



Leicester Local Plan (2020 – 2036) - Adoption

Decision to be taken by: Full Council

Date of meeting: 26th March 2026

Lead Director/officer: Andrew L Smith, Director of Planning, Development and Transportation

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1. Summary

1.1 The preparation of the new Leicester Local Plan has now reached the end of the plan-making process. The Inspectors' Report has been received (**See Appendix 1**). This concludes that, subject to incorporating the associated modifications identified by the Inspectors, the plan provides an appropriate basis for the planning of Leicester and is 'sound'.

1.2 The Local Plan will cover a 10-year timescale to 2036 and will replace the current Core Strategy and saved policies from the previous local plan of 2006.

2. Recommendations

That the Council notes and adopts the following documents:

- Leicester Local Plan and modifications (**Appendix 2**) be adopted and published in accordance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended by Section 23(2) and (3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (As amended by section 112(3) of the Localism Act 2011)
- The Policies Map (**Appendix 3**)

Authorises the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Planning, to make minor typographical amendments or factual updates in preparing the final version of the Local Plan.

Authorises a copy of the local plan, the adoption statement and the sustainability report will be made available for public inspection on the Council's website. Notification will be sent to any person who requested to be kept informed of the plan progress. A copy of the adopted Local Plan and the adoption statement will be sent to the Secretary of State. The Council anticipate that this will take place by the first week in May.

3. Background

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires all local planning authorities to prepare and maintain up-to-date local plans that are consistent with local and national planning policy.

3.2 The new Leicester Local Plan will ensure that the City Council remains in a strong position to manage proposals for new development through its decision taking. The Plan covers the period 2020 to 2036 and seeks to:

- Meet the need for homes, jobs, shopping, and leisure;
- Allocate sites for development including strategic development sites; and
- Set clear planning policies that guide decisions on planning applications

3.3 The preparation and production of the new Leicester Local Plan has followed the legal requirements set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 and is in accordance with national planning policy. The plan has been subject to extensive public

consultation and collaborative working with partners throughout. Full Council approval was secured at the required key stages.

These included:

- Issues and Options Consultation (2014) – Full Council Approval
- Emerging Options (2017) – Full Council Approval to commence consultation
- Regulation 18 (2020) – Draft Plan - Full Council Approval to commence consultation
- Regulation 19 Submission Plan (2023) – Full Council Approval to commence consultation and submit to Government thereafter
- Consultation on Main Modifications – (June to August 2025)

3.4 Following consultation on the Council's proposed submission plan, the Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for the purpose of an Examination in Public (EIP). Three independent Inspectors were appointed to examine the new plan. The examination hearings were carried out over five weeks in October/November 2024 and considered the submitted plan against the relevant legal and policy requirements. The process has included preliminary written questions from the Inspectors; Inspectors' matters, issues and questions (in advance of the public hearings); public hearing sessions; and post hearing actions.

3.5 Following the hearings, the Inspectors outlined the stages of the proposed main modifications to the plan. These introduced necessary main modifications to the plan's strategies, planning policies, site allocations and supporting text in order to secure its overall soundness. The Inspectors' modifications respond to matters and issues that arose during the course of the examination process. All local plans that go through an examination are subject to modifications by their Inspectors prior to their adoption by the Council.

3.6 The main modifications were subject to additional public consultation between 9th June - 29th July 2025. A total of 88 representations were received which were subsequently passed on to the Inspectors for their consideration as part of the statutory process. A summary of the representations can be viewed in **Appendix 5**. These, alongside all written and verbal material submitted throughout the examination process, informed the content of the Inspectors' final Report, which is attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.7 The Inspectors' final Report formally closes the examination and is the penultimate stage in the preparation of the Local Plan. The Report finds the Local Plan sound and considers it an appropriate basis for the planning of Leicester up until 2036.

3.8 The Inspectors' Report has also been made available to those who commented on the plan and placed on the Council's website.

4. The Inspectors' Report

4.1 Planning Inspectors were appointed to carry out an independent examination of the Leicester Local Plan to determine legal compliance and soundness and subsequently produce a report to the local planning authority with recommendations (if adopted).

