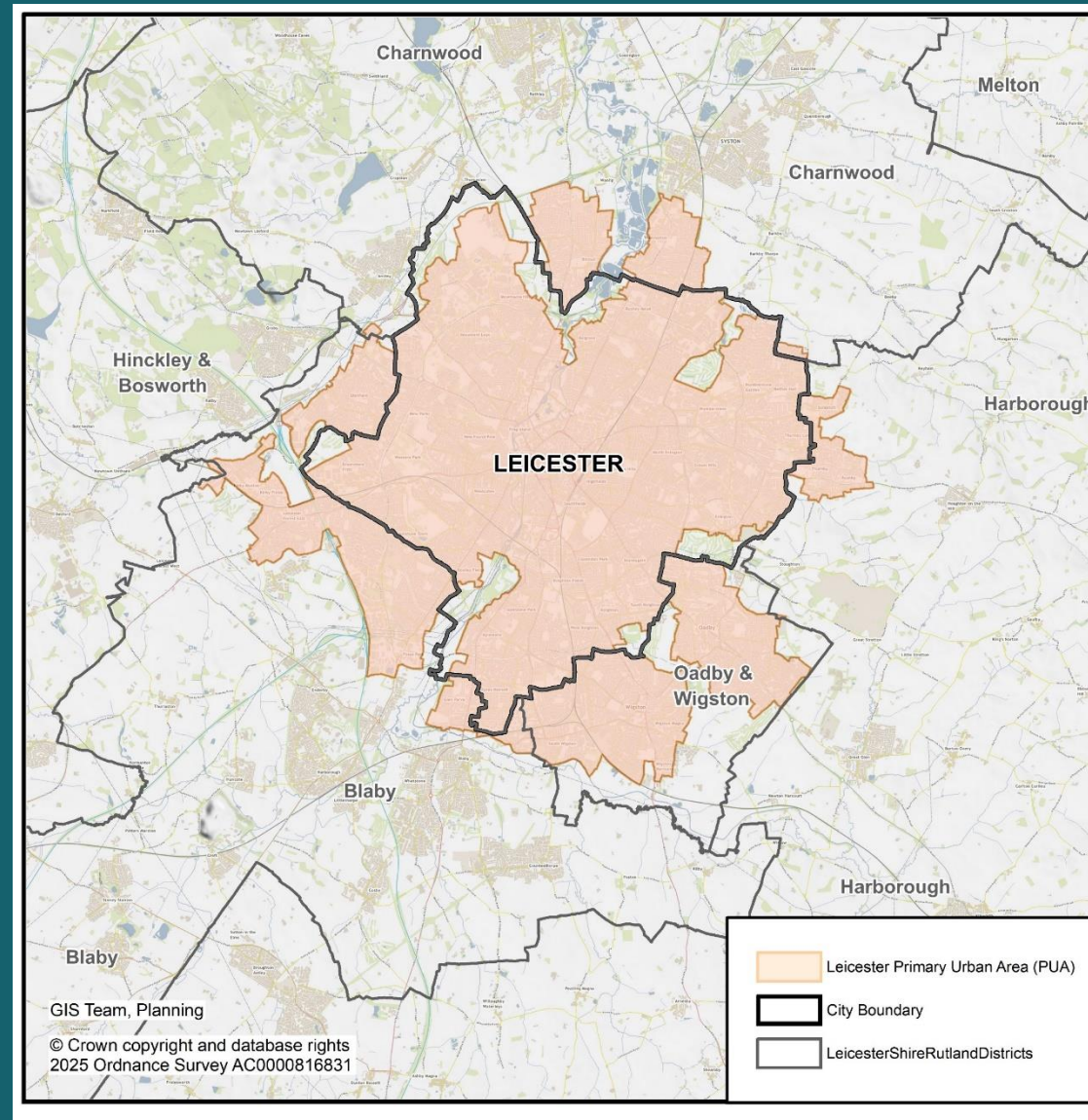
Illogical city boundary: examples



City boundary context – ‘official’ boundaries



‘Built up Area’
Office of National Statistics
defined area recognises the
contiguous built-up area of the
city and connected suburban
areas



