



# Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

**To All Members of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on  
Wednesday, 08 November 2023**

**Date of meeting: Thursday, 16 November 2023**

**Time: 18:30**

**Venue: Council Chamber  
Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough.**

Members of the public can access a live broadcast of the meeting from the [Council website](#), and the meeting webpage. The meeting will also be open to the public.

## **Agenda**

- 1 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes.**
- 2 Declarations of Members' Interests**
- 3 Draft Community Scrutiny Panel Minutes - 10th October 2023 3 - 4**
- 4 Portfolio Holder Update**
- 5 Scrutiny Report - Local Plan LDS and Issues & Options 5 - 104 consultation**
- 6 Any Urgent Business**  
To be decided by the Chairman.

LIZ ELLIOTT  
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE  
HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Contact:  
[democratic.services@harborough.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@harborough.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 01858 828282

Circulate to: Neil Bannister - Member, Peter James - Chairman, Barbara Johnson - Member, Amanda Nunn - Member, Martin Sarfas - Member, Lynne Taylor - Vice-Chair, Simon Whelband - Member

**And all other Councillors for information**

# HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Held at Council Chamber

Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough.

On Wednesday, 11 October 2023

Commencing at 18:30

Present:

**Councillors:** Neil Bannister, Peter James, Barbara Johnson, Amanda Nunn, Simon Whelband, Jo Asher, David Gair, James Hallam

**Officers:** Liz Elliot (Chief Executive) (via Teams) Clare Pattinson (Director of Law and Governance), Vicki Jessop (Director of Communities and Wellbeing) Russell Smith (Head of Environmental Services), Christine Elsasser (Democratic Services Officer)

### 1. Election of Chairman for 2023/24

Councillor James was proposed as Chairman, the vote was **CARRIED** and Councillor James was elected Chairman.

Councillor Nunn and Taylor were proposed as Vice Chairman, the vote for Councillor Nunn was **NOT CARRIED** and the vote for Councillor Taylor was **CARRIED** and therefore Councillor Taylor was elected Vice Chairman.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sarfas (Councillor Gair substituted) and Taylor (Councillor Asher substituted).

### 3. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Bannister pecuniary declared an interest in Item 5b as he was a Member of Strategy Board and also was employed by the Crown Prosecution.

### 4. Draft Communities Scrutiny Panel Minutes - 27 April 2023

The minutes of the meeting 27 April were accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments were made:

Apologies and who substituted needed to be made clear.

It was requested that in future the Cabinet Portfolio Holder of the report presented attend the meeting if possible, send a substitute Member or provide a verbal or briefing note.

5. Consider the following reports:

The Draft Communities Scrutiny Workplan 2023.24 for noting.

Community Safety Action Plan update 2023/24 for noting.

a. Draft Communities Scrutiny Workplan 2023.24

The Draft Communities Scrutiny Workplan 2023.24 was noted.

Comments were made around when the Panel would scrutinise on the results and if that could be built into the work plan.

It was **AGREED** to note the report.

b. Community Safety Action Plan update 2023/24 (To Follow)

The Head of Environmental Services presented the report. The action plan had been through Cabinet and the idea was to review the content contained in Appendix A.

It was explained that partners including the police decided the priorities of the Plan and the ability to change and be flexible to accommodate resident's priorities depended on funding.

The community van was seen as a key aspect to this as it enabled engagement with all residents to ensure the communities needs/wants were met. There was an opportunity to use CACI which would provide statistics, dashboards and databases.

It was agreed this information would be presented at future meetings and furthermore as a Member Briefing. There was also a plan to work with the Wellbeing team and talk about more serious issues for future meetings.

It was **AGREED** to note the report.