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the 'tests of soundness' against which local plans are considered at their examination in public. A local plan can only be adopted if it is found sound. Plans are 'sound' if they are:

- **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** – demonstrating an appropriate strategy, considering 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 statements of common ground; and
- **Consistent with National Policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

4.3 The Inspectors' Report is structured to first discuss the statutory requirements of plan preparation, followed by a discussion of key issues as identified by the Inspectors, including where they consider main modifications are necessary to ensure the Local Plan policies and allocations are sound. A separate list of minor modifications has been prepared by the council that deal with minor changes that do not change policies or sites. These mainly relate to typographical errors.

4.4 The Planning Inspectors' Report concludes that the duty to cooperate has been met and that, with the recommended main modifications in the Local Plan, satisfy the requirements referred to in section 20(5)(a) of the 2004 Act, and is sound.

4.5 The main modifications identified by the Inspectors as necessary to make the plan sound are set out in **Appendix 2**. The most significant of these modifications are:

- A new policy to make it clear that a review of the Plan should commence upon adoption and be completed within three years.

- Amendments to the employment land requirement and supply figures, including making it clear that the unmet need will be met in full in Charnwood Borough.
- Changes to the policies on the Strategic Sites to ensure that they are effective in respect of the requirements for any future development proposals.
- Amendments to other housing policies to ensure that they are justified, effective and consistent with national policy, including policies on housing mix, affordable housing, housing densities, older persons' housing, self-build and custom built housing, internal space standards, student accommodation, retention of family housing, houses in multiple occupation, and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.
- Modifications to policies and proposals for the Central Development Area in Leicester, in order that the Plan is positively prepared and is justified, effective and consistent with national policy, including improving opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport; safeguarding key viewpoints; and ensuring clarity in respect of the requirements for development proposals in this area.
- Changes to ensure that the policies for climate change and flood risk are positively prepared and are justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
- Amendments to the policies and proposals for health and wellbeing in Leicester, including clarity around the types of development which would require a Health Impact Assessment.
- Modifications to the policies for delivering design quality to ensure that a clear approach to development proposals is set out in the Plan.
- Changes to the policies for heritage to ensure that they are clear and consistent with national policy.
- Modifications to ensure that policies and proposals for open space, sports and recreation in Leicester are effective and provide wider benefits and enhancements.
- Changes to the policies for the natural environment to ensure that they are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy, including the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Amendments to transport policies and proposals, including the deletion of the reference to the workplace parking levy; updated air quality objectives, guidelines, and targets; the delivery of a sustainable transport network; park-and-ride facilities; and sustainable freight opportunities.
- Modifications to make clear what infrastructure could be funded by planning contributions.

- Changes to update the housing land supply for the Plan period, including the 5-year housing land supply, as well as the inclusion of a detailed housing trajectory.

4.6 Policies map.

4.7 The council has also produced a policies map (**Appendix 3**) which sets out a visual representation of the policies contained within the Local Plan on a mapping base. The Council consulted on the policies map at all relevant stages of the plan-making process and also produced a 'Atlas of Changes' document (**See Appendix 6**) which sets out what changes were made between the policies map at submission (Regulation 19) and the version the council expects to adopt. These changes were requested by the Planning Inspectors as part of the examination.

The main changes are as follows:

- Some sites were removed from proposed housing development and were reverted to their previous use.
- Other site boundaries were amended.
- Slight amendments to the green wedge boundaries. Constraints such as flood risk and heritage were added.
- Other changes to provide clarity including site numbers and other labels.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

4.8 At the time of the Examination hearings, the Council used a base date of 1 April 2024 for calculating its housing land supply and was able to demonstrate that it had a supply of 5.16 years inclusive of a 20% buffer to address past under-delivery. However, in the intervening time, the housing land supply has dropped below five years, primarily due to the longer lead-in times required for completions on the larger strategic sites which are projected to come forward later in the Plan period. This means that at the point of adoption, the Council will not be able to demonstrate a 5-Year Housing Land Supply, but a housing land supply greater than five years will be regained later in the plan period.