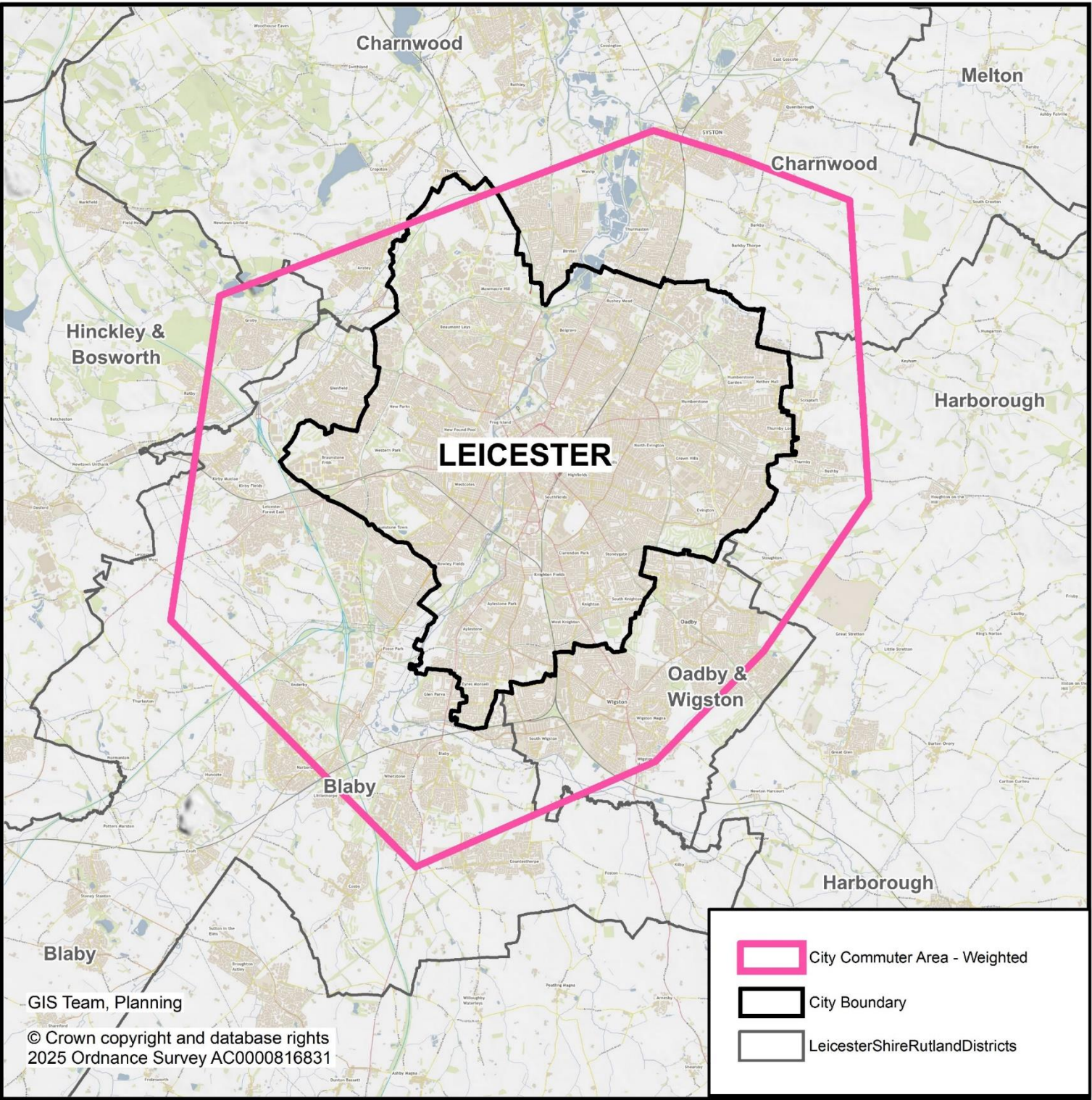
‘Principal Urban Area’
Locally defined boundary, published in
statutory planning documents by the
city, district and county councils,
recognises the contiguous built-up
area of Leicester



