Local Government Reorganisation

Special OSC

10th November 2025

Leicester City Council

What the Government asked for

Invitation to all LLR councils to submit proposals for the whole area

**Proposals should have regard to criteria including**

- Deliver single tier local government

- Unitary population of 500,000 +

- Sensible geography

- Sensible economic areas

- Improvement to local services

- Efficiency savings

- Support for devolution

Heavily constrained city boundary

- Boundaries largely fixed c100 years ago

- Small number of authorities not extended in 1973 and 1997 reorganisations

- Illogical boundaries do not recognise the actual extent of the built-up area

- Inefficient/confusing service delivery

- Heavily constrained land for housing/ jobs

- Low tax base
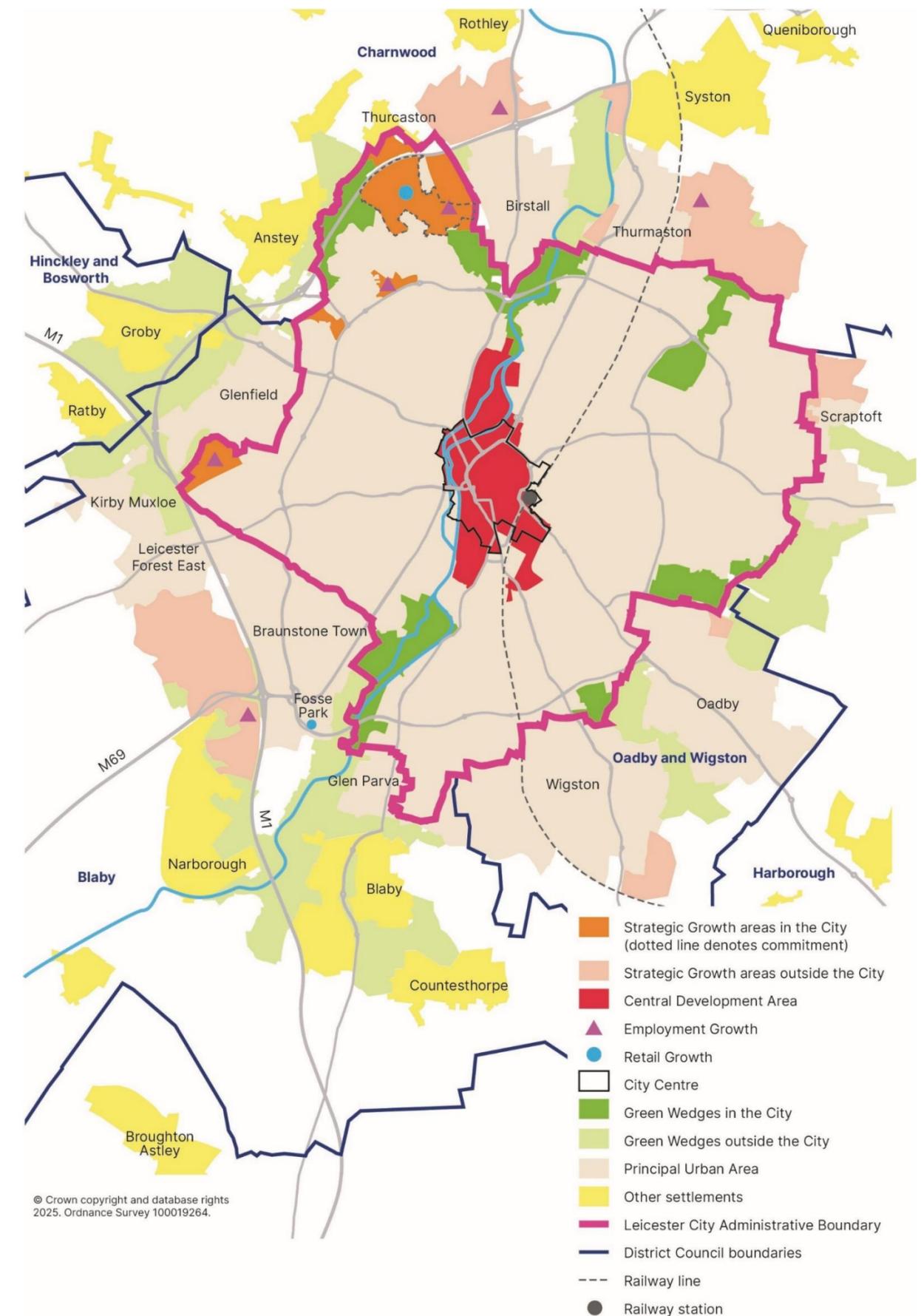
City boundaries are illogical - splitting streets and communities
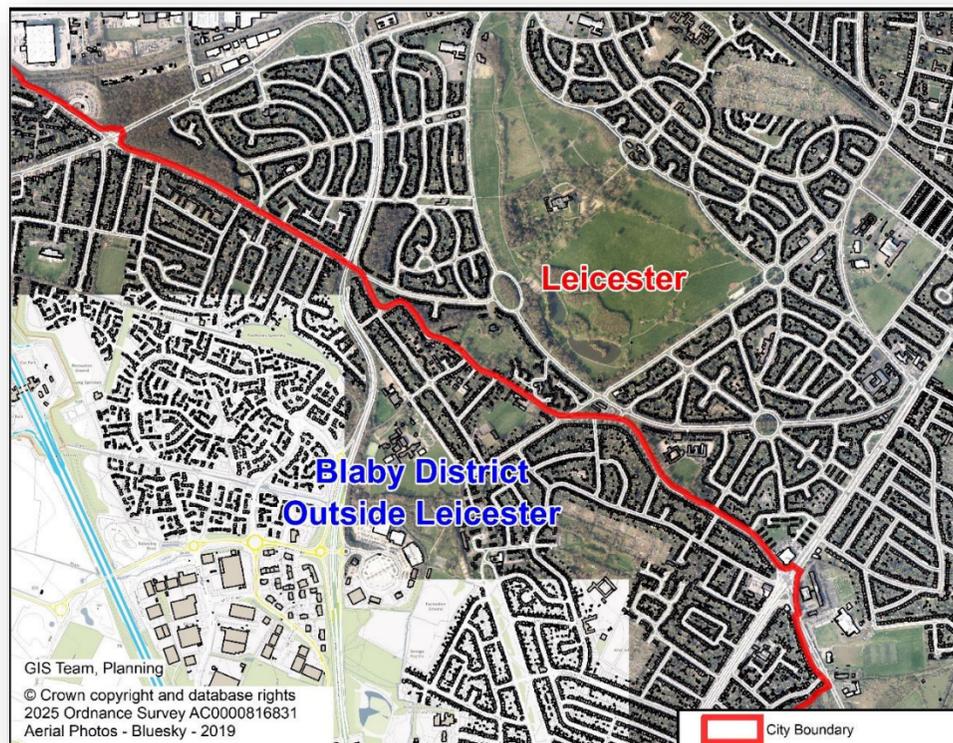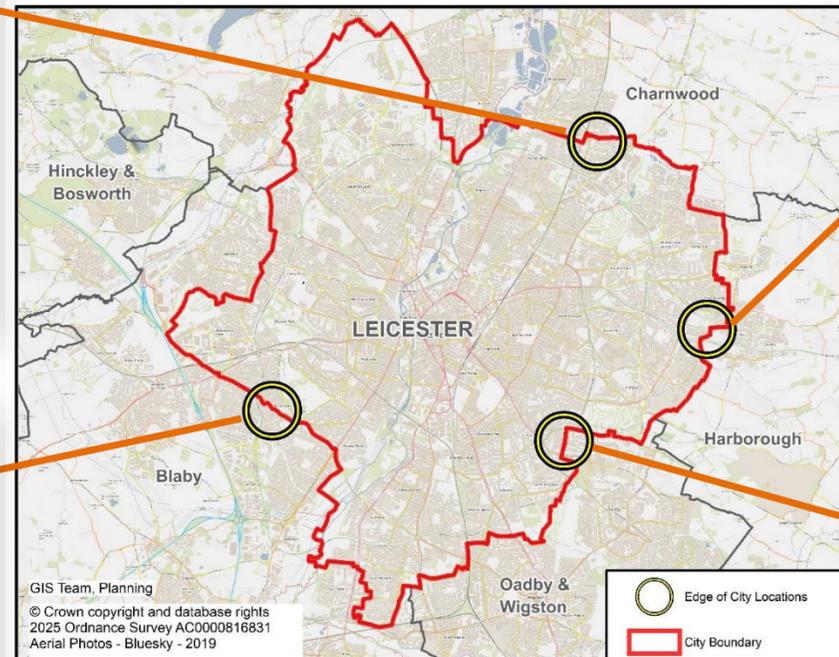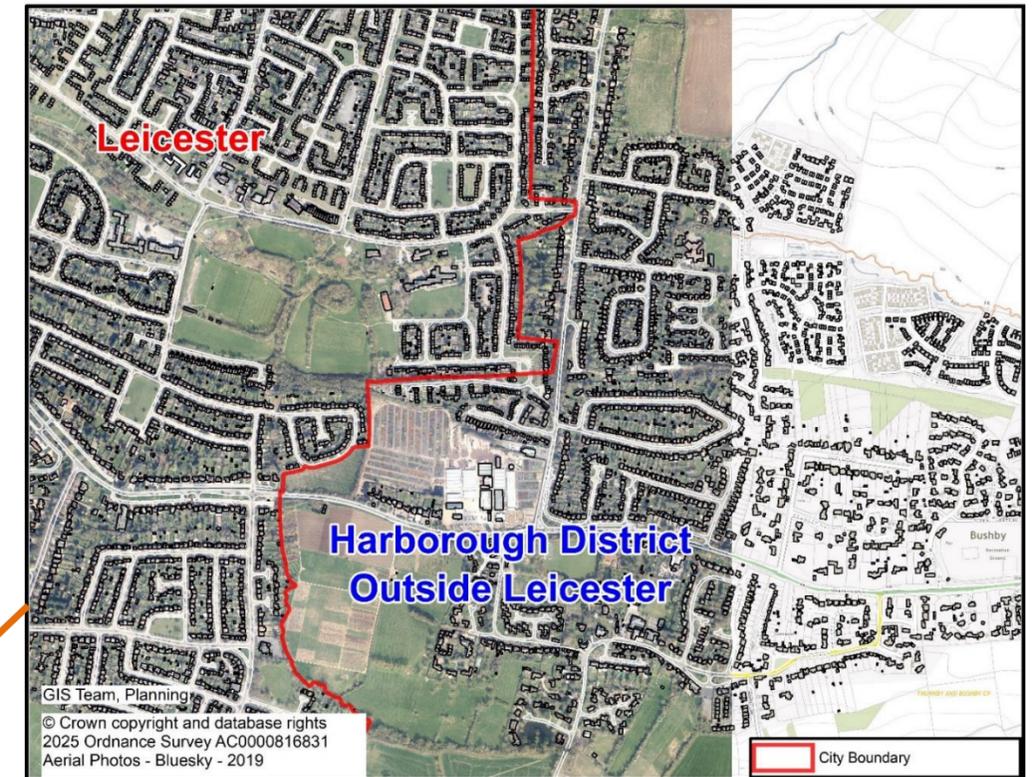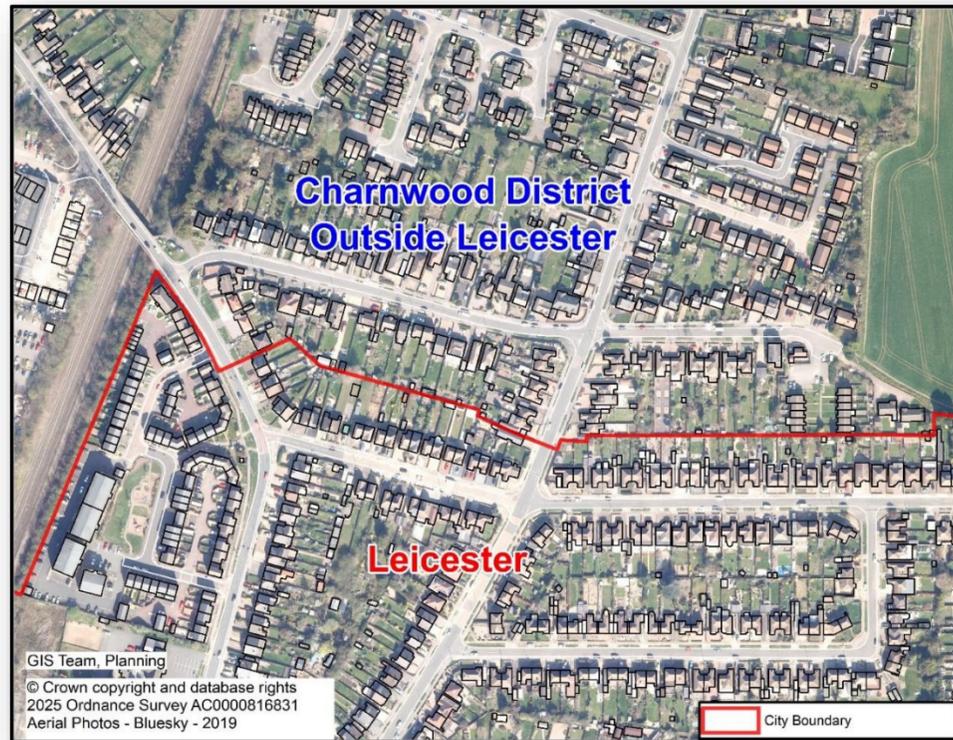
Comparator cities have land for housing and economic growth and are less than a third as densely populated