4.9 Despite this, it is noted in the Inspectors' Report that there is little evidence to suggest that Leicester has any other sources of housing land supply that could be brought forward within the Plan period. The Inspectors' Report recommends that the plan should still proceed to adoption with a 2036 end-date so as to allow the proposed housing allocations to progress to delivery, but a review of the Plan must be commenced upon its adoption which must be completed within three years.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

4.10 It should also be noted that at the time of the EIP the Council, on the advice of the Planning Inspectors, committed to producing a number of Supplementary Planning Documents. These documents would provide more detailed guidance to

help implement the policies in the new Local Plan, offering more specifics on issues such as design, climate change, developer contributions and affordable housing.

4.11 However, the Government announced in December 2025 that new SPDs can only now be adopted under the existing local plans system until June 2026. This tight deadline would mean that the council would be unable to produce any SPDs by the June deadline (as it usually takes around 9 months at the earliest to adopt SPDs), so other options are being considered including informal guidance, or detailed guidance as part of the immediate review of the plan. An options paper will be brought in due course to executive to provide further guidance.

5. The final version of the Leicester Local Plan

5.1 A final version of the Leicester Local Plan is attached in **Appendix 2**, along with the policies map showing allocations and designations in **Appendix 3**. These documents include all the main modifications required by the Planning Inspectors.

5.2 If Council is minded to adopt the plan, it will be this Plan that is used in the determination of planning applications and to guide growth through the allocation of sites in the city.

5.3 As a reminder, the Plan seeks to ensure the delivery of at least 20,730 new homes to meet housing needs across the district. It allocates sites for 3,362 new homes alongside 7,188 homes that already have planning permission. It also makes provision for some 34.49 hectares of employment growth, enabling the Council to help support the expansion of existing local companies, the creation of new businesses, and to attract new businesses to the area.

5.4 The plan is informed by a Statement of Common Ground (SocG) agreed in partnership with the districts and Leicestershire County Council to meet the unmet need arising out of Leicester in the surrounding area within Leicestershire. The Statement of Common Ground, agreed in June 2022, makes provision for an unmet need of 18,694 homes to be met across the districts, and 23 ha of employment land to be met within Charnwood between a period of 2020-36.

Other Policies

5.5 In addition to allocating sites, the plan contains policies to boost the delivery of affordable housing in the city; address climate change; protect the city's heritage and natural environment; and enhance biodiversity. Policies also recognise the need to design places to encourage positive health and wellbeing and ensure that all new homes are required to meet the nationally described space standards.

Key Policy Areas:

- Chapter 5 deals with housing. It sets out expected amounts of homes of different sizes and affordable housing to meet the needs of the city. It also includes policies for housing for older people and people with other

specialised needs including Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show people, and people who want to build their own homes. Policies on houses in multiple occupation and purpose-built student accommodation are also contained in this chapter.

- Chapters 6 focuses on climate change and flood risk. It includes policies on the sustainable design and construction of new development, reducing carbon emissions from new development, renewable and low carbon energy generation projects, managing flood risk, and sustainable drainage systems in new development.
- Chapters 7 and 8 deal with delivering quality design and health and wellbeing. This includes policies on tall buildings, built form, landscaping and inclusive design. It also includes policies to ensure that adverse impacts of development on health and wellbeing are minimised.
- Chapter 9 on the Central Development Area (CDA) contains policies to guide development within the CDA. The chapter has overarching policies setting out development principles in the area, followed by policies on nine individual character areas as well as policies on the other regeneration areas which make up the CDA area.
- Chapters 10 and 11 deal with Heritage and Culture, Leisure and Tourism. The policies in these chapters aim to conserve existing heritage and protect and enhance culture/leisure uses across the city. The heritage chapter includes policies to minimise impacts of development on heritage assets, conservation areas, and archaeology. The culture chapter seeks to support public houses, places of worship, assets of community value, as well as providing new cultural and leisure facilities, such as at the Great Central Heritage Railway.
- Chapters 12 and 13 deal with economic matters and includes policies in relation to supporting new employment opportunities, protecting important existing employment sites and policies for dealing with retail and main town centre development in the city centre, town centres and local shopping areas. It also sets policies for retail and main town centre uses that are proposed in out of centre locations, which includes considering the extent of the impact that the proposed development would have on “town centres”.
- Chapters 14 and 15 deal with Open Space, Sports and Recreation, and the Natural Environment. They include policies for how open space, green wedges, playing fields and sports facilities, designated sites, protected and priority species, green and blue infrastructure, ancient woodland, veteran trees, and irreplaceable habitats, and biodiversity should be considered in determining planning applications.
- Chapter 16 on Transport sets out the planning approach to strategic and local issues related to transport. It includes policies around ensuring development is located in the most sustainable locations for access to transport, addressing the impact of climate change and air quality related

