

# Executive Report to Council

Date of meeting: 19th June 2014

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## **Adoption of Revised Core Strategy Policies For New Office Development & Employment & Training Opportunities**

Report of the Director of Planning, Transportation and  
Economic Development

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Abbey; Castle; Fosse; Spinney Hills ; Stoneygate; & Westcotes
- Report author: Rachael Mkanza, Senior Planning Officer
- Author contact details: (37) 2978
- Date of Exec meetings:-
  - Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission 4th September 2013
  - Full Council 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 At the Full Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013, the wording (shown in **Appendix 1**) was agreed as the “submission version” to use to revise the existing Core Strategy policies, to enable new development opportunities for offices and to require employment and training opportunities to be provided in the construction sector.
- 1.2 The agreed wording was then sent to the Planning Inspector for approval and was considered by “Written Representations Examination”. The City Council received the Inspectors report (**see Appendix 2**) in March 2014, which found the proposed changes ‘sound’ and recommended that the Council now formally adopt the changes.
- 1.3 The policy review is intended to support the delivery of the Economic Action Plan, by allowing in principal larger offices anywhere within the city centre, rather than concentrated with the New Business Quarter. It will also require specific employment and training opportunities to be provided as a contractual obligation by the construction sector.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Full Council formally adopts the changes to the Core Strategy found in **Appendix 1**.

### 3. Supporting information including options considered:

- 3.1 The changes to the Core Strategy will help deliver the economic action plan by: -
  - 1) Relaxing the restrictions on locating offices within the City Centre. This is because when the Leicester Office Market Review was carried out, interest has been shown by developers in developing sites outside of the defined New Business Quarter and these changes will allow these sites to now be developed.
  - 2) It will help to create new jobs in the construction sector by requiring specific employment and training opportunities to be provided as a contractual

obligation by the construction sector in major planning applications.

#### **4. Financial, legal and other implications**

##### 4.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.  
Paresh Radia – Principal Accountant 37 4082

##### 4.2 Legal implications

Reviews of specific adopted policies are governed by the usual plan preparation requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The legal position is as summarised within the main report.  
Kylie Chapman, Solicitor, Legal Services 37 1408

##### 4.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are no significant climate change implications associated with this report.  
Charlotte Wood, Senior Environmental Consultant (Climate Change), Environment Team 37 2238

##### 4.4 Equalities Implications

An equality assessment is not applicable, as the proposals make offices and employment & training opportunities more accessible and more widely provided.

##### 4.5 Other Implications

n/a

#### **5. Background information and other papers: n/a**

#### **6. Summary of appendices:**

**Appendix 1** – Changes to the Core Strategy

**Appendix 2** – Report from the planning inspectorate into the ‘soundness’ of the proposed changes to the adopted Core Strategy.

#### **7. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

#### **8. Is this a “key decision”?**

No

## Appendix 1

### Proposed Changes to Core Strategy Wording

a) The *relevant sections* of the existing Core Strategy wording is shown with proposed changes shown in ***bold italic red (inserts)*** and deletions as ~~strike through~~ below:-

To CS04:-

#### CS POLICY 4: STRATEGIC REGENERATION AREA

The Strategic Regeneration Area will be the focus of major housing development and physical change to provide the impetus for economic, environmental and social investment and provide benefits for existing communities. New development within the Strategic Regeneration Area must be comprehensive and co-ordinated, complementing and building on delivery programmes and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Development will promote:-

- Prosperity and economic growth where regeneration is the focus for major employment development;
- Liveability, with high quality residential neighbourhoods having access to a range of facilities;
- High quality urban environments that provide mixed uses and spaces;
- The potential to live, work, play and enjoy opportunities for leisure and cultural activity;
- Continuing investment in University related projects;
- Improved accessibility to jobs, homes and services and connectivity between areas including the riverside and water corridors, through opportunities for walking, cycling and use of high quality frequent public transport;
- The protection and enhancement of designated and other heritage assets and where the City Council considers appropriate the use of heritage-led regeneration; and
- Protection of existing habitats and enhancement or creation of new areas for wildlife. A comprehensive management and maintenance programme for the canal and riverside will be required, to safeguard the natural environment and increase its ecological value.