Any Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 19:00

# Harborough District Council



## Report to Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meeting of 16 November 2023

<b>Title:</b>	Local Plan timetable (Local Development Scheme / LDS) and Issues and Options consultation (Regulation 18).
<b>Status:</b>	Public
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Report Authors:</b>	Head of Strategic and Local Planning, Tess Nelson Local Plan Project Officer, Joanne White
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Planning Portfolio, Councillor Galton
<b>Appendices:</b>	A. Local Development Scheme B. New Local Plan Issues & Options consultation document

### Summary

- i. The timetable for the preparation of the local plan is set out in the Local Development Scheme ('LDS'). The current LDS was published in July 2022 and is now out-of-date and requires updating. The updated LDS (Appendix A) updates the timetable and provides clarity to stakeholders on key milestones.
- ii. The first public stage in preparing the new local plan for submission for examination is the Issues and Options consultation – this is also known as the 'Regulation 18' process. The draft consultation document (Appendix B) sets out key planning issues and asks for feedback through a number of consultation questions. This feedback will inform later stages of plan making.

### Recommendations

- 1) To comment on the proposed updated Local Development Scheme.
- 2) To comment on the scope of the first public consultation on the new local plan (known as the Issues and Options or 'Regulation 18' consultation).

### Reasons for Recommendations

- i. The planning system is plan-led. This means that planning applications must be considered and determined in accordance with the development plan unless

material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan should therefore be kept up to date.

- ii. Preparation of the local plan is a corporate priority and will help to deliver against a number of further corporate priorities.
- iii. The Council is required to retain an up-to-date Local Development Scheme. Publication of the revised Local Development Scheme provides clarity and confirmation to a range of stakeholders of the Council's intended timescale to submit its local plan for examination.
- iv. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 ('LURA') has changed the statutory framework for the 'making' of local plans. It provides for a period of transition for local authorities who have been progressing preparation of their local plan to the preceding regime. The transition period requires the Council to submit its local plan for examination by 30 June 2025 – the date in the existing LDS. To achieve that deadline, the Council needs to progress the preparation of the new local plan. The updated timetable is set out within the draft Local Development Scheme (Appendix A).
- v. The Issues and Options consultation (Appendix B) is an important first public stage in preparing the new local plan. It seeks feedback on significant issues, which will inform future stages of preparation of the local plan.

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report proposes that the Council update its Local Development Scheme as set out at Appendix A, and sets out the proposed contents of the first public consultation on the new local plan as set out at Appendix B.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 In England there is a 'plan-led' approach to the regulation of land and development which places local plans at the heart of the town and country planning system. A local plan forms part of the statutory 'development plan' for an area and is the starting point for the determination of all planning applications in the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.2 The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act places a duty on local authorities to carry out plan-making with the "objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development" while the Planning Act 2008 puts an additional obligation on plan-making authorities to ensure their development plan documents (taken as a whole) include policies that are "...designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change."
- 2.3 Chapter 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') sets out the requirements that planning authorities are expected to comply with when preparing a local plan, stating at paragraph 16 specifically that plans should:

- a. be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;
- b. be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable;
- c. be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees;
- d. contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals;
- e. be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation; and
- f. serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant).

2.4 The Harborough Local Plan was prepared and subsequently adopted in April 2019. It replaced the previous Harborough District Core Strategy adopted in 2011. The adopted plan provides at Policy IMR1 that:

“2. A full or partial update of the Local Plan will be commenced (defined as the publication of an invitation to make representations in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) within 6 months of the following:

- a. the adoption by the Council of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) which proposes a quantity of housing or employment development to 2031 that is significantly greater than the housing requirement or employment need identified in this Local Plan; or
- b. in the absence of an adopted MOU or SoCG, 12 months from the date of publication of a Local Plan for Leicester City (defined as publication of an invitation to make representations in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) (‘a Regulation 19’) that includes satisfactory evidence of an unmet local housing need; or
- c. conclusion of a review in response to specific trigger points as set out in the monitoring framework, including identification of significant and persistent shortfalls in the delivery or supply of housing against the housing requirement.

3. Any full or partial update of the Local Plan triggered by 2. above will be submitted for examination within 30 months from the date it commenced.”