to transport, ensuring that development is accessible for all and ensuring that adequate car parking is provided in new developments.

- Chapter 18 sets out policies relating to the provision of infrastructure. The first policy deals with how development contributions will be used to secure necessary contributions towards infrastructure from developments.

Infrastructure Delivery

5.6 The local plan sets out what infrastructure is needed to support development coming forward in Leicester in the next 10 years. This is outlined in the Development and Infrastructure chapter and revised Policy DI01 'Developer Contributions and Infrastructure'. As part of the examination, the Inspectors requested that it was made clear what infrastructure is proposed and how developer contributions will be sought. As a result, the policy now sets out the broad areas on which the Council will collect money from developers to fund infrastructure. The viability evidence which supports the local plan also highlights that approx. £2,500 per dwelling could be secured to fund infrastructure, subject to site viability.

Habitat Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

5.7 As a result of the modifications, the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) documents were updated and consulted on with the main modifications in June-July 2025.

5.8 The HRA (May 2025) considered the impacts of the Local Plan on European sites of nature conservation interest and importance. The main modifications made during the course of the Examination were considered in a report which can be found [here](#). The HRA concludes that the Local Plan is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the integrity of European sites and that further assessment is not required.

5.9 An Adoption Statement will be provided once the Local Plan has been adopted. This will explain the Local Plan sustainability appraisal process up to the point of adoption, including the SA reports published in 2020, 2022 and an updated version to correct minor errors which was published in 2024, and main modifications and Inspectors' Report in 2025. The Adoption Statement will demonstrate that a legally robust SA process was undertaken alongside plan-making, assessing the plan and reasonable alternatives, and that this assessment, informed by appraisal findings and consultation responses, fed into decision-making at key stages of the plan making process. The Sustainability Appraisal report which was consulted on at the same time as the main modifications can be found [here](#).

6. Adoption

6.1 It is recommended that the Council adopt the Leicester Local Plan as amended by the main modifications suggested by the Inspectors.

6.2 By choosing to adopt the plan, the Council would be putting an essential part of the future development of the city in place. It would place the local planning authority

in a very strong position to provide policy to determine planning applications and bring forward the sites required to meet the housing, employment and other needs of the city to 2036. The plan also contains a suite of policies that address climate change and seek to protect and where possible enhance the city's environment.

6.3 Having an up-to-date Plan will also provide certainty to strategic partners in the Housing Market Area who have agreed to contribute towards our unmet need and are continuing to address this as an ongoing cross-boundary strategic matter. An adopted Plan will support positive planning and development while the Council starts work on a new plan through plan review, which will help update the evidence to support new and upcoming plans in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area.

6.4 With an adopted plan, the city will meet its housing requirement of 20,730 homes over the plan period. The remainder of the housing need will be addressed as part of the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) agreement (June 2022) with the districts on accommodating unmet need.

6.5 An alternative option of not adopting the plan was considered, but this would mean starting work again on a new plan without the comfort of an up-to-date local plan providing certainty around the amount and location of development across the city. This could lead to speculative development coming forward across the city in an unplanned manner, putting pressure on infrastructure, contrary to the aims and objectives of the emerging plan.