Leicester

Population: **372k**

Area km2: **73**

Population density pop'n/km2:

5095
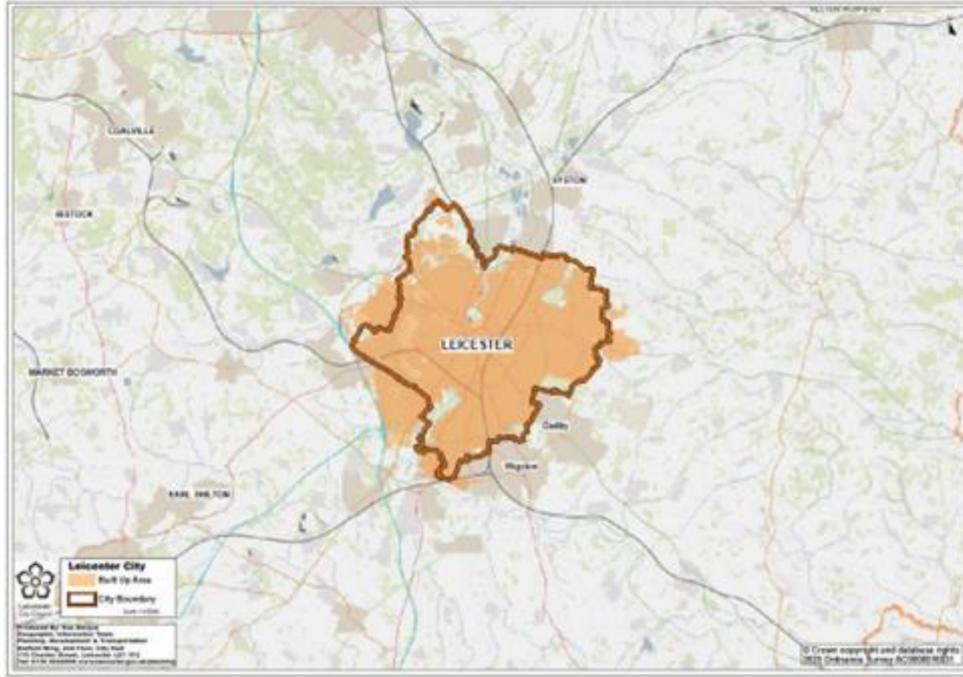
Bradford

Population: **553k**

Area km2: **365**

Population density pop'n/km2:

1514
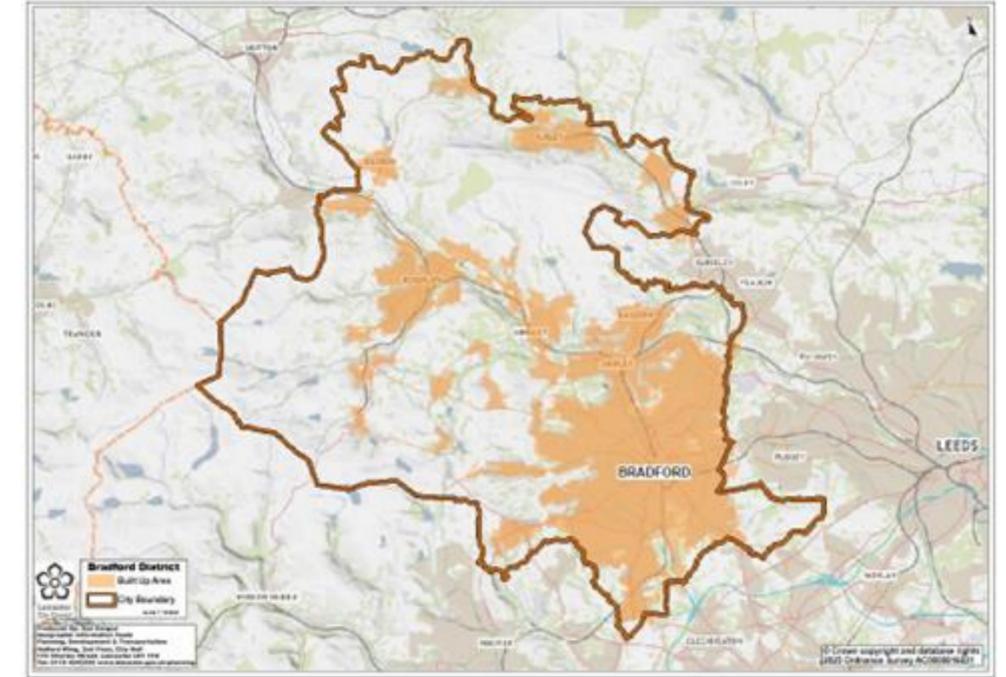
Sheffield

Population: **564k**

Area km2: **367**

Population density pop'n/km2:

1540
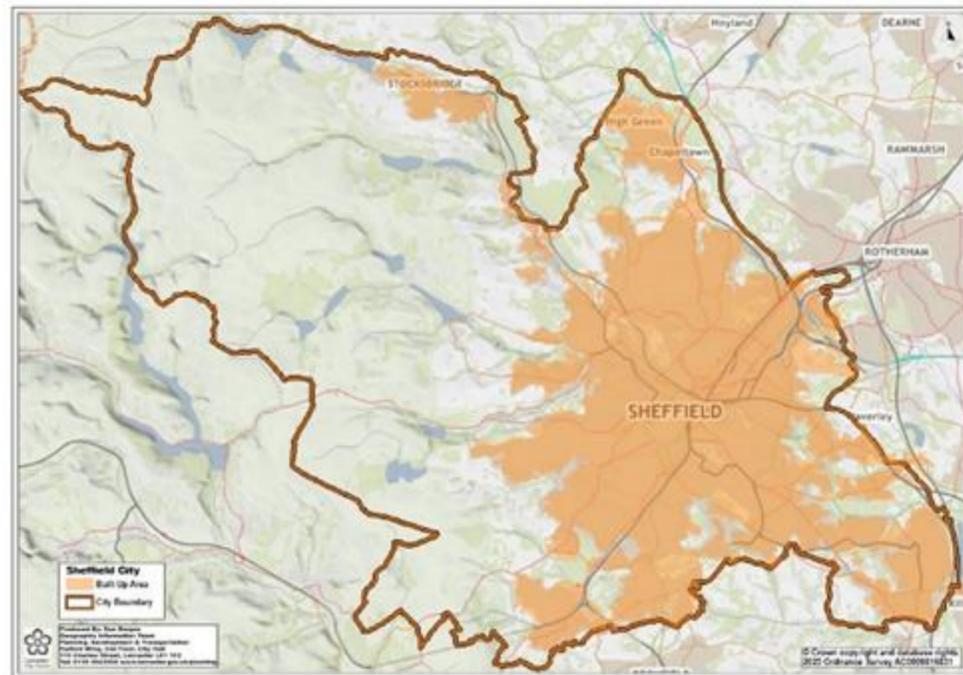
Leeds

Population: **820k**

Area km2: **550**

Population density pop'n/km2:

1493
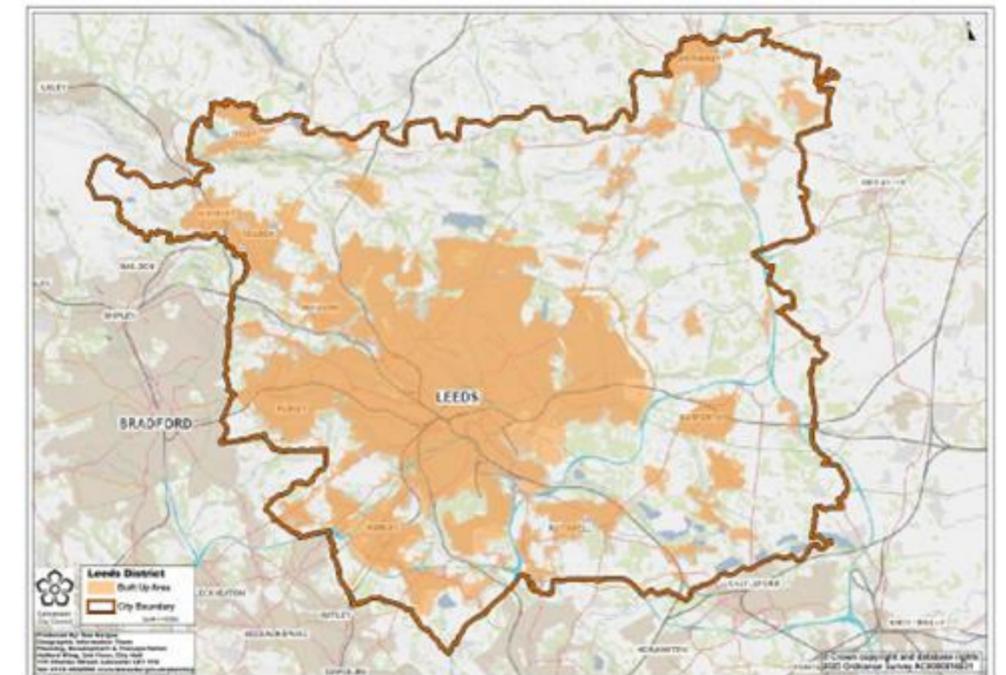
Establishing a sensible boundary for the city

- Coherent geography recognising the city and its suburbs and rural areas

- Recognising how people live their lives – travel to work, shop and leisure facilities