2.5 Whilst the current local plan remains up to date, the trigger set out at 2(b) above has been activated as a consequence of Leicester City Council publishing a Regulation 19 on 16 January 2023. This means that the Council must commence a full or partial update of its local plan in accordance with the Regulation 18 provisions. This accords with a decision by Cabinet in July 2021 to begin the preparation of a new local plan. A new local

plan is beneficial to provide long term certainty, allocate development in sustainable locations and protect important natural spaces and built heritage.

- 2.6 An integral part of the preparation of a new local plan is the formulation of a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS sets out the timetable / route map for the preparation of the new Local Plan. The timetable identifies key dates and public consultation stages as well as outlining the subject matter and geographical extent of the plan. By preparing and publishing the LDS, key stakeholders such as the local community, neighbouring authorities, infrastructure providers and developers can be informed when they can contribute to planning policies for the district. The LDS is also an opportunity to provide information on any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) adopted by the Council. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide additional information on policies and proposals in a local plan and are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.7 The long anticipated Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 ('LURA') has introduced a revised statutory framework for the 'making' of local plans. However, to ensure that work undertaken by local authorities is not abortive, the legislation also provides for a period of transition. This means that local authorities who have been progressing preparation of their local plan to the preceding regime can, within a set period, still rely on the work they have done to date. The transition period is currently expected to end by 30 June 2025 ('the Transition Date') – the date in the existing LDS.

### **3. Details.**

#### Local Development Scheme

- 3.1 The Council is required to keep under review the key milestones in the timetable within the LDS; some changes in context, especially at sub-regional and national level, may be driven by circumstances beyond the authority's control.
- 3.2 The Council's existing LDS provides that the Council will submit its local plan for examination by 30 June 2025. This date is not changing. However, the timetable within the existing LDS requires updating to reflect that the Council will be issuing the Regulation 18 issues and options consultation slightly later than anticipated.
- 3.3 The proposed updated LDS meets the requirements of Local Plan Policy IMR1 and will facilitate a new local plan being submitted for public examination by 30 June 2025. The re-profiled timetable for the preparation of the local plan outlined in the proposed LDS (see Figure 1) takes into consideration both the national and local planning policy context, including:
- 3.3.1 preparation of the Harborough Local Plan 2011-31:
- 3.3.1.1 Local Plan Background work on the currently adopted Local Plan begin in 2012, in response to legislative and national planning policy changes in 2012.
- 3.3.1.2 Options for the current adopted plan were consulted upon in 2015 (Regulation 18), the Proposed Submission consultation was conducted in 2017 (Regulation 19) and then submitted for Examination in March 2018, and finally adopted on 30 April 2019.



- 3.3.1.3 The adopted local plan will be 5 years old on 30 April 2024. Reviews at least every five years are a legal requirement for all local plans<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, from 30 April 2024 the adopted local plan will be open to challenge, unless a Regulation 18 consultation has been conducted.
- 3.3.1.4 A Review of the Local Plan in July 2021 concluded that work should begin on preparing to update the Local Plan, in light of high levels of unmet housing need having been identified in Leicester City under the government's revised standard methodology for calculating local housing need and the associated conditions set out in Policy IMR1 (see paragraph 2.4).
- 3.3.2 Leicester City Council's emerging local plan:
- 3.3.2.1 Unmet housing need identified in the Leicester City Draft Plan Consultation (Sept 2020)
- 3.3.2.2 A Pre-submission Consultation (Regulation 19) was opened from 16 January to 27 February 2023.
- 3.3.2.3 Proposed Submission Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State, for Examination on 26 September 2023.
- 3.3.2.4 A Statement of Common Ground, dated June 2022, has been drawn up to agree the level of unmet housing need and how this can be sustainably redistributed across neighbouring Leicestershire planning authorities, as required by the Duty to Cooperate. To date, six out of the eight neighbouring local planning authorities to Leicester City have decided to Approve the apportionment of unmet housing need as set out in the Statement of Common Ground.