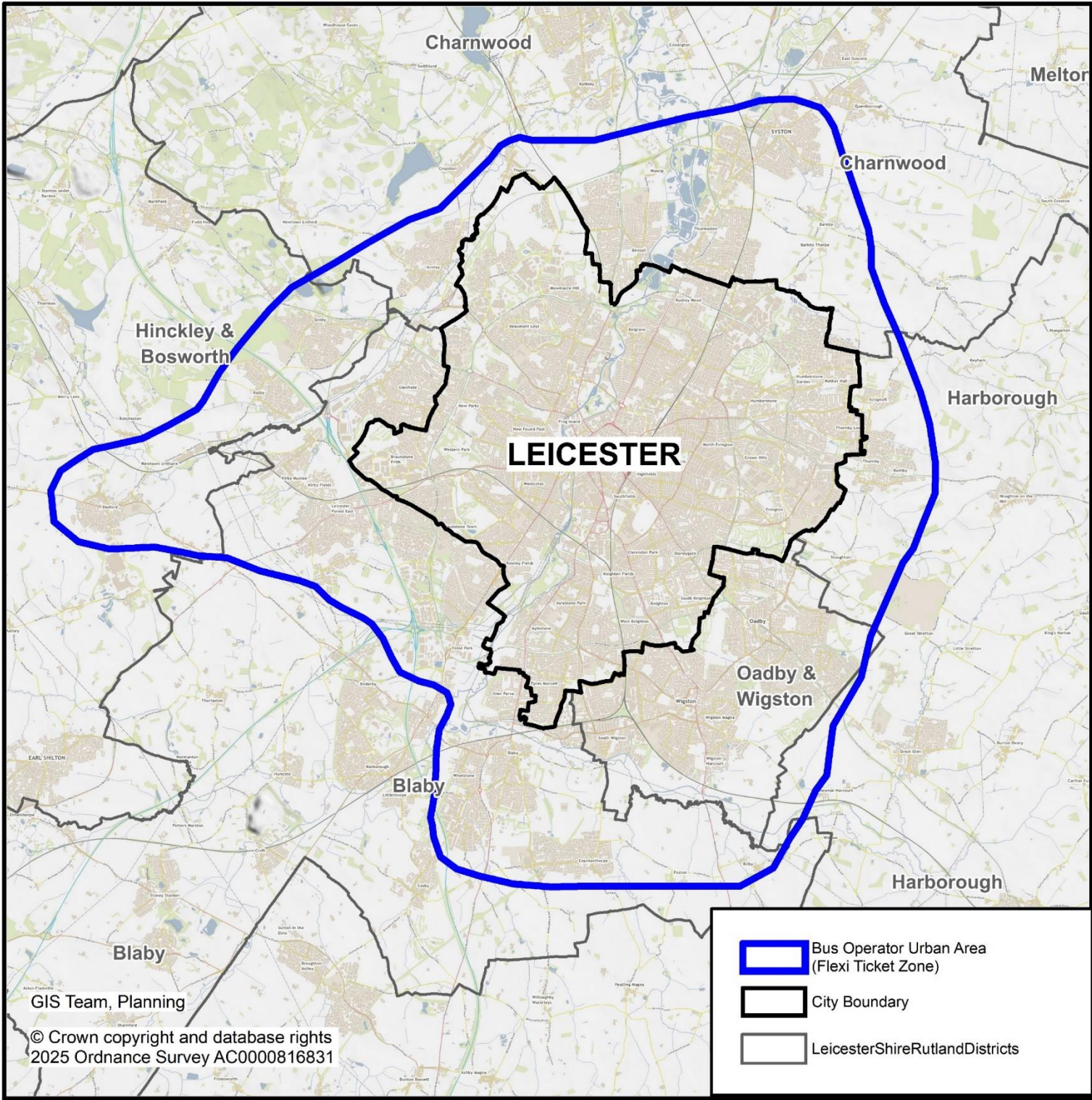
‘Coronavirus Lockdown Area’
Government recognised contiguous
built-up area where transmission most
likely to occur