- Room for future city expansion - housing and jobs for local people

Coherence of central urban city and rural areas with ring of county towns
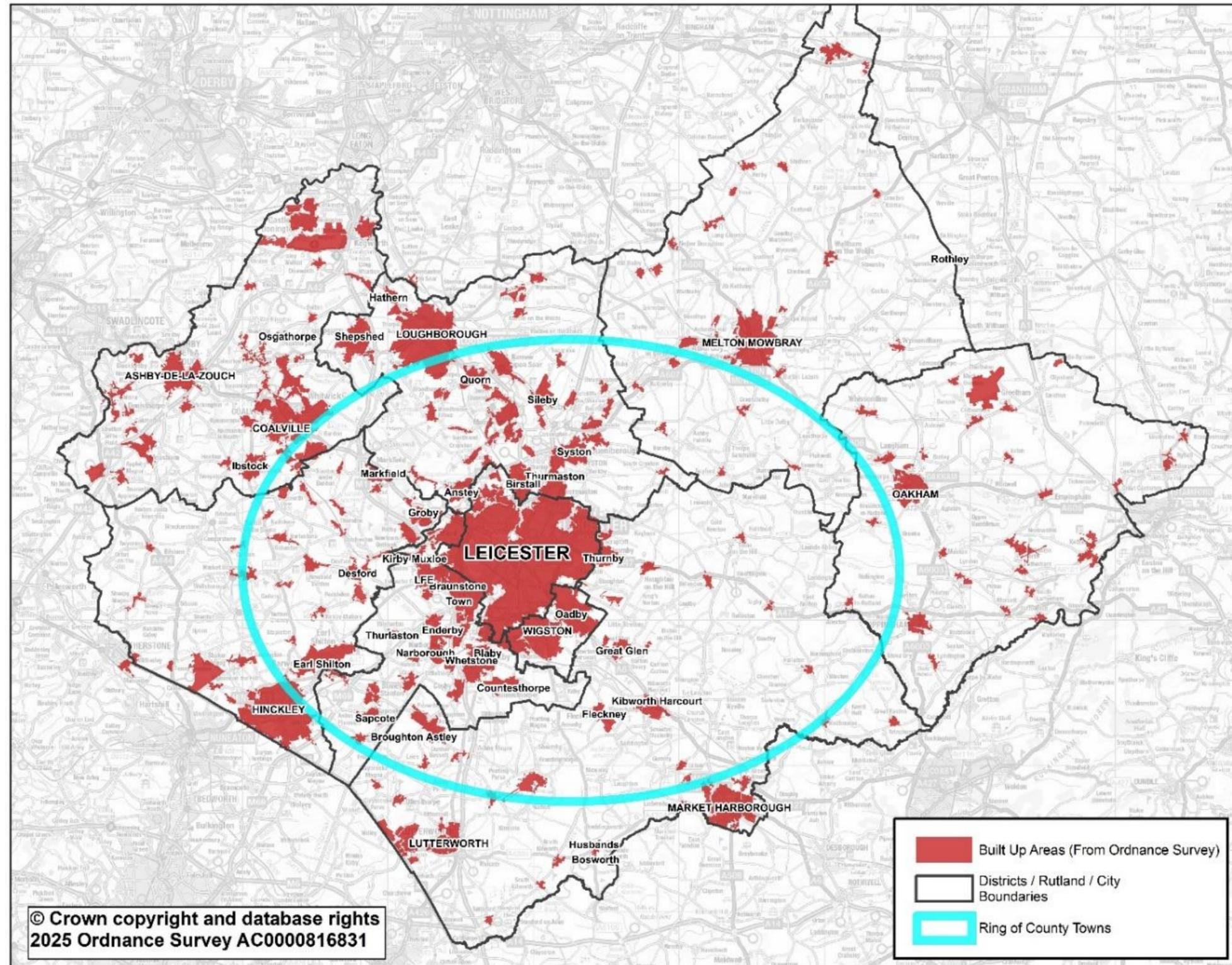
City travel catchments showing high degree of self containment for work, leisure and shopping journeys
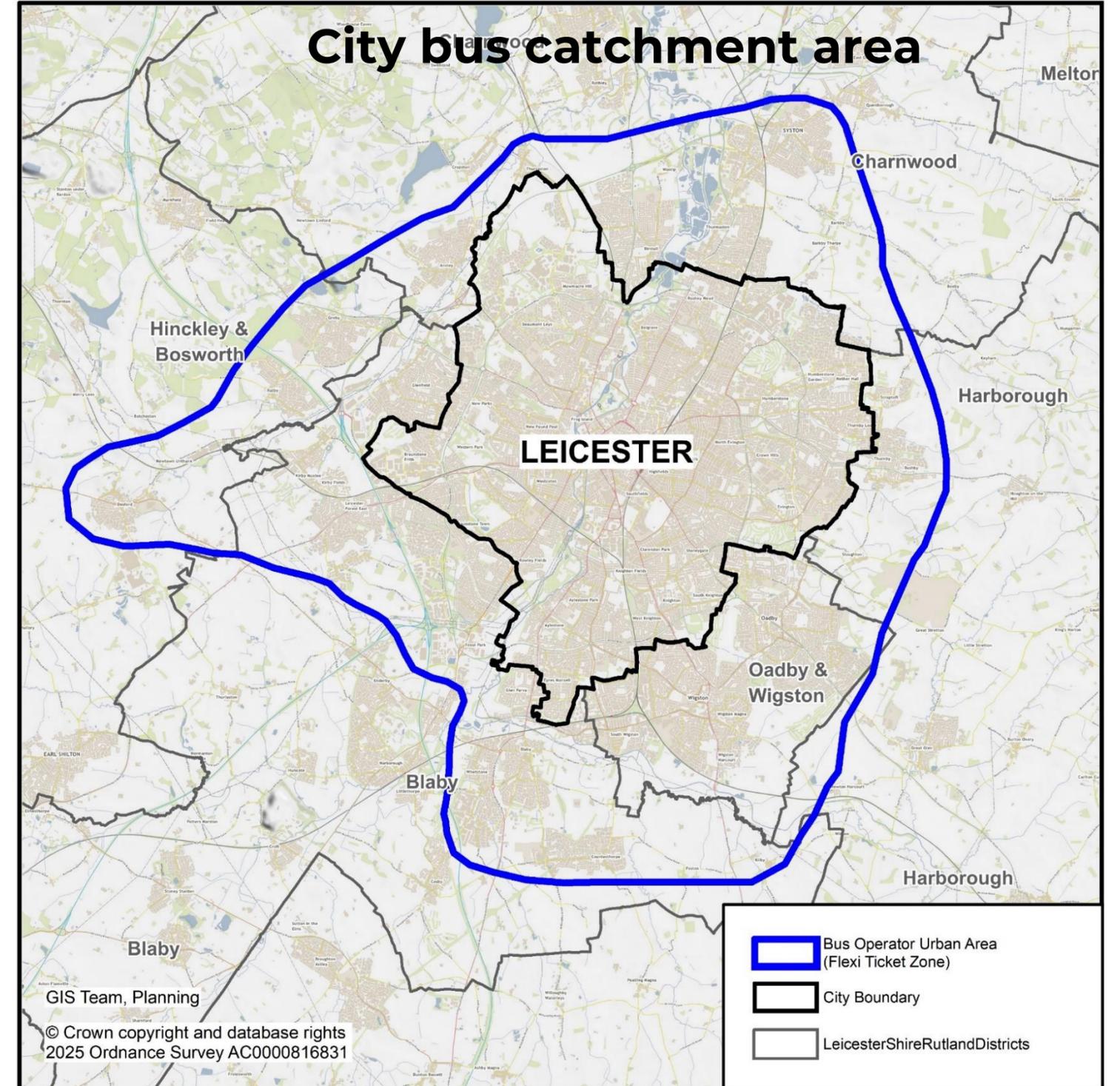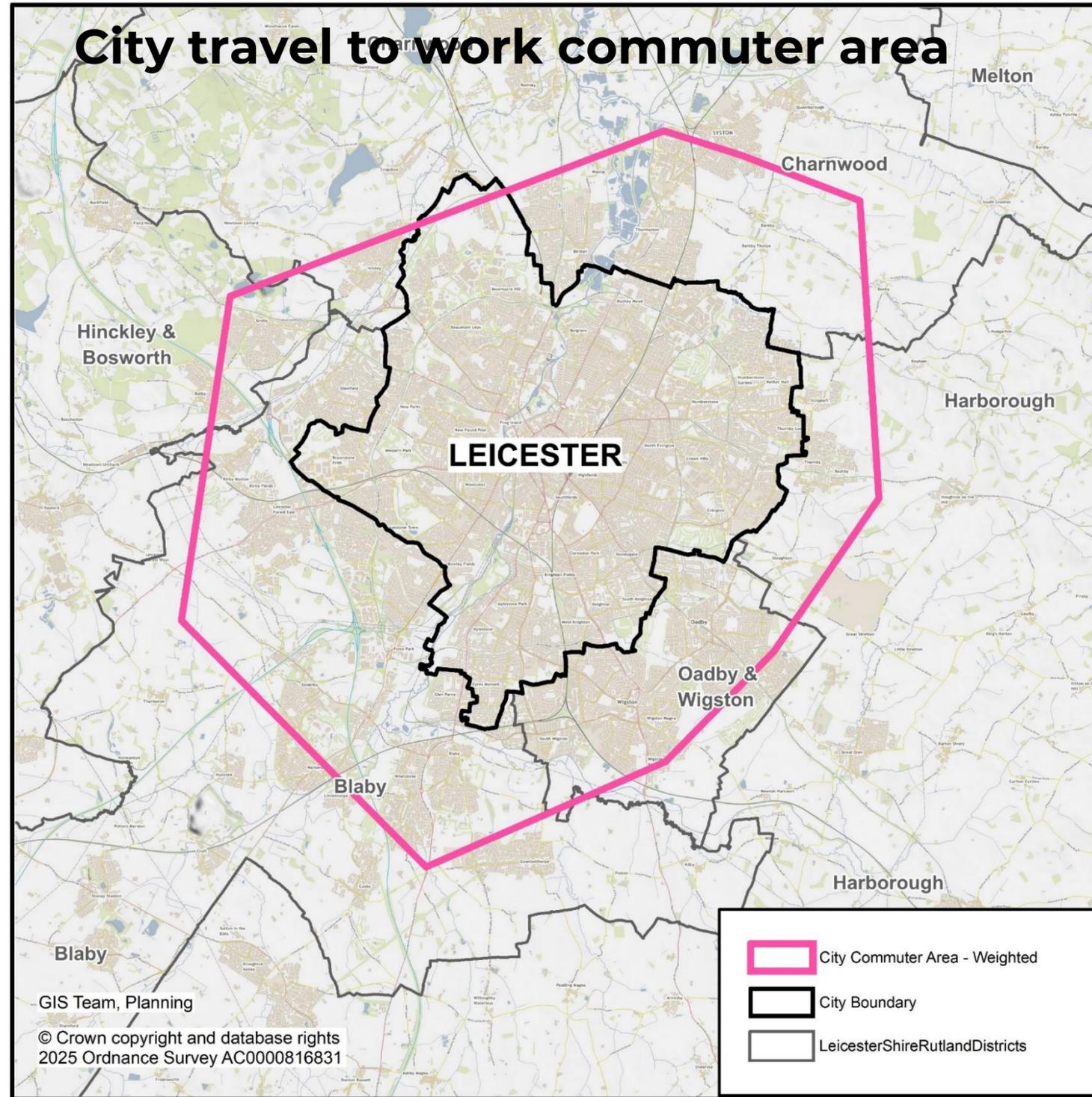
People living in suburbs outside the city boundary regularly travel to use city facilities