	2023				2024												2025												2026													
Stage	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
Issues and Options consultation (Regulation 18)																																										
Proposed Submission Consultation (Regulation 19)																																										
Submission for Examination																																										
Local Plan Adoption*																																										

Figure 1: An illustration of the reprofiled timetable for local plan preparation, with key project milestones indicated on a calendar; Issues and Options consultation (Jan-Feb 2024), Proposed Submission consultation (Jan-Mar 2025), Submission for Examination (May-Jun 2025), and Adoption from mid-late 2026.

- 3.4 In the event that the Council is unable to submit its plan for examination by the transition date, it will be required to comply with the plan making arrangements set out within the LURA. The new plan-making system removes local authority controls for deciding when a new local plan should be commenced. This means that even if Council's monitoring indicators highlight that there is a need to start preparing a new local plan, the project will not be officially initiated until the Council receives confirmation it can proceed from

<sup>1</sup> Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

central government. It is proposed that Councils will be grouped or 'batched' according to their plan-making track record and adoption date of their last adopted local plan. The government intends to ensure that the first 'batch' of local plans to be prepared under the new system will comprise authorities without a current adopted plan. Future 'batches' of authorities will be instructed to commence local plans chronologically, according to past local plan adoption dates (in order of oldest to newest). In view of Harborough District Council's strong track record of local plan preparation and adoptions, and strong track record of housing delivery, it is anticipated that the Council is unlikely to be asked to prepare a new local plan until 2027.

- 3.5 The Government has indicated that it will introduce protections for plans which become more than five years old during the first 30 months of the new system (i.e. between 1 July 2025 and January 2028 if the transition date is not altered). This protection is intended to reduce speculative development. This protection would not however apply to the Council's plan as it was adopted on 30 April 2019. It will therefore be more than five years old (and therefore out of date) and remain out of date until replaced by a new local plan.
- 3.6 The re-profiled LDS timetable set out at Appendix A will enable a new plan to be submitted for public examination under the current plan-making system as anticipated by 30 June 2025. A thorough and comprehensive project management led approach has been put in place to mitigate any such circumstances as much as possible.
- 3.7 Failure to submit the local plan for examination by 30 June 2025 may lead to the Council having an out of date local plan and no statutory protection until 2029 or 2030 because of the impact of LURA. That would place the district at considerable risk of speculative development over a period of several years and is not recommended.

### Issues and Options Consultation

- 3.8 The Issues and Options or Regulation 18 consultation is the first formal public consultation on the new local plan. Its purpose is to begin a public conversation about what the local plan should contain and the kind of place Harborough should be in the future. The consultation is aimed at :
  - residents of, and visitors to Harborough;
  - people who work and do business in the district
  - wider stakeholders including Parish Councils, resident groups, interest groups, infrastructure and utility providers, developers and those with an interest in the district; and
  - neighbouring authorities and other public bodies.
- 3.9 The Regulation 18 consultation document seeks views on a number of planning issues and proposed options for the future development of the district. Each key planning issue is introduced with relevant background information and policy explained before a proposed approach or set of proposed options outlined. Comments and feedback is sought through a number of detailed questions relating to each key issue. The issues for inclusion have been identified through engagement with the Local Plan Member Advisory Panel, through a review of national planning policy and also address the key objectives of the Council and include:

- Homes (including affordable homes and specialist homes and accommodation types);
- Jobs;
- Protection of green spaces;
- Good design;
- Climate change;
- Flood risk;
- Water supply and waste management;
- Biodiversity and geodiversity;
- Heritage;
- Healthy communities;
- Natural spaces;
- Open spaces, sport and recreation;
- Town centres
- Tourism.

3.10 Consultation responses will inform the next version of the local plan, which will include more detail, including draft policies and proposals relating to specific areas of land. The draft local plan will be the subject of further public consultation ('Regulation 19 consultation') before being submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The examination stage will test whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and whether it meets the Tests of Soundness. One of the legal tests it must pass, is that the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012), which require public consultation; the first of which is the current consultation, in accordance with Regulation 18.