The strategy for specific parts of the Strategic Regeneration Area is set out below:-

#### **~~New Business Quarter~~**

##### ***Major Office Development***

***At least 50,000 sqm of new grade 'A' office development will be provided in the City Centre. The Office Market Review (2012) identified the need to upgrade the office stock, by either redevelopment, or refurbishment of offices capable of meeting occupier requirements for flexible and energy efficient working environments. New offices will need to demonstrate good pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access. Parking provision will be considered on an individual basis.***

~~The New Business Quarter (NBQ) in the vicinity of the railway station, is the key area for providing office based employment and economic growth in the City. The Council will fully support the NBQ by concentrating new, large floorplate, major office development over 1,000 sqm in that area so that a critical mass of co-located offices is achieved and by promoting Leicester as an attractive place in which to invest. Parking provision will be considered on an individual basis to ensure that traffic flows are compatible with the Local Transport Plan.~~

~~As a thriving prestige office area, the key features will be:~~

- ~~At least 50,000 sqm of new grade 'A' large floorplate offices; supporting retail and leisure uses; a hotel/conference centre; a new public square; a re-orientated railway station; a new car park; and improved bus and rail integration;~~
- ~~Good connectivity with adjoining areas along key routes to the Central Shopping Core, the Cultural Quarter and New Walk area;~~
- ~~Improved pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access to reduce the severance effect of the Central Ring Road; and~~
- ~~Appropriate transport infrastructure to support delivery of the NBQ and to ensure it can compete against out of town office locations.~~

b) The *relevant sections* of the existing Core Strategy wording is shown with proposed changes shown in ***bold italic red (inserts)*** and deletions as ~~strike through~~ below:-

To CS10:-

## CS POLICY 10. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The City Council will work with partners to ensure that Leicester has a thriving and diverse business community that attracts jobs and investment to the City. The City Council will also take the following actions:-

### Offices

- ~~Promote development of the New Business Quarter (NBQ) in the vicinity of the railway station. This will be the location for concentrating new high quality (grade 'A<sub>2</sub>'), large floorplate, major office development over 1,000 sqm, so that a critical mass of co-located offices is established and enhanced.~~

***At least 50,000 sqm of new grade 'A' office development will be provided in the City Centre. The Office Market Review (2012) identified the need to upgrade the office stock, by either redevelopment, or refurbishment of offices capable of meeting occupier requirements for flexible and energy efficient working environments. New offices will need to demonstrate good pedestrian, cycle and vehicle access. Parking provision will be considered on an individual basis.***

~~Allow s~~ ***Small offices will be allowed*** between 100 and 1,000 sqm outside the City Centre in local and District Centres, or where they extend existing offices or where they are part of a mixed use scheme, including a Business Centre (B1(a) at Ashton Green, as part of the village Centre.

### General Economic Growth

The City Council will ***require the developers of major planning applications to provide site specific employment and skills plans*** ~~promote local labour agreements with developers to enable local people in deprived communities to secure employment and~~ ***training opportunities*** ~~and skills development and~~

- The City Council will support local business to reduce their carbon footprint by bringing together business concerned with improving their environmental performance.

c) The *relevant sections* of the existing Core Strategy wording is shown with proposed changes shown in **bold italic red (inserts)** and deletions as ~~strike through~~ below:- In rest of CORE STRATEGY DOCUMENT

#### P7 FOREWORD

The whole of the Leicester community can all share in the successes of projects such as Highcross, Curve, LCB Depot, **Colton Square** ~~Phase One of the New Business Quarter~~ and innovative new housing at Freemens Meadow. Many have been award winning and all have earned the City widespread recognition.

#### P29 LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

4.3.2 A key element for the development of the Leicester PUA is the restructuring of central Leicester, focusing on intervention within the Strategic Regeneration Area (SRA) comprising Waterside, Abbey Meadows, St. George's and **new City Centre Office Development** ~~the New Business Quarter (NBQ)~~.<sup>1</sup>

#### P29 Employment

4.3.7. Further investment in ~~the New Business Quarter~~ and the Leicester Science Park at Abbey Meadows will create **a** places of national significance for the creation of high skill, high wage jobs. Offices for ~~small and professional businesses~~ will be encouraged to locate in the City Centre.<sup>1</sup>

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##### CS POLICY 1. LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

2. Significant new employment development will be focused in the following locations:<sup>2</sup>

- ~~New Business Quarter~~ **City Centre;**
- Abbey Meadows Science and Innovation Park; and
- Up to 10 hectares of land at Ashton Green.