City Leisure Centre Memberships
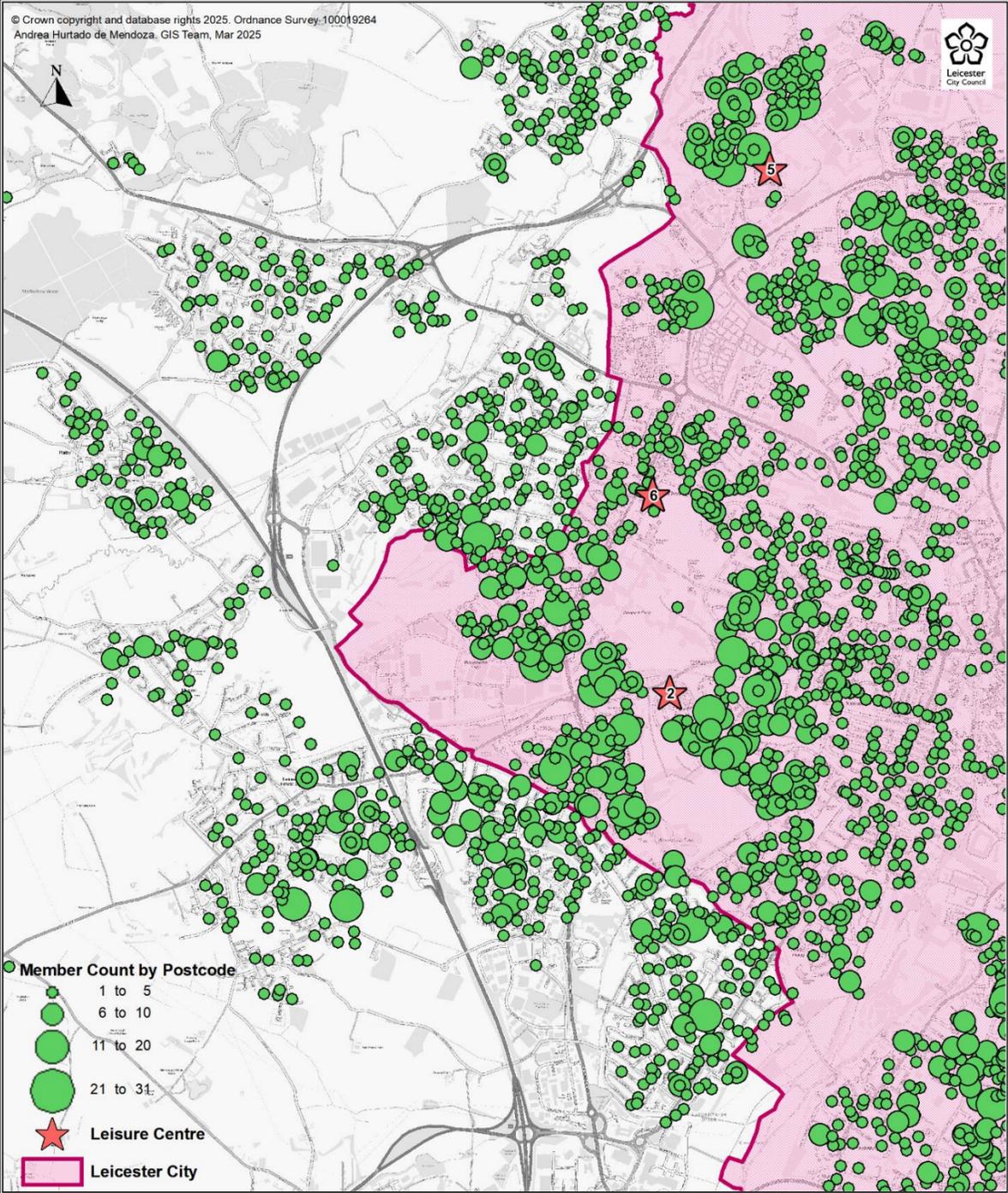
Phoenix Cinema customer database
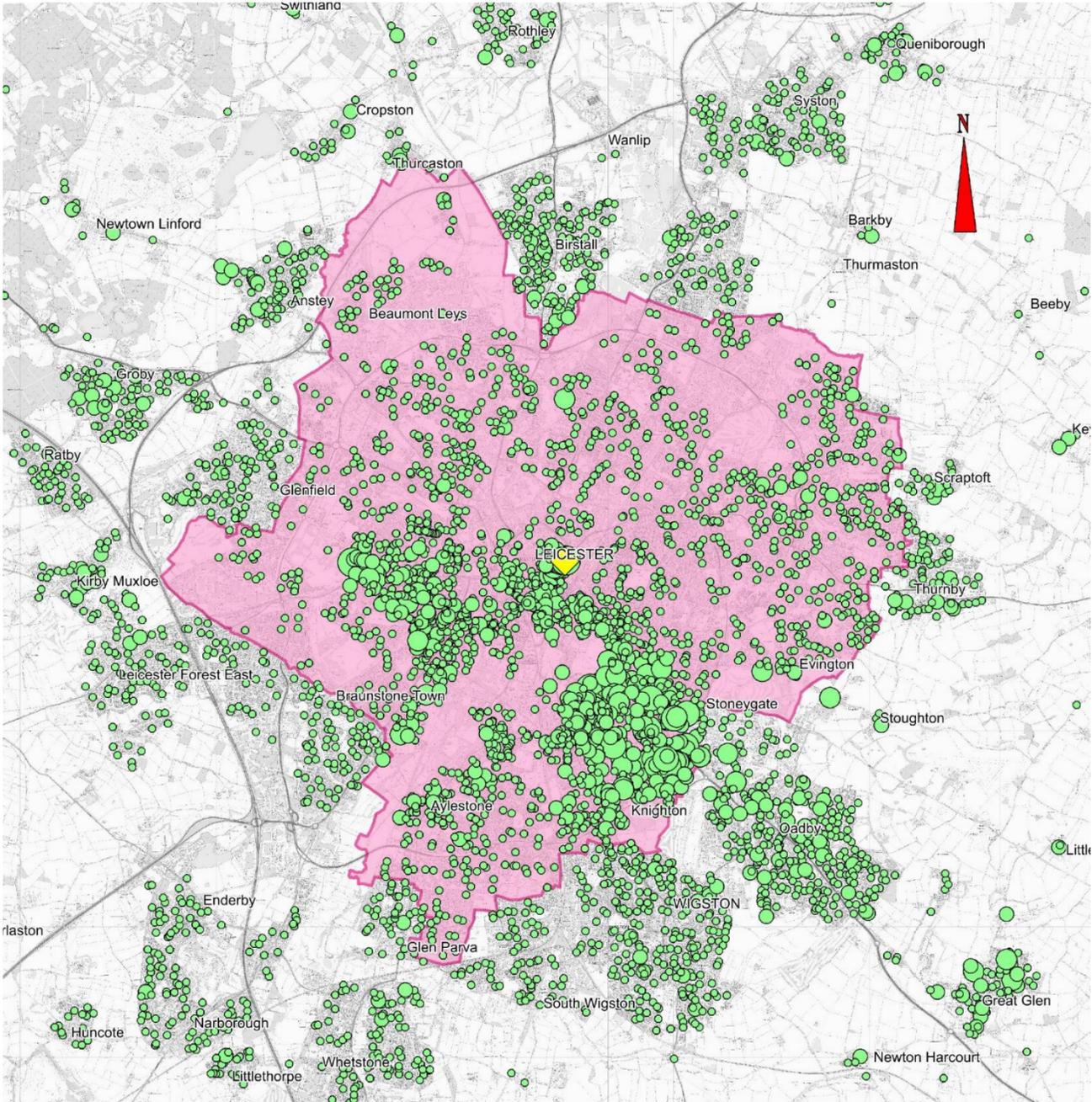
Future Growth