## 4. Implications of Decisions

### Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Preparation of the new local plan will aid delivery of the following corporate priorities:
- CO1: There will be an adequate supply of housing to meet local needs across all tenures and price ranges, and reducing the potential for homelessness
  - CO2: Our local plan will ensure growth in the area is balanced with employment opportunities and transport and infrastructure needs are met
  - CO3: The rural nature of the district will be recognised, and our heritage and cultural assets are preserved
  - CO4: Our local communities, the voluntary and charitable sector are more engaged and actively managing their own localities and shaping their own places
  - CO5: The district will be shaped through good design, that addresses local needs and promotes healthier life choices.

### Consultation

- 4.2 No consultation is required on the Local Development Scheme.
- 4.3 Consultation on the Issues and Options / Regulation 18 is expected to be undertaken during January to February 2024. A dedicated web page will be established to host the

consultation document and to encourage and enable feedback via a specialist planning consultation portal.

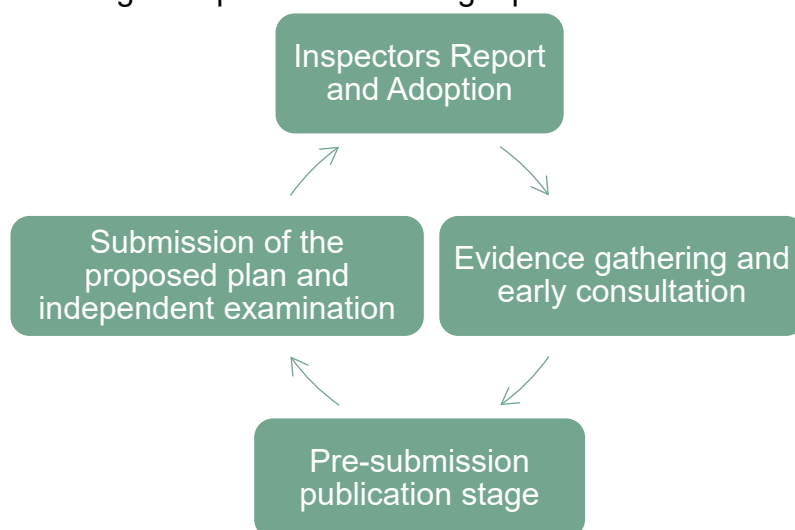
- 4.4 Consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant regulations and in accordance with the consultation principles established through the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

### **Financial**

- 4.5 No additional resources are required to enable the publication of the Issues and Options document for consultation. Details of additional resources needed in order to meet the reprofiled work programme for the preparation of the local plan for submission by 30 June 2025 will be presented to Cabinet for approval on 27 November 2023.

### **Legal**

- 4.6 The requirement to publish and keep under review the Local Development Scheme is set out within section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 4.7 Preparation of the new Local Plan will take place in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to carry out plan-making. The process of making a plan involves four main stages:



### **Environmental Implications**

- 4.8 The new Local Plan will have implications in relation to the spatial planning of the district. The wider environmental implications of the scale and distribution of development and associated supporting infrastructure will be assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan, which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive. However, this report relates to the adoption of an up to date Local Development Scheme and authorisation of the commencement of the Regulation 18 consultation and does not therefore have any direct environmental implications.

### **Risk Management**

- 4.9 The updated Local Development Scheme and publication of the issues and options consultation are important steps in the preparation of the new local plan. Both documents help the Council to manage the risks associated with preparing a new local plan within the reprofiled LDS timeframe, including:
- The proposed LDS local plan preparation timetable confirms that the new local plan will be submitted for examination in June 2025, which accords with the

government's deadline for plans to be submitted for examination under the current plan-making system.