City boundary context - city travel catchments

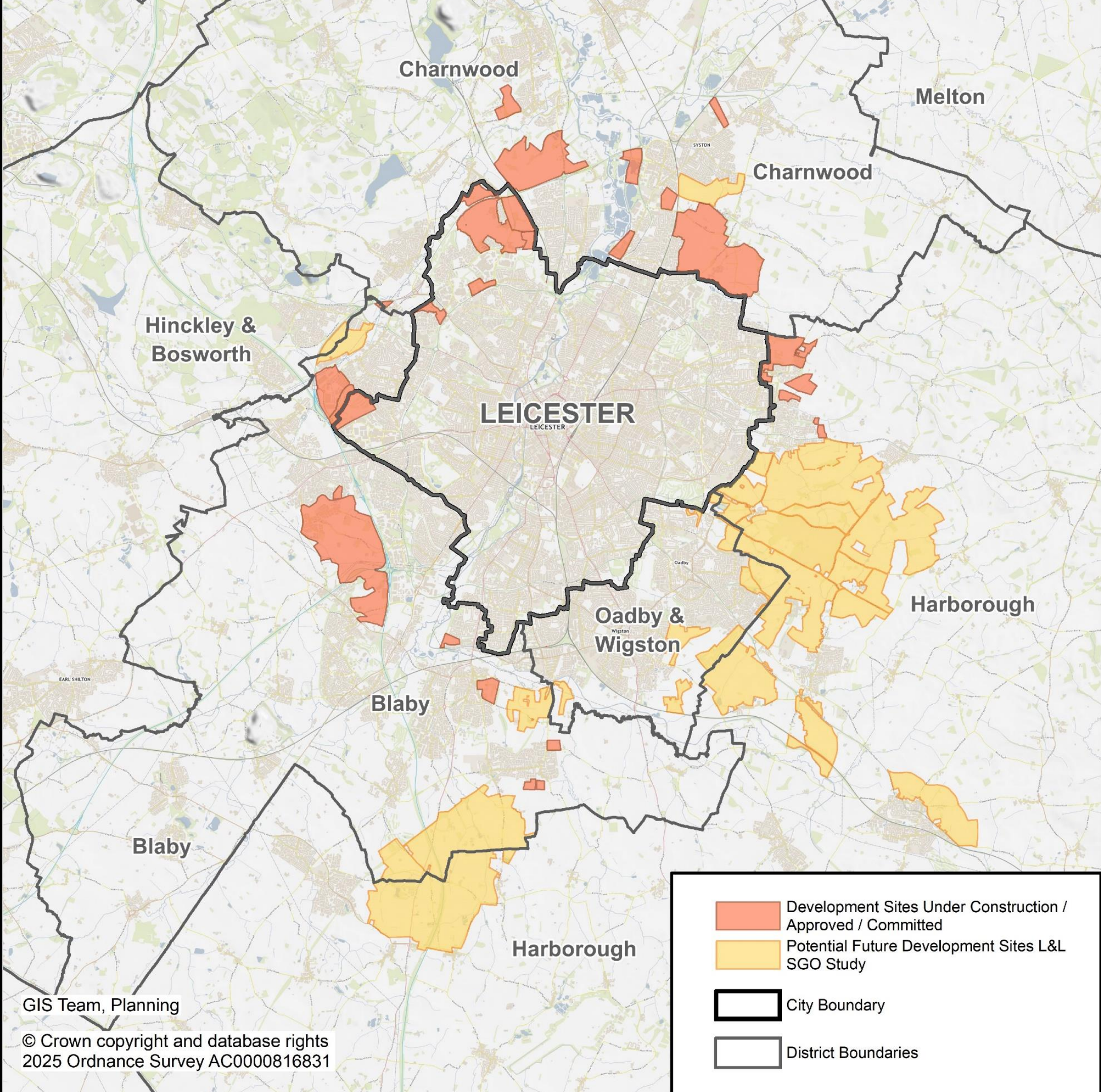
City travel to work commuter area



City bus catchment area



Existing and potential future strategic growth sites



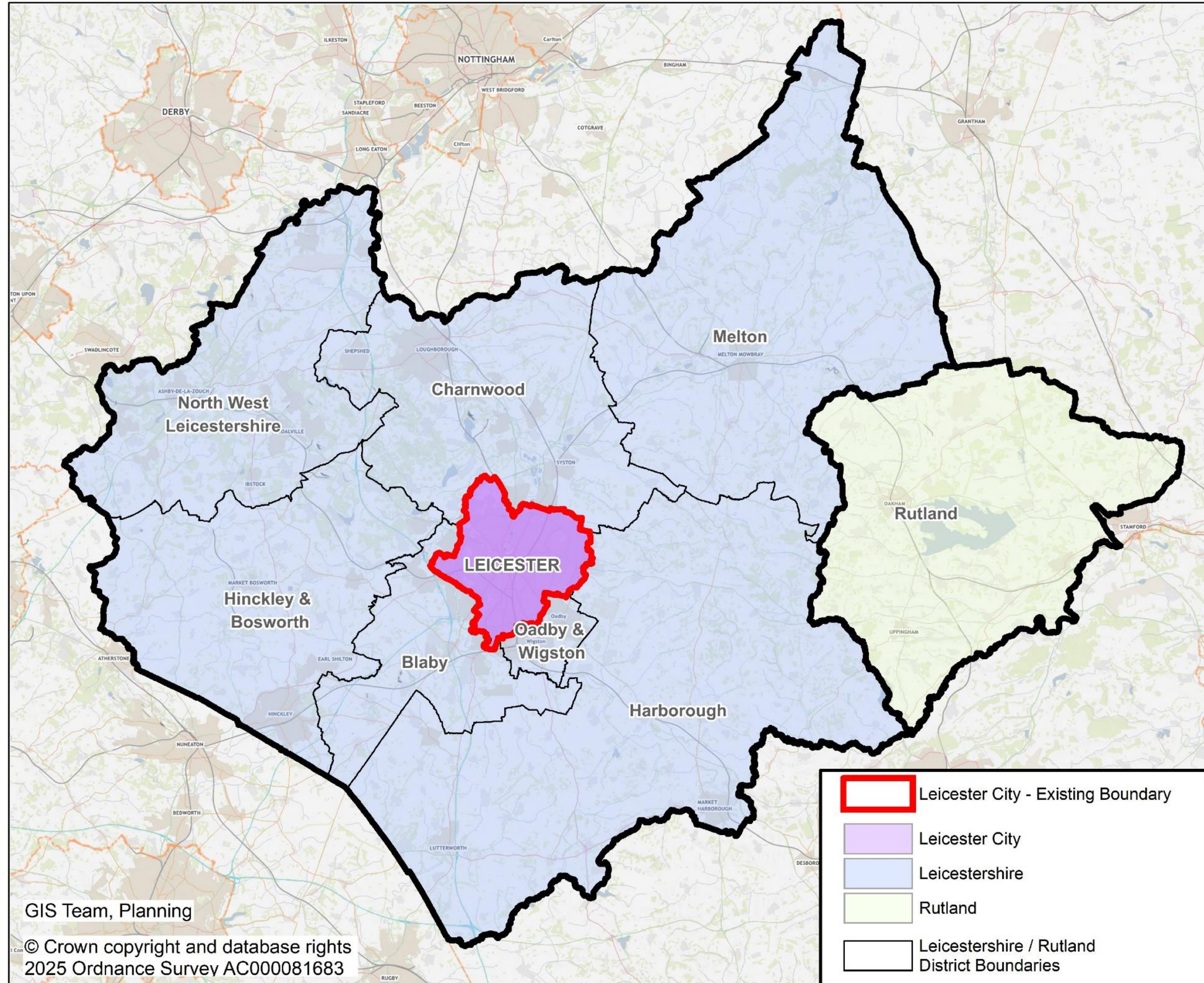
County council LGR proposal

- One unitary council for existing county area
- Excludes Rutland
- No city boundary change

Populations

City – 394,670