Committed and potential future strategic housing and employment growth sites

Room for future long term city growth

Sensible to plan and deliver development coordinated by one unitary council working with development partners/funders

Legend:
- Development Sites Under Construction / Approved / Committed
- Potential Future Development Sites L&L SGO Study
- City Boundary
- District Boundaries

GIS Team, Planning

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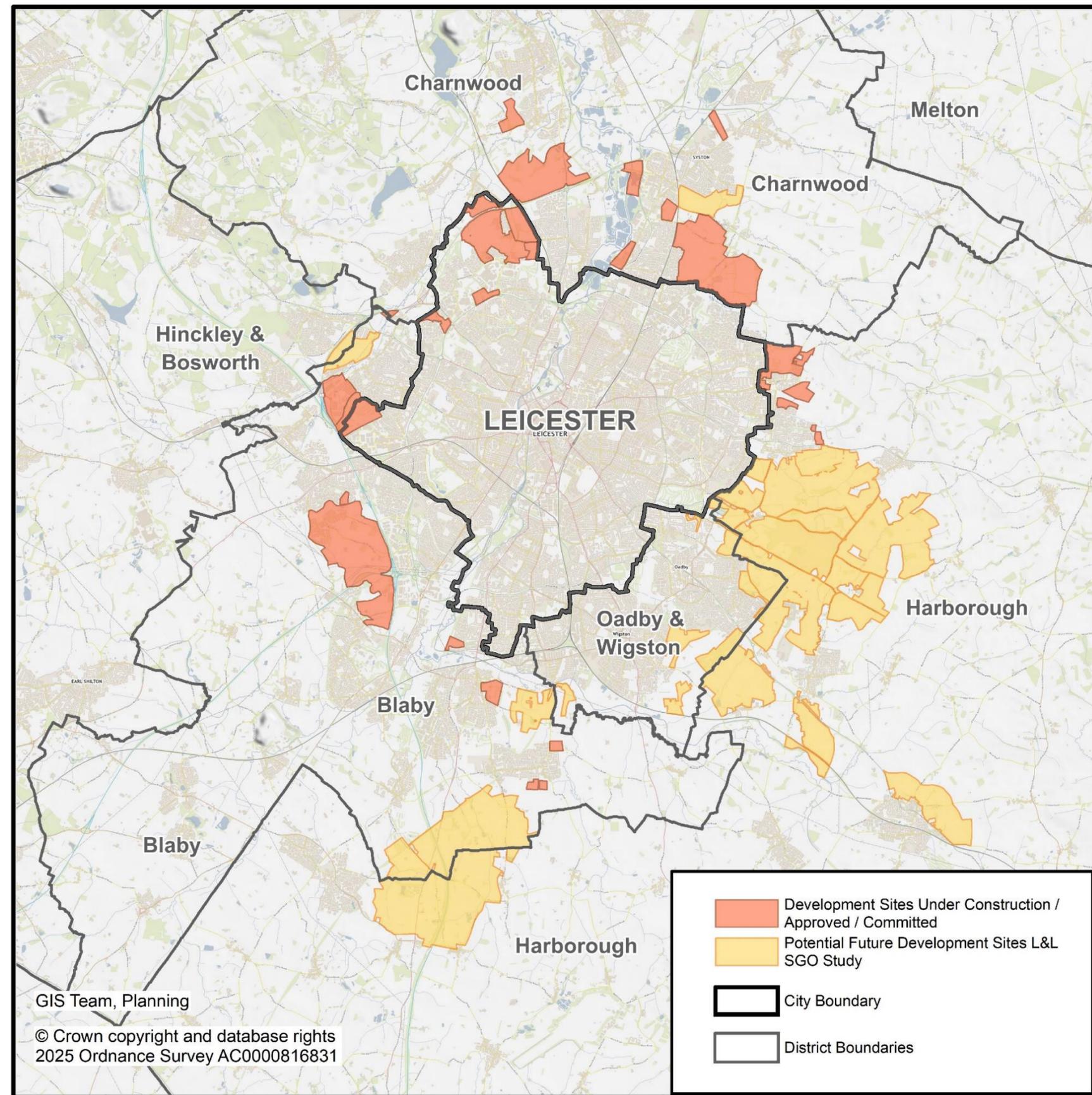
County Council Proposal

- One unitary council for existing county area and Rutland

- City excluded – no boundary change

Population estimates – 2028

Existing City – **392k**

Whole County unitary – **814k**

Very imbalanced councils with substantial variance from Gov't guide population of at least 500k
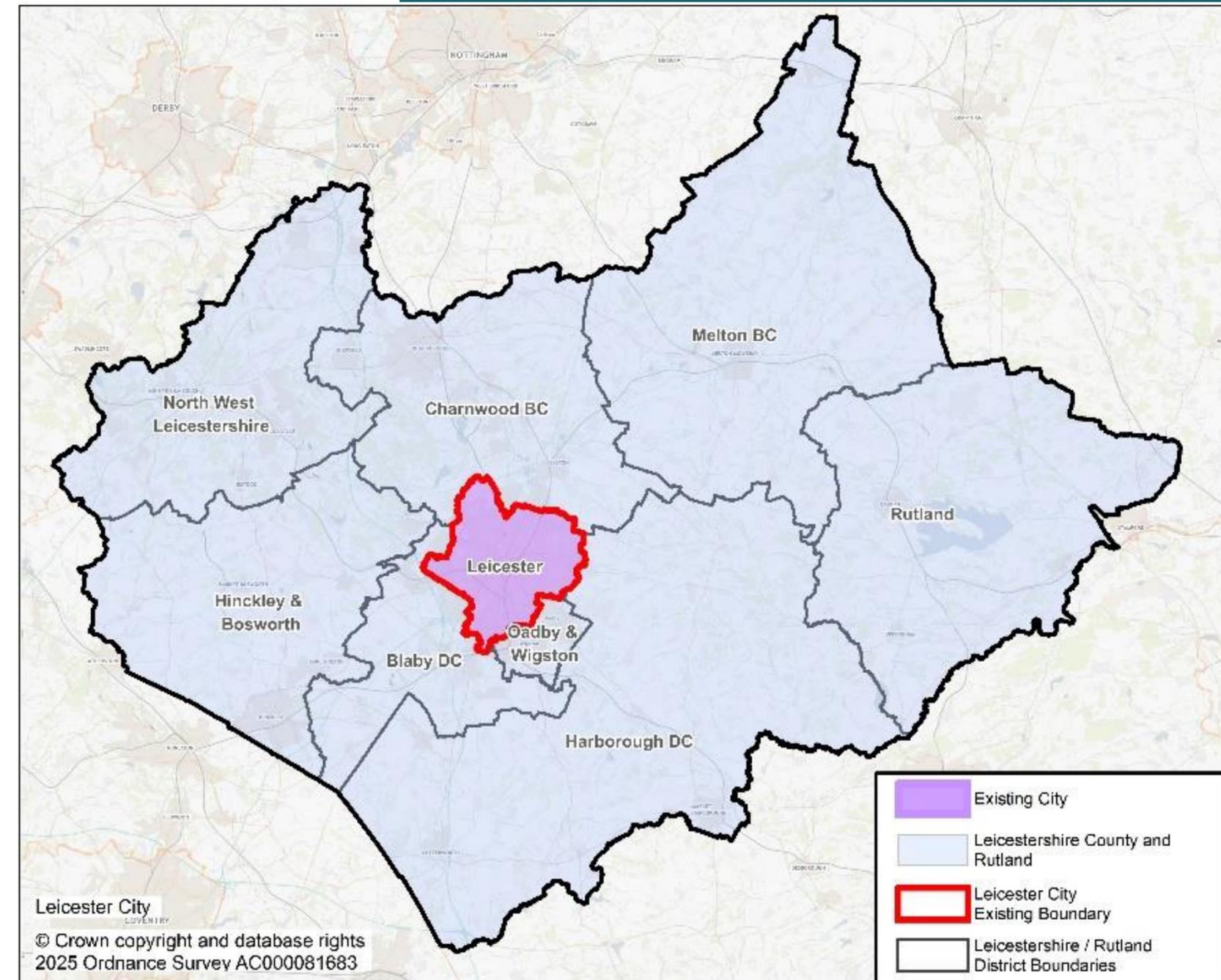
Districts/Rutland Interim Proposal