- Triggers which specify the circumstances in which the Authority will need to prepare a new local plan (as outlined in local plan policy IMR1) have been activated, since Leicester City Council published its Regulation 19 in January 2022. As such, consultation under Regulation 18 is required in accordance with the Council's own existing plan.
- Ensuring the local plan remains up to date.
- Provision of certainty to key stakeholders, including partners, infrastructure providers and site promoters, enabling effective collaboration.
- Ensures compliance with the regulatory framework for Local Plans.

### **Equalities Impact**

- 4.10 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Local Plan will be prepared and regularly reviewed as part of the Local Plan making

### **Data Protection**

- 4.11 All consultations on the Local Plan will be carried out in compliance with the provisions of the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 The Panel may wish to discuss the following before providing comments to Cabinet on this report:
- 1) Is it desirable to ensure the local plan remains up to date?
  - 2) Are the risks associated with the reprofiled local plan time clearly explained in the LDS: have any risks been overlooked?
  - 3) Is the contents of the Issues and Options consultation document clear?
  - 4) Is it desirable to submit a new local plan for examination by 30 June 2025 in order to protect the district from speculative development and ensure plan led development is delivered across the district?
- 5.2 The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked comment on this report and its appendices.

## **6. Background papers**

- 1) Review of the adopted Harborough Local Plan: Cabinet 5 July 2021.
- 2) Local Development Scheme for the new Local Plan: Cabinet 6 September 2021.
- 3) Local Development Scheme for the new Local Plan: Cabinet 4 July 2022

Above reports are available here: <https://cmis.harborough.gov.uk/cm5/Meetings.aspx>

- 4) Current LDS: <http://www.harborough.gov.uk/local-development-scheme>
- 5) Government consultation, July-Oct 2023: [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms](#)

Consultation is now closed but available to view online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/plan-making-reforms-consultation-on-implementation/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-consultation-on-implementation-of-plan-making-reforms>



# **HARBOROUGH DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

**November 2023**

**Harborough District Council**

Published: xx xxxx 2023

## Table of Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>The planning system .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Current development plan .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>New Local Plan.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Supplementary planning documents .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Other documents .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Other factors impacting on Local Plan preparation .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Timetable for new Local Plan .....</b>	<b>13</b>



## **Local Development Scheme (November 2023)**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to prepare, publish and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the district under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 1.2 In July 2021 Cabinet decided to begin the preparation of a new Local Plan. The Local Development Scheme sets out the timetable for the preparation of the new Local Plan, giving key production and public consultation stages as well as outlining the subject matter and geographical extent. It also enables the local community to find out about planning policies for their area by setting out the documents which currently form the development plan for Harborough District. The LDS is also an opportunity to provide information on any Supplementary Planning Documents which have been adopted by the Council.
- 1.3 The LDS is published on the Council's website at [www.harborough.gov.uk/local-development-scheme](http://www.harborough.gov.uk/local-development-scheme). The Authority's Monitoring Report will report on plan making activity and progress against the LDS to keep communities and interested parties informed.
- 1.4 This LDS replaces the July 2022 version.

### **2. The planning system**

- 2.1 Planning law requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework, which must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions, emphasises that 'the planning system should be genuinely plan-led'. It advocates succinct local and neighbourhood plans, which should be kept up to date, and be based on joint working and co-operation.
- 2.2 As set out in Section 3 below, the Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 is a fundamental part of the 'plan-led' system. It was adopted in April 2019 and then underwent an internal officer review. This review demonstrated that the Local Plan remained up to date and continued to deliver sustainable development across the district. However, the

review identified that a recent significant increase in Leicester's housing need, combined with the requirement to meet resultant unmet need within Leicester and Leicestershire through the Duty to Cooperate, was likely to result in the need to update the Harborough Local Plan. In recognition of the time needed to prepare a local plan, on 5th July 2021 Cabinet took the decision to begin preparation of a new Local Plan as a full update to the adopted Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 (the Cabinet report is available [here](#)).

2.3 In order to keep local communities and other stakeholders informed of local planning activity, the Council is required to prepare a Local Development Scheme under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