3. The City Centre will be the focus for new retailing, leisure, and cultural development, to maximise choice in a central location and to enhance the scale, range, and appeal of the Centre. ~~In addition to offices in the New Business Quarter,~~ **O**ffices for small and professional businesses will be encouraged to locate in the City Centre. Beaumont Leys Town Centre and the district centres will serve local needs.<sup>3</sup>

#### P40 Diagram 7. The Strategic Regeneration Area

~~Delete~~ 4. New Business Quarter

#### P41

4.4.6 ~~Problems with the City Centre office market are compounded because modern offices have been developed out of town, to the detriment of the City Centre, attracting occupiers through freely available parking. The New Business Quarter (NBQ)~~ **The City Centre** is able to take advantage of the proximity of the City Centre's cultural, leisure and retail offer, as well as the availability of public transport. There are opportunities to minimise car parking over the plan period whilst ensuring viability and deliverability in the short term, in order to compete effectively with out of town office locations. It is important to balance Local Transport Plan requirements and City Centre parking need. ~~Allowing large floorplate offices anywhere else in the City would undermine the viability and deliverability of the NBQ.~~

p65 **Table 5: New Employment Provision 2006 –2026**

Location Area (Ha) Floorspace

Ashton Green \* Up to 10 -

Science Park \*\* 6.1 At least 30,000 sqm B1(b)

~~New Business Quarter~~ **City Centre** \*\*\* - At least 50,000 sqm B1(a)

\* The Core Strategy proposes up to 10 ha of additional employment land at Ashton Green (see CS Policies 1, 5 & 10). At least 6 ha have been identified through the masterplanning work and further opportunities for employment provision may emerge.

\*\* There is a total of 6.1 ha of land available for the Science Park. This is likely to provide over 30,000 of B1(b) floorspace (based on the most recent outline consents).

\*\*\* 50,000 sqm of offices includes ~~at least 30,000 sqm next to the station~~, over 9,000 sqm completed at Colton Square **and the remainder elsewhere in the City Centre** ~~at least 40,000 sqm elsewhere in NBQ.~~

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~~4.4.73 Developing the New Business Quarter (NBQ) as a nationally recognised, sustainable office location, to support regeneration initiatives will help to rejuvenate the office market in Leicester. The delivery of a successful City Centre office market is very important to Leicester's future.~~

4.4.74 The NBQ **City Centre** is able to take advantage of the availability of public transport so there are opportunities to minimise car parking over the full plan period whilst ensuring viability and deliverability in the short term. This combined with the draw of an attractive place to work and the retail and leisure opportunities that the City Centre offers, will enable ~~the emerging New Business Quarter~~ **Leicester** to compete effectively with out of town office locations.

P67 **Diagram 10. Office Areas**

~~Delete~~ 4. New Business Quarter

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~~4.4.80 These developments are complemented by improvements to the main City Centre thoroughfares and the New Business Quarter being developed around the rail station, which will take advantage of the City's new links with Europe.~~

P73 **Diagram 12. City Centre**

~~Delete~~ 4. New Business Quarter

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CS POLICY 12. CITY CENTRE

4. Developing an economically prosperous Centre through the location of small offices and creative industries ~~to complement the New Business Quarter~~ and supporting related uses including new hotels and conference venues.

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**Appendix 2. Replacement of Local Plan Policies**

This table identifies the City of Leicester Local Plan (2006) policies that will be replaced by a Core Strategy policy or saved until they are replaced by the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD.

~~PS05 Central Office Core (New Business Quarter)~~

**P120 Appendix 7: Infrastructure Schedule**

CS Policy 4 – Strategic Regeneration Area – ~~New Business Quarter~~, Abbey Meadows, The Waterside, St. George's South, St. George's North, St Johns.