- Two unitary councils across current county/Rutland area

- City excluded -No boundary change

Population estimates – 2028

Existing City – 392k

North Unitary (NW Leicestershire, Melton, Charnwood, Rutland) – 413k

South Unitary, (Harborough, O & W, Hinckley & Bosworth, Blaby) – 401k

Balanced councils but all below Gov't guide population of at least 500k

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Legend:
- Leicester City
- North Unitary
- South Unitary
- Leicestershire / Rutland District Boundaries
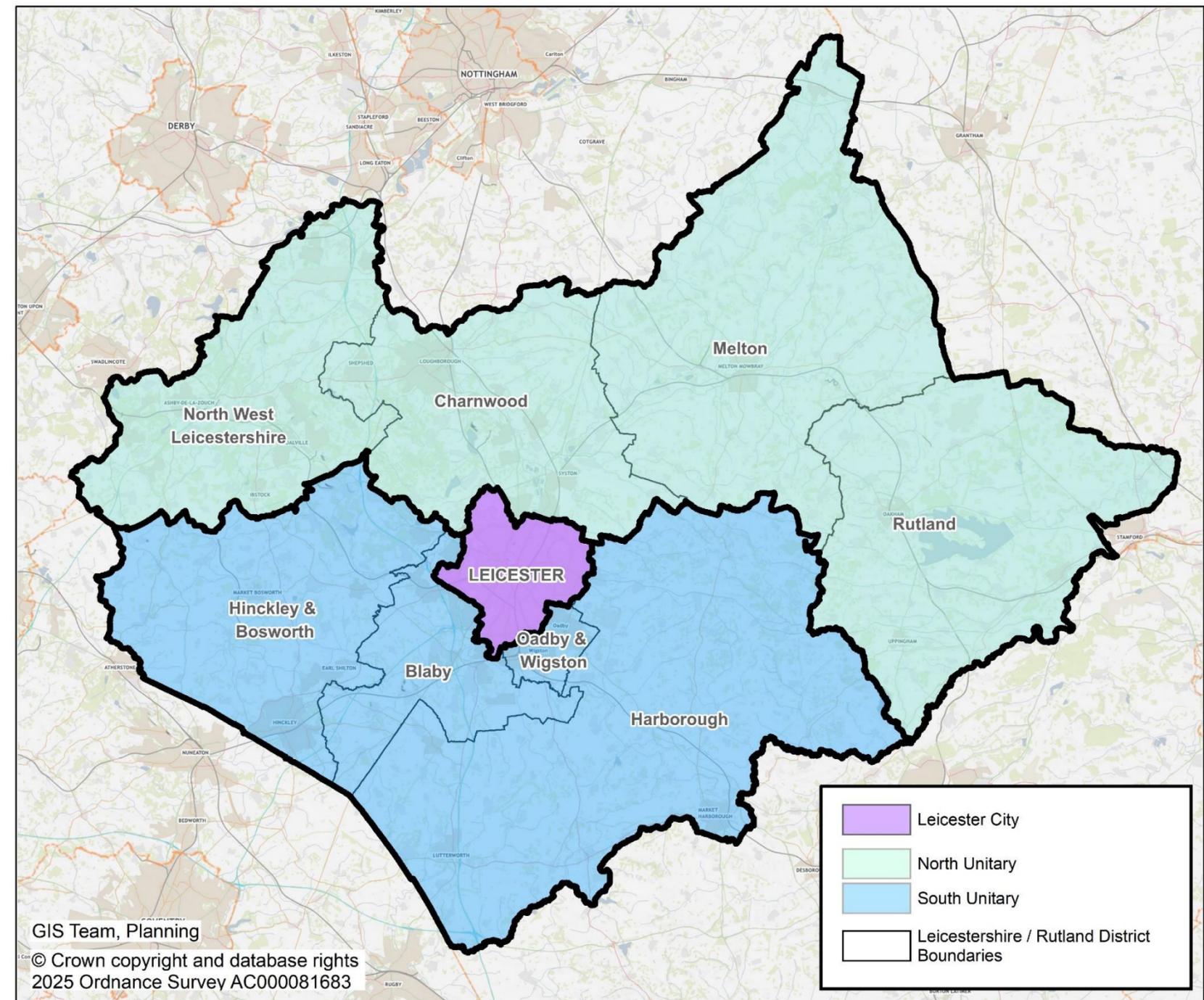
Compliant base proposal

- Government/legal advice - compliant proposals should initially be formed using whole districts as building blocks

- To ensure compliance, a suitable base proposal has been identified including the current city council area with Oadby and Wigston, Harborough and Blaby districts

- Detailed boundary change will be requested in parallel to achieve the council's preferred city boundary expansion proposal

- Similar approach to other constrained cities: Brighton, Nottingham and Southampton
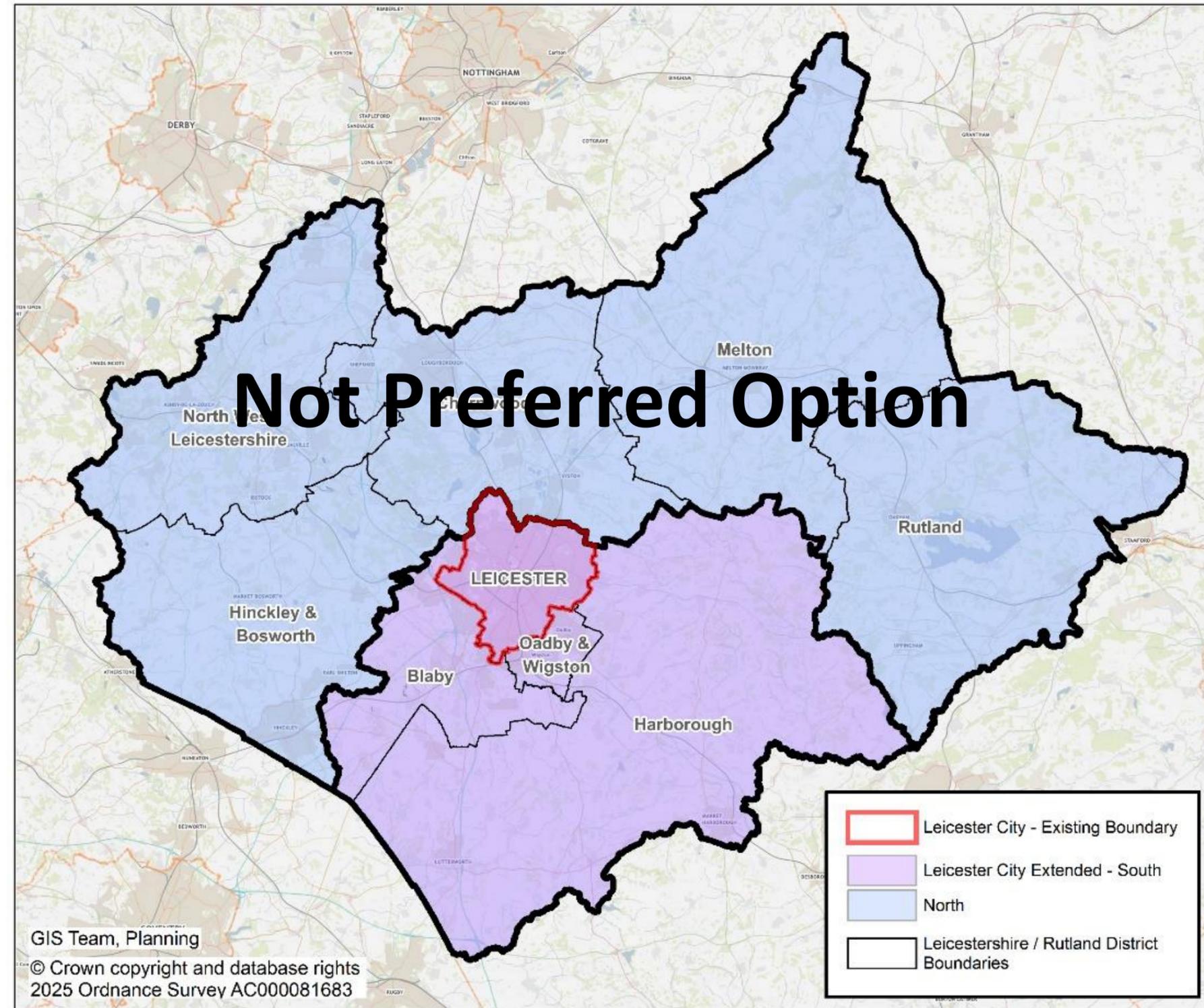
Compliant base proposal