County – 764,429



County council LGR proposal

- ✗ Reneges on Jan 2025 joint LLR submission to Government
- ✗ Does not meet Government target of 500,000+ unitary population
- ✗ Retains illogical city boundary
- ✗ More expensive services: 3 unitary councils not 2, less cost efficient
- ✗ Severely constrains land for future city growth: housing, businesses, jobs
- ✗ Will not deliver financial stability and sustainability for city council
- ✗ Unbalanced – 3 unitary councils of very different sizes
- ✗ Does not join up services across the built-up area
- ✗ Retains unclear service responsibility for residents in adjoining suburbs

Districts/Rutland LGR Proposal

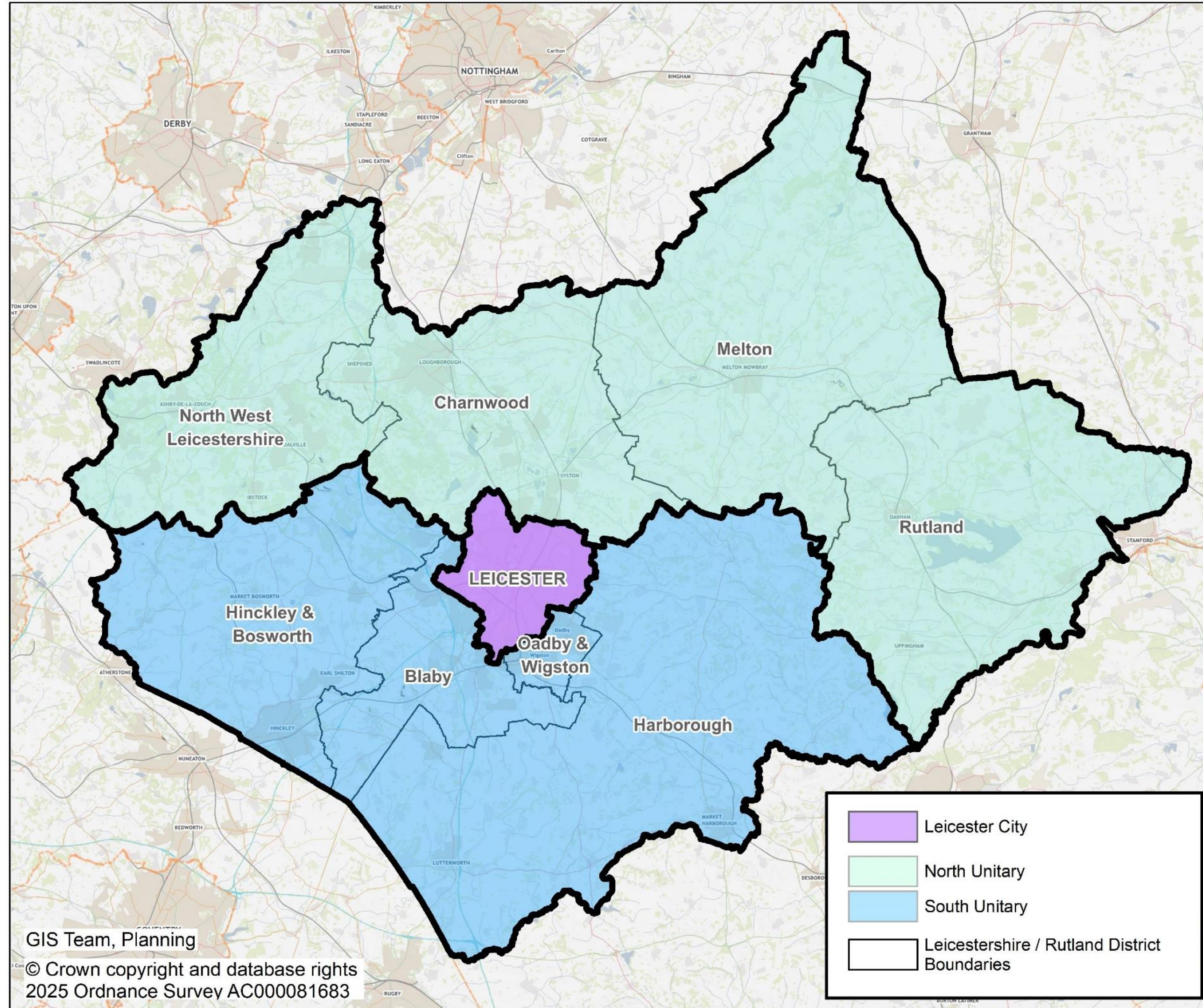
- Two unitary councils across county/Rutland
- No city boundary change

