

APPENDIX A

Potential Indicative Options for Distributing Housing in Harborough District

Background

- 1 This report provides a summary of potential alternatives to the Spatial Strategy in the Strategic Growth Plan from the Harborough perspective requested by the Scrutiny Task Group.
- 2 It is important to point out that this process does not in any way pre-empt the statutory Local Plan process. When Harborough reviews its recently adopted Local Plan it will have to consider all reasonable alternatives based on the evidence available at that time.
- 3 The Local Plan process is lengthy, involves comprehensive public consultation, will be informed by a substantial and detailed evidence base; and will test spatial options in appropriate detail.

The Growth Challenge facing Harborough District?

- 4 To date, the majority of new housing in Leicester and Leicestershire has been built on small and medium-sized sites in the City, Market Towns, Villages and Rural areas. Some of this development has been unplanned. Often these developments make little or no contribution to infrastructure or services and, instead, rely on existing facilities. This has created significant problems. Some communities feel overwhelmed by the speed and scale of change. Others are disadvantaged by pressures on local schools, health centres and recreation facilities. Congestion on local roads and public transport is a frequent cause of complaint.
- 5 This situation has been strongly reflected in Harborough, where the overwhelming majority of development between 2011 and 2031 is expected to take place on small and medium sized sites 'bolted-on' to existing towns and villages, often with limited contributions to infrastructure and services.
- 6 If this continues, it could lead to significant problems for the district given the potential scale of growth required in the long-term. The Core Strategy (2011) was based on providing 350 homes a year. Since then Harborough's housing requirement has increased by 60% to 557 homes per year in the recently adopted Local Plan. Leicester City has declared an unmet housing need. All 3 major national political parties are saying they want to build more homes and the Government has set an ambitious target to build a minimum 300,000 homes a year nationally by the mid-2020s. In this context, Harborough needs to provide significant and sustained growth in the longer term, with or without the Strategic Growth Plan.
- 7 Meeting these demands is one of the most significant long-term challenges facing the district, which has seen a significant amount of unplanned development on the edge of its towns and villages. It is important this does not continue in an unsustainable way in the future.

Strategic Growth Plan Response

- 8 The Strategic Growth Plan recognises this challenge. If we are going to deliver the amount of homes required, reduce pressure on our existing communities and provide the infrastructure we need – we cannot continue to plan as we have done in the past – to be successful we need to plan for the future at a larger than local level and for the longer term.
- 9 The Strategic Growth Plan seeks to reduce the pressure on existing towns and villages by focussing development in key locations and advocates the use of major strategic development (e.g. new communities), to help secure the necessary infrastructure and services.
- 10 For Harborough, the Strategic Growth Plan seeks to open up new areas for Strategic Growth taking the pressure off existing towns and villages. It indicates that a 'notional' 15,930 homes should be provided between 2031 and 2050. Of this, 82% (13,000 homes) should be on Strategic Sites. The general assumption being that the majority of these strategic sites will be located somewhere along the A46 Priority Growth Corridor in new Garden Communities (the location, scale and timing of development will be a matter for subsequent local plans).
- 11 This approach would substantially reduce the pressure on existing towns and villages in the District compared to what has and will happen under the recently adopted Harborough Local Plan. The Local Plan contains a supply of about 13,000 homes between 2011 and 2031. Of this only 28% are on strategic sites containing over 750 homes (i.e. at Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Scraftoft).
- 12 Given the potential scale of growth required long-term, continuing with this type of approach in the Local Plan would put significant pressure on existing towns and villages to continue accommodating substantial levels of growth long into the future. The Pie Charts at Figures 1 and 2 below shows the potential impact the Strategic Growth Plan could have the towns and villages in Harborough, by significantly reducing the amount of development in existing settlements:

**FIGURE 1: HDC LOCAL PLAN SUPPLY PROPORTIONS
2011-31**

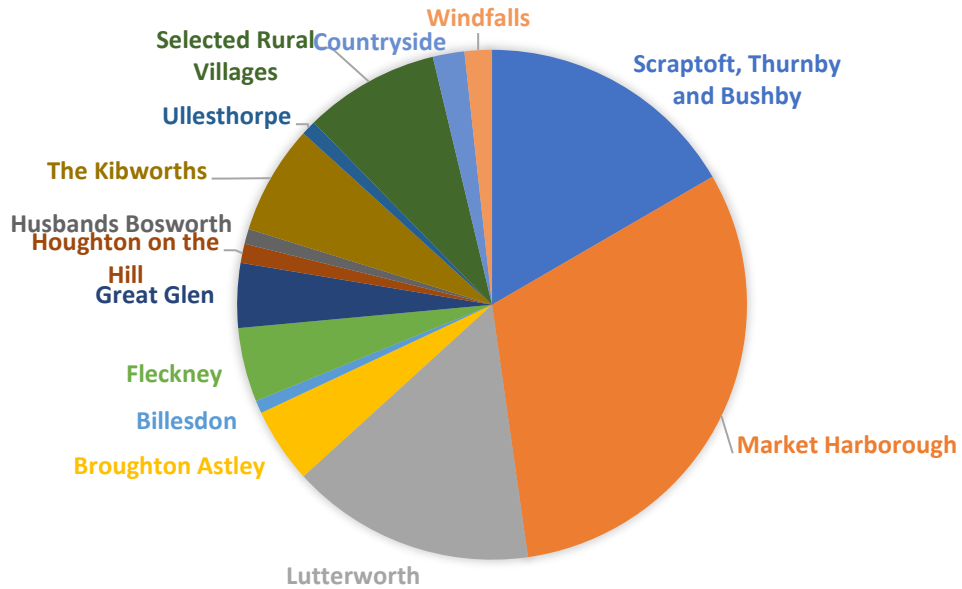
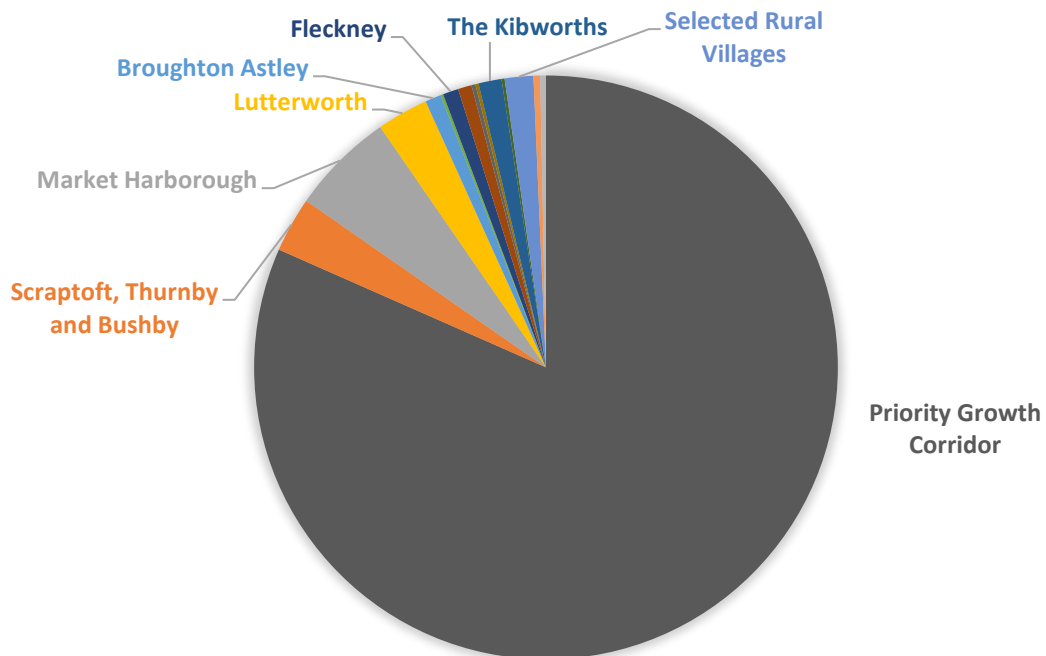


FIGURE 2: POTENTIAL SGP PROPORTIONS 2031-2050



Note: The Charts above are simply an arithmetical exercise. This is purely indicative and appropriate proportions will be determined through subsequent local plans.

13 The Strategic Growth Plan seeks to open up new parts of the District to deliver large amounts of development and reduce the amount of development in existing towns and villages. To give an understanding of the potential impact of this, four hypothetical alternative options to housing growth have been considered:

- Option 1: Strategic Growth Plan - Focus growth in Strategic Sites (or new communities) close to Leicester somewhere along the Priority Growth Corridor)
 - Option 2: The Harborough Local Plan (2011-2031)
 - Option 3: Reduced Growth – halving Harborough’s contribution to Leicester’s unmet need in the Strategic Growth Plan and applying the proportions of growth in the adopted Local Plan
 - Option 4: Development focussed on existing towns and villages – applying the proportions of growth in the adopted Local Plan to the notional delivery figures in the Strategic Growth Plan.
- (See Figures 3 and 4 and paragraphs 14 – 17 below).