Unitary 1 – City + three districts
- Oadby and Wigston
- Blaby
- Harborough

Population (2028) – 673k

Unitary 2 – North Leicestershire and Rutland

Population (2028) – 528k

Both meet Govt 500k+ guide - less balanced than city preferred option

City boundary includes extensive rural areas and not urban areas in Charnwood
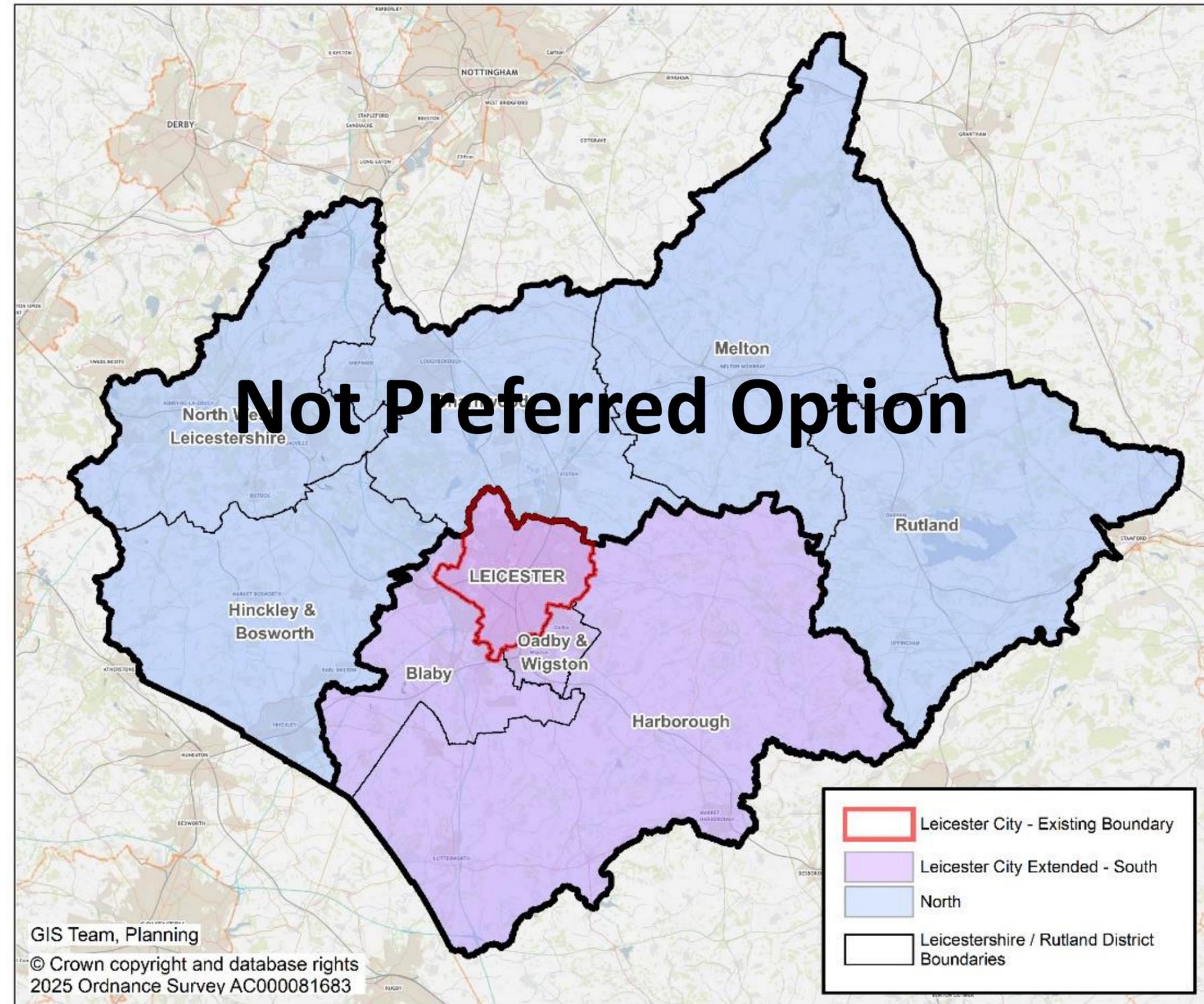
City Council preferred proposal

- Expanded unitary city council

- New unitary council for remaining Leic's county with Rutland

Population - 2028

Expanded City – 622k

County/Rutland – 584k

Balanced councils where both meet

Govt 500k+ guide

Legend:
- Proposed City Boundary Expansion
- Leicester City Existing Boundary
- Leicestershire (Remainder) & Rutland
- Leicestershire / Rutland District Boundaries

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Stakeholder engagement/public consultation

- Engaged c100 **stakeholders** - public bodies, voluntary sector, business, leisure and sports, unions, parish councils

- Stakeholders generally considered the council's preferred city boundary expansion proposal to be sensible for the long-term future of the city and the wider LLR area

Public survey 810 responses - 89% were residents

- 85% strongly agree or agree that councils should reflect how people live, work and travel across the area.
- 85% strongly agree or agree that urban and rural communities face different issues. To be most effective, councils should represent areas that share common issues.
- 46% of ranked efficient services as the most important when thinking about the future of their local council
- 42% raised significant concerns for city expansion
- 15% of respondents have been unsure which council to contact for a service or issue.

City boundary expansion preferred proposal

✓ Two unitary councils with **balanced populations meeting the Government's 500,000 + guideline**

✓ **Highest annual savings for LLR of £46m**….putting the most back into frontline services

✓ Share savings to **better balance budgets** across LLR unitary councils

✓ **Equalise the cost per person of service delivery -** difference of only £50 between councils – (£300 - county plan & £340 - district plan)

✓ Recognise the **true physical extent of the urban area**, confirmed by how people travel and use facilities across the city

✓ Better **balance development opportunities across LLR**

✓ **Address growing city development**– est 30,000 homes and 67 ha of employment land required to 2046

✓ Replace fragmented services across ten LLR councils with **two simple urban and rural focused unitary councils**

✓ Replace fragmented services across the conurbation with **a single joined-up city council** with clarity on who delivers services

✓ Maximise economic growth potential **for whole of LLR** by **unlocking a Mayoral Strategic Authority**

Preferred proposal– examples of benefits to people

✓ **Clear council responsibility for services** e.g. waste collection and street maintenance not split within streets and neighbourhoods

✓ **Simpler streamlined service planning** e.g. only two local plans with city and rural area focus / delivery of urban extensions brought within one council area

✓ **Services better focused on needs of urban and rural areas** e.g. city and rural bus services

✓ **More sustainable services supported by users from across the whole city** e.g. leisure centres and cultural facilities

✓ **More effective Joined-up services** e.g. common housing support service across whole of urban area – match demand and stock / More able to plan and deliver SEND services

✓ **Better value services** – larger councils with better buying power benefitting service users e.g. commissioning adult and children social care services

✓ **Delivers most savings for the whole of LLR to support frontline services for all**

Next steps

Full Council
20th Nov

Final submission
to Government
by 28th Nov
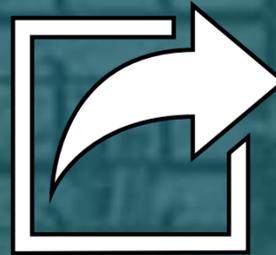
Government
consultation
early 2026?

Government
decision
Summer 2026?

Shadow
elections May
2027?

LGR 'go live'
April 2028?