Populations

City – **394,670**

North unitary – **408,735**
(NW Leicestershire, Melton, Charnwood, Rutland)

South unitary – **398,187**
(Harborough, O&W, Hinckley & Bosworth, Blaby)



Districts/Rutland LGR Proposal

- ✗ Reneges on Jan 2025 joint LLR submission to Government
- ✗ Retains illogical city boundary
- ✗ Severely constrains land for future city growth: housing, businesses, jobs
- ✗ 3 unitary councils rather than 2, adding complexity
- ✗ Does not meet Government target of 500,000+ unitary population
- ✗ Does not join up services across the built-up area
- ✗ More expensive services: 3 unitary councils less cost efficient than 2. Splits social care in county area
- ✗ Will not deliver financial stability and sustainability for city council
- ✗ Retains unclear service responsibility for residents in adjoining suburbs
- ✗ Rutland agrees loss of current council identity

City council LGR proposal

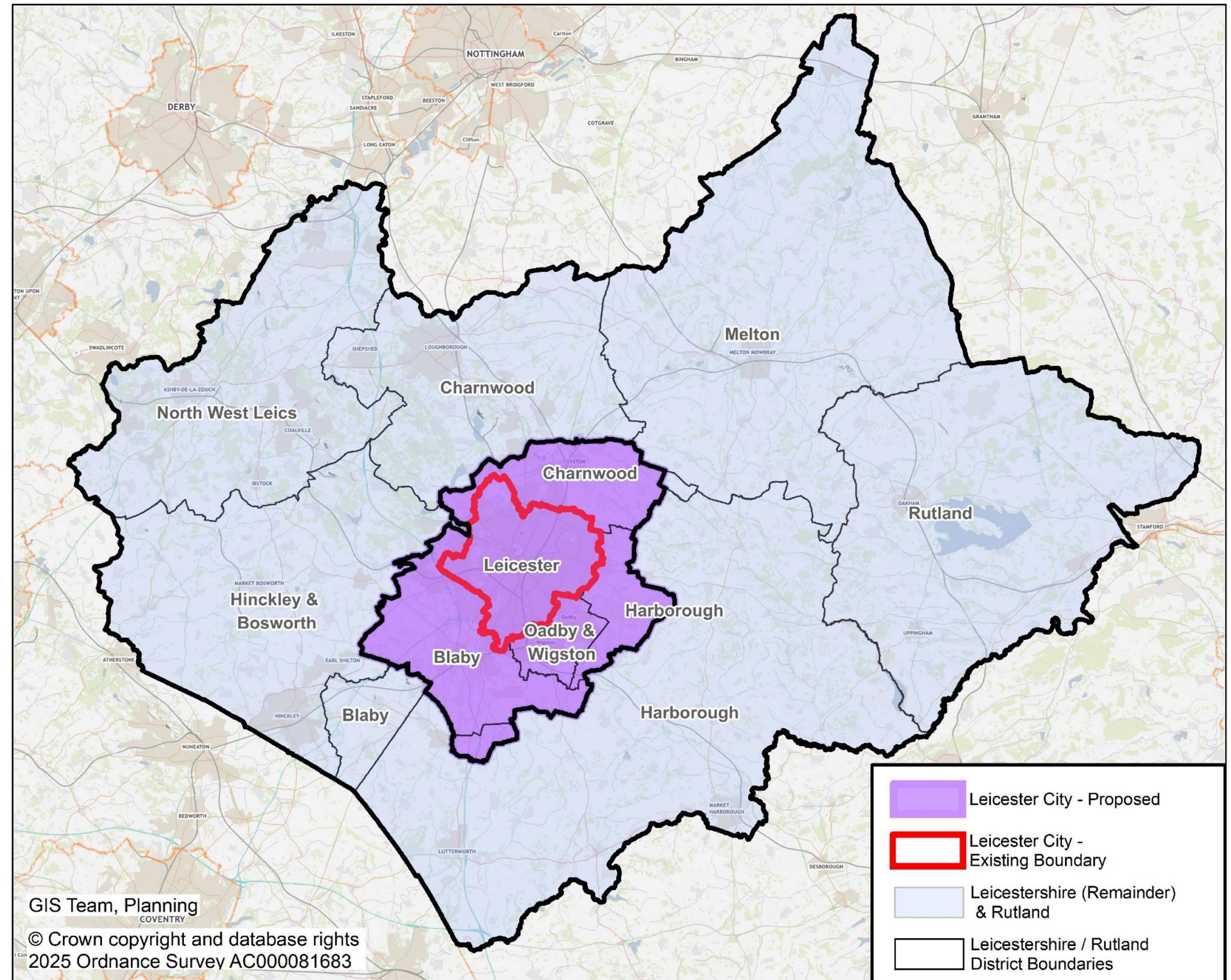
- Expansion of city boundaries to include adjoining built-up areas
- New unitary council for county and Rutland

Populations

City – **618,869**

County/Rutland –

582,723



City council LGR proposal

- ✓ Delivers on Jan 2025 joint LLR submission to Government
- ✓ Strong justification for not using existing district boundaries
- ✓ Common sense city boundaries
- ✓ Sensible geographical boundaries providing land for future city growth
- ✓ Delivers mayoral strategic authority for LLR with 2 balanced unitary councils
- ✓ Meets Government target of 500,000+ unitary population
- ✓ Most cost efficient option for service delivery: 2 unitary councils rather than 3
- ✓ Delivers financial stability and sustainability essential for city council survival
- ✓ Joined up services across the whole built-up area
- ✓ Clear service responsibility for residents living in adjoining suburbs

Conclusions

Only Leicester City Council's proposal:

- ✓ keeps to the Jan 2025 joint submission to Government
- ✓ resolves the city's boundary constraints
- ✓ identifies a sensible geographical boundary for Leicester
- ✓ meets the city's need for housing and employment land
- ✓ gives 500k+ population per unitary
- ✓ delivers a sensible economic area
- ✓ is simple, easily understood and cost-effective
- ✓ creates a stable and sustainable financial position for the city council.

Next steps



Submit
interim
proposal to
Government
by 21 March



Feedback
from
Government



Further detailed
analysis



Ongoing
engagement
and review



Final submission
to Government
by 28 Nov