Figure 3: Potential amount of housing in existing towns and villages

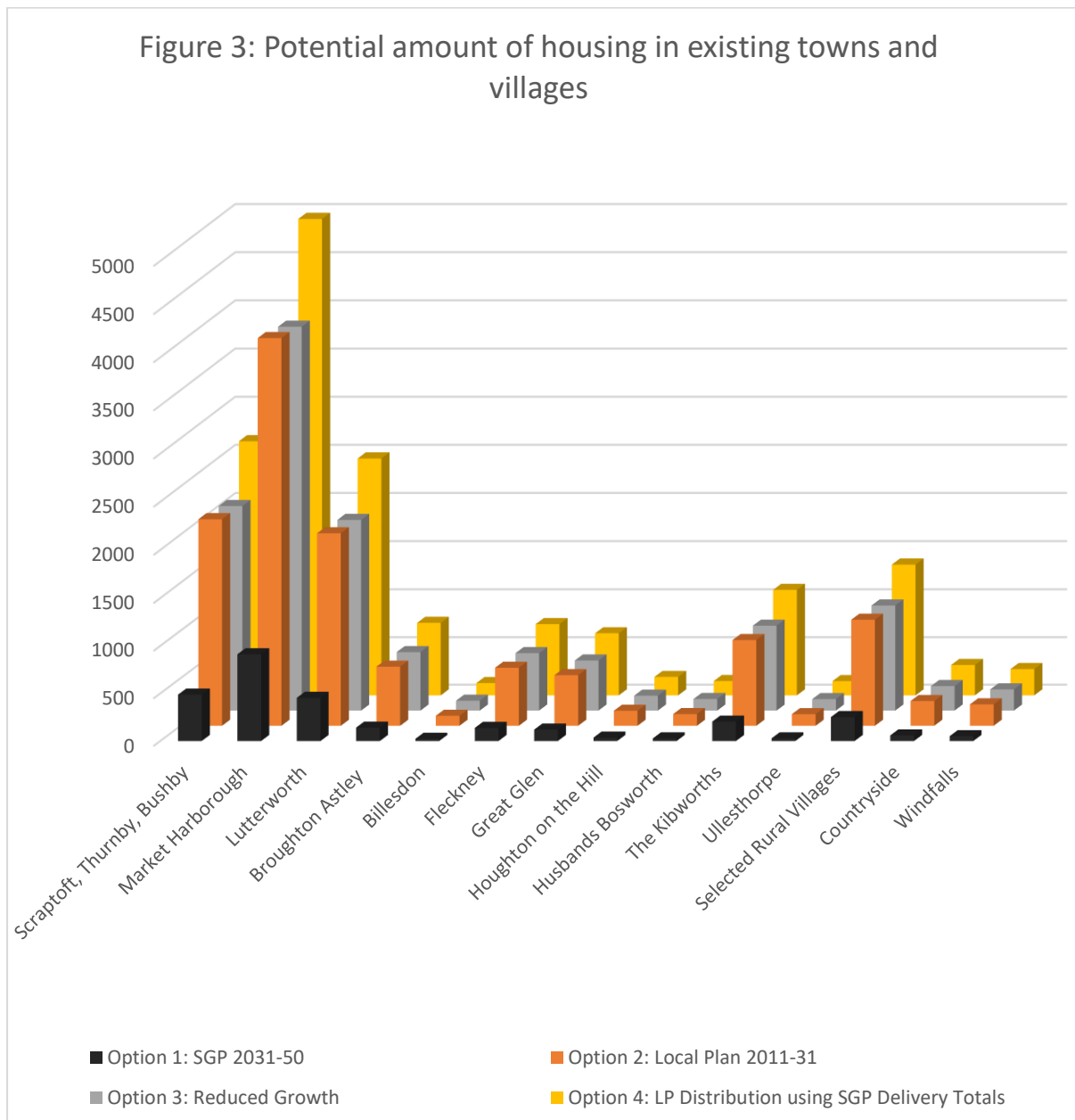
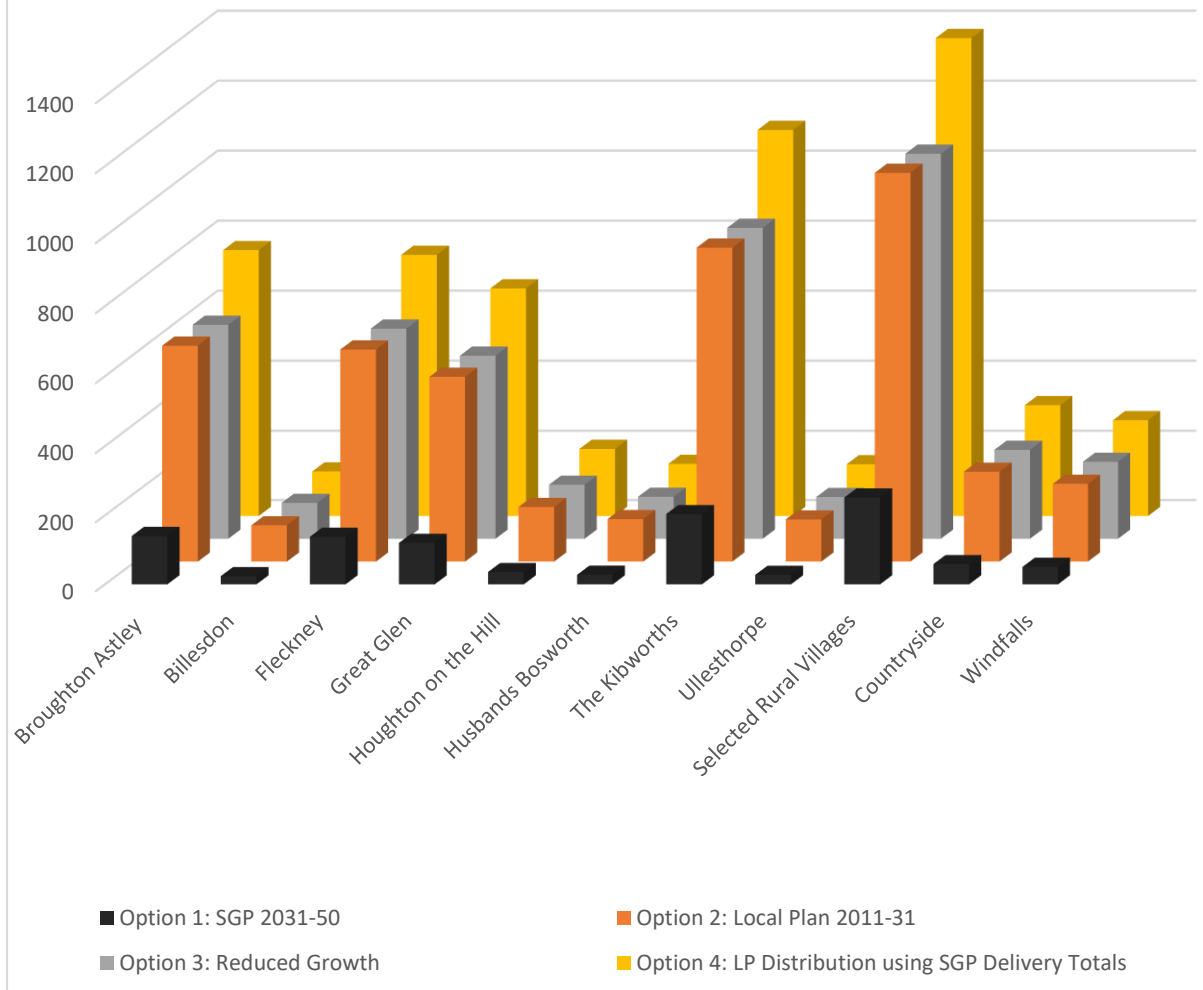