P121 delete whole page ~~New Business Quarter Primary Infrastructure~~

**Appendix 8. Glossary**

~~NEW BUSINESS QUARTER~~

~~An area between the railway station and city centre where large office development will be focused.~~

Appendix 2



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# Report to Leicester City Council

By Jill Kingaby BSc(Econ) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014

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PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004 (AS AMENDED)

SECTION 20

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION OF LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL'S REVIEW OF  
CORE STRATEGY POLICIES, TO ENABLE NEW OFFICE DEVELOPMENT AND  
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

Document submitted for examination on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Examination by written representations, with site visit on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014.

File Ref: PINS/W2465/429/3



## **Non-Technical Summary**

This report concludes that the Review of Core Strategy Policies, to Enable New Office Development and Employment and Training Opportunities, results in a Core Strategy which provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the City to 2026 and is sound.

## **Abbreviations Used in this Report**

AA	Appropriate Assessment
CD	Core Document
HMA	Housing Market Area
LDS	Local Development Scheme
MD	Main Document
NBQ	New Business Quarter
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
RS	Regional Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy

## **Introduction**

1. This report contains my assessment of the Review of Core Strategy Policies to enable new office development and employment and training opportunities, in terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). It considers first whether the Plan review's preparation has complied with the duty to co-operate, in recognition that there is no scope to remedy any failure in this regard. It then considers whether the Plan is sound and whether it is compliant with the legal requirements. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 182) makes clear that to be sound, a Local Plan should be positively prepared; justified; effective and consistent with national policy.
2. The starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. Leicester City Council's Core Strategy was adopted in November 2010. The basis for my examination is Appendix 1 to the Submission Document (26<sup>th</sup> November 2013), which contains Proposed Changes to Core Strategy Wording<sup>1</sup>.

## **Assessment of Duty to Co-operate**

3. Section s20(5)(c) of the 2004 Act requires the Inspector to consider whether the Council has complied with any duty imposed on it by section 33A of the Act in relation to the Plan's preparation. Section 110 of the Localism Act and Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning, England, Regulations 2012 identify the relevant bodies for co-operation. The Council's Consultation Statement (Reg 22(1)(c)) reports on liaison with neighbouring local authorities and the prescribed bodies for the purposes of section 33A in considering options for the location of new office development in the city centre. Compliance with the duty has not been disputed and I am satisfied that it has been met.

## **Assessment of Soundness**

4. Changes to the Core Strategy (the Plan or Local Plan) are designed to support delivery of the Leicester Economic Action Plan – A plan for jobs and growth: 2012 to 2020 [CD1]. In summary, they seek to provide new development opportunities for offices, to encourage inward investment in the city centre, and require employment and training opportunities to be provided in the construction industry when large scale development is proposed. Changes are put forward to CS Policy 4 Strategic Regeneration Area and CS Policy 10 Employment Opportunities in the adopted Core Strategy, to achieve these aims, with consequent changes elsewhere in the plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to MD1. This limited review of the Core Strategy is consistent with paragraph 153 of the NPPF which permits partial reviews of Local Plans to respond flexibly to changing circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Submission Document is Main Document 1 in the examination library. The adopted Core Strategy is Core Document [CD] 6.

<sup>2</sup> Guidance for Fast Track Reviews of Specific Policy Issues for a Local Plan, Planning Inspectorate, 2012, and Examining Local Plans Procedural Practice, Planning Inspectorate, Dec 2013, both outline procedures and timetables.

## Main Issues

5. Taking account of all the representations and written evidence and my site visit, I consider that there are two main issues upon which the soundness of the proposed changes to the Plan depends. These are addressed below.

**Issue 1 – Whether the proposed changes to the Core Strategy to permit new grade 'A' office development more widely in the City Centre would be consistent with securing economic growth in Leicester, without leading to any serious, adverse consequences.**