7. Financial, legal and other implications

7.1 Financial implications

7.2 The adoption of the Local Plan, as proposed within this report, provides clarity on areas for development and as such will positively impact economic investment across the city, alongside the development of much needed housing. The impacts on Council finances are less significant than those of the wider economy of Leicester but include the potential to alleviate pressures on temporary accommodation and income from planning applications. If the plan is not adopted then not only will there be a delay to the benefits outlined here, but the process will need to be re-followed at significant cost to the Council.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance
26th February 2026

8. Legal implications

8.1 The examination process assessed whether the plan was prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and if it was sound (Positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy). The plan was

prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

8.2 Once the examination process is complete and an affirmative report has been received from the Inspectors, the Local Plan requires adoption by a full meeting of the Council pursuant to Regulation 4(1) and (3) of the Local Authorities (Functions and responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. On adopting the Local Plan, the Council has to make publicly available a copy of the plan, an adoption statement and sustainability appraisal in line with Regulation 25, 26 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended.

8.3 The local plan once adopted is subject to a potential period of legal challenge for a period of six weeks from the date of adoption by the Council.

Stuart Evans – Planning Legal Advice
24th February 2026

9 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

9.1 Buildings and transport are responsible for almost all of Leicester's scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions (emissions directly produced within city boundaries and those from electricity consumption in the city). New construction will also create scope 3 emissions (emissions caused in producing and transporting construction materials and products and eventually demolishing and disposing of buildings).

9.2 Development will also need to be adapted to the changing climate, in particular with respect to heatwaves and the increasing occurrence of intense rainfall contributing to flood risk. The new Local Plan therefore has an important role to play in addressing these issues in support of the council's Climate Ready Leicester goals and Net Zero ambition.

9.3 The new Local Plan will have a major impact on carbon emissions and climate adaptation relating to development within the city. This includes setting policy requirements for new development to reduce emissions and flood risk, protect open space which stores carbon and support reduced travel distances and infrastructure for active travel and public transport. [ref. policies: CCFR01 to CCFR06, DQP04 to DQP06, CDA01, HW01, TCR02, OSSR01 to OSSR03, OSSR07, NE01 to NE04, T01 to T07]

9.4 In conclusion, implementing the climate change and related policies in the Local Plan will be amongst the most important and impactful actions the council can take to deliver a climate ready city.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246
24th February 2026

10 Equalities Implications

10.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

10.2 Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

10.3 Meaningful consultation on the local plan was an important method of collating evidence around any potential equalities implications and should aid the authority in paying due regard to the aims of the PSED. The local plan is a high-level document. In order to foster a meaningful approach to assessing the equalities impacts, a high-level assessment of potential equalities implications has been undertaken to indicate key issues and where more intensive focus is required in the development of the local plan.

10.4 An equality impact assessment (EIA) was undertaken in 2020 to support the consultation at that stage, and again in 2022 for our second round of consultation. An EIA has been undertaken for the local plan in 2025/2026 and as the Local Plan will be monitored annually and reviewed on a three-year cycle, equality considerations need to be embedded as part of the evaluation process, and it is recommended that EIAs be undertaken as appropriate by service areas.

10.5 Building an evidence base is a vital part of equality impact assessment and should include protected characteristic groups (through established groups, support organisations and individually as part of a representative sample of consultees) and other groups at risk of exclusion. A key part of this will be understanding how current policies and issues affect different groups. This will be an iterative process and should be undertaken in such a way that equalities considerations influence the final decision.

10.6 Where disproportionate negative impacts on any protected characteristic/s are identified, decision makers must consider steps to mitigate those impacts. It is important that, throughout the process of decision making, decision makers are aware of and act upon their duty to pay due regard to the PSED.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer
26 February 2026

11. Other Implications

None applicable

12. Background Information and other Papers

Appendix 1 – Inspectors’ Report of the Examination of the Leicester Local Plan and Schedule of Main Modifications. Please use the following link [Leicester Local Plan Examination - Main Modifications](#) for the Main Modifications.

Appendix 2 - Leicester Local Plan 2020 – 2036 Tracked Changes Plan.

Appendix 3 - Leicester Local Plan 2020 – 2036 Policies Map [click here](#)

Appendix 4 - Equalities Impact Assessment.

Appendix 5 – Main Modifications Representations Summaries.

Appendix 6 – [Atlas of Changes to Policy Map](#)