Figure 4: Potential amount of houses in existing towns and villages (excluding Scraftoft, Thurnby, Bushby, Market Harborough & Lutterworth)



- 14 The Local Plan (option 2) anticipates a supply of about 13,000 homes in the District 2011-31 with growth divided between the existing towns and villages in the District (the overwhelming majority of which is on small and medium-sized sites). In line with sustainable principles the amount of growth in each settlement broadly reflects the size of each town or village and the level of service provision.
- 15 The Strategic Growth Plan seeks to move away from this approach to improve infrastructure delivery and ease the pressure on existing towns and villages in the long-term. It does this by shifting the focus of development away from small and medium-sized sites in existing towns and villages, to large strategic sites in the priority growth corridor that are better able to deliver infrastructure and services that new communities need. As a result the amount of housing in existing settlements is substantially lower than the other options considered. This is because the Strategic Growth Plan envisages that outside of strategic sites (mainly focussed along the Priority Growth Corridor) only 2,930 homes would be needed at existing settlements, substantially lower than the 9,000 - 10,000 homes envisaged in the Local Plan up to 2031.

- 16 The 'Bar Chart' above shows the potential impact of the aspirations of the Strategic Growth Plan, on the amount of homes each of the existing towns/villages may need to accommodate (using the proportions from the Local Plan). It shows a substantial drop in the amount to be accommodated in all settlements. This is because, the overwhelming majority of growth is anticipated on strategic sites, in new communities along the Priority Growth Corridor (Note: The chart doesn't include the 13,000 homes anticipated on strategic sites because the purpose is to look at the potential impact on housing numbers in existing towns and villages which have taken significant growth).
- 17 The options are extremely indicative and do not take into account constraints and opportunities. It is merely a theoretical exercise to show potential impact that the aspirations in the Strategic Growth Plan could have on housing numbers of existing settlements in the long-term. Subsequent Local Plans will decide the scale and location of growth.

January 2020