6. CS Policy 4 of the Core Strategy seeks economic, environmental and social investment, development and change in the Strategic Regeneration Area. This includes a New Business Quarter (NBQ) in the vicinity of the railway station where at least 50,000sqm of grade 'A' large floorplate offices should be provided, among other development, to promote a thriving prestige office area. A first phase of office development, at Colton Square, was completed in 2009, but no new schemes have come forward in the NBQ. The Council attributes this in part to the decline in European, national, regional and local public funding which was anticipated to pump prime development here.
7. The Leicester Office Market Review, undertaken in 2012 [CD 2 & 3], confirms that crises in credit markets and weak economic growth have restricted development in the commercial property market since 2008. The Review includes a forecast of workplace jobs in the City and updates the HMA Employment Land Study 2008. Demand for new office floorspace in the city is forecast to remain low for the next few years due to falling employment in the business and financial sectors, and better utilisation of office space resulting from increased flexible working and the need to achieve energy efficiency. However, workplace jobs are forecast to rise 2021-31 and with an allowance for the renewal of office stock, the Review forecasts a requirement for some 53,300sqm of office floorspace in Leicester City by 2031.
8. The Review identified evidence of structural decline in the Leicester office market with an ageing office stock and significant "run down of the civil service office estate". Developers were found to be continuing to plan and provide grade 'A' offices on out of town sites but not in the city centre. The Review's survey of office occupier requirements indicated the importance of parking, access to public transport, space efficiency and good IT provision, lease flexibility and a good (ie safe and attractive) public realm. Whilst the new office space at Colton Square was praised for its quality and image and opportunities for more efficient working practices on a single open plan floor, limited car parking was perceived to have discouraged some potential occupiers.
9. A call for sites by the consultants undertaking the Review led to the identification of a number in the city centre considered capable of delivering large scale grade 'A' office space, either through new development or refurbishment. I have considered whether it is premature to change CS Policies 4 & 10 in order to encourage high grade office development beyond the NBQ across a wider city centre area. However, the Leicester Office Market Review reflects up-to-date trends and empirical evidence from consultations with office occupiers, property developers and planning officers. It

demonstrates general difficulties in the office market, perceived difficulties with car parking in the NBQ, and the potential of other centrally based sites to satisfy business needs. In addition, the NPPF expects planning to drive and support proactively sustainable economic development, taking account of market signals and the needs of business communities, among other things (paragraph 17). The policy changes would enable a wider range of centrally placed sites to be considered for office development consistent with the Core Strategy's objective for a thriving and diverse economy and with the thrust of CS Policy 4 for the Strategic Regeneration Area.

10. The Council advised that none of the sites identified in response to the consultants "call for sites" had been expected, or would be likely, to contribute to the City's housing supply in the short or medium term. The Core Strategy examination had assessed housing land supply and the Inspector had accepted that there was sufficient to meet needs. As the Review's demand estimate of 53,300 sqm office space is broadly the same as the figure of 50,000 sqm for the NBQ in CS Policy 4, the changes do not envisage a significant uplift in office development or shift in the balance of land uses in the wider area.
11. Better quality offices and job opportunities could attract people to the city and boost demand for city centre residential development. Recent changes to permitted development rights would enable some existing offices to convert to residential use in the short term. I have seen no evidence that the NBQ would be unsuitable for future residential development facilitating regeneration of the area, if the policy supporting office development there were relaxed.
12. I have considered whether major office development further from the railway station and with better on-site car parking than in the NBQ would have a detrimental effect on the city centre's highway network. However, the Council advised that transport studies using the Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport model and the sustainability appraisal provided assessments of traffic impact. There is no evidence that the proposed policy changes would have an unacceptable adverse impact. I have taken into account that the overall level of office development in the city centre is not expected to increase significantly, and I accept that the overall effect on traffic volumes from the proposed revision of CS Policy 4 would consequently be limited. CS Policy 15, with the forthcoming supplementary planning document updating the city centre parking strategy, would be applied to specific sites and proposals to manage the use of cars and limit congestion.
13. Concern was raised that allowing new office development more widely in the city centre could create uncertainty over the impact on the historic environment. Leicester's city centre contains many designated and undesignated heritage assets. Policy CS4 requires new development within the Strategic Regeneration Area to promote the protection and enhancement of such assets, and where appropriate the use of heritage-led regeneration. Even if a small part of the city centre lies outside the Strategic Regeneration Area, CS Policy 18: Historic Environment applies throughout Leicester City. The consequential changes to the Core Strategy to delete references to the NBQ and refer to City Centre, and to amend diagrams, should remove any uncertainty and ensure that the protection and/or enhancement of heritage

assets is fully taken into account when new office development is planned.

14. I have considered whether the proposed changes to CS Policy 10 should have gone further to remove some of the detailed references to 'B' use classes and recognise the employment creation benefits of non-B land uses. Although the NPPF requires planning policies to avoid the long term protection of employment sites with no reasonable prospect of being used for that purpose, it goes on to state that policies should ensure the vitality of town centres, defining primary shopping areas and applying a sequential test for planning applications that are not in a defined centre, among other things. The current review of the Core Strategy is not the place to consider whether specific sites or business parks in Leicester should be considered suitable for retail development. Removing references to 'B' use classes from Policy 10 could be inconsistent with national policy for town centres, and could undermine the effectiveness of CS Policies 11 and 12.
15. English Heritage requested clarification as to what is meant by grade 'A' offices and I note that the term is not defined in the Core Strategy's glossary. The Council stated that there is no set definition but puts forward a characterisation of "Class A space" in its response to English Heritage (Submission Consultation Statement (Reg 22(1)(c) (Nov 2013)). Such a description could be added to the glossary as a minor plan modification, if the Council considered that this would be helpful to readers and users. However, its absence does not make the plan unsound.
16. I conclude that the proposed changes to the Core Strategy to permit new grade 'A' office development more widely in the City Centre would be consistent with securing economic growth in Leicester, without leading to any serious, adverse consequences.

**Issue 2 – Whether requiring the developers of major planning applications to provide site specific employment and skills plans is deliverable, and consistent with national planning policy.**

17. Paragraphs 173 onwards of the NPPF require careful attention to be given to viability and costs in plan-making. Development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that the ability to be developed viably is threatened. Although the City Council has not carried out viability testing of the likely costs to developers of introducing employment and skills' plans, it contends that implementation of the plans would most likely be cost neutral. Developers commonly have to provide skills' training and I appreciate that a more skilled workforce should give better value for money.
18. The Leicester Economic Action Plan - A plan for jobs and growth: 2012 to 2020 [CD1] highlighted a relatively weak skills' base, high levels of worklessness in some areas of Leicester including among young adults, low levels of economic activity among females and a dependency on public sector employment. Its priorities begin with measures to tackle these problems, working in partnership with local businesses, universities and colleges, public and voluntary sector agencies and local communities. Leicester to Work – Constructing Leicester [CD5] sets out how employment and skills plans should be developed for the construction industry, reflecting the National Skills Academy for Construction Guidance and being applied to all major

development schemes [CD4]. The evidence base provides justification for the proposed change to CS Policy 10 to secure the specified employment and training opportunities.

19. The Council quoted examples of two planning applications for developments (City Council projects) expected to start in 2014 for which employment and skills' plans had been agreed, and three other proposals where such plans are being negotiated with developers. Public consultation on the proposed change to CS Policy 10 requiring developers of major planning applications to provide site specific employment and skills' plans elicited no objections. I conclude that the change in policy should be deliverable (therefore effective), and consistent with the NPPF's aims to secure economic growth and plan proactively for an economy fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Assessment of Legal Compliance

20. My examination of the compliance of the Plan with the legal requirements is summarised in the table below. I conclude that the Plan meets them all.

<b>LEGAL REQUIREMENTS</b>	
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	This Partial Review of Core Strategy Policies is identified within the approved LDS March 2014 which sets out an expected adoption date of May 2014. The content and timing of the Review are compliant with the LDS.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and relevant regulations	The SCI was adopted in September 2006. Consultation has been compliant with the requirements therein, and with the regulations.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	SA has been carried out and is adequate.
Appropriate Assessment (AA)	The Habitats Regulations AA Screening Report (September 2009) set out why AA for the Core Strategy was not necessary. Reassessment in consultation with Natural England in February 2014 confirmed that this remains the position following the Partial Review.
National Policy	The Core Strategy as partially reviewed complies with national policy.
Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)	Satisfactory regard has been paid to the SCS.
2004 Act (as amended) and 2012 Regulations.	The Partial Review of Core Strategy Policies complies with the Act and the Regulations.

## **Overall Conclusion and Recommendation**

**21. In accordance with Section 20(7) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, I recommend that the submitted Review of Core Strategy Policies to enable new office development and employment and training opportunities is adopted, on the basis that the revised plan meets in full the requirements of Section 20(5). My report covers the primary issues that have brought me to this conclusion.**

Jill Kingaby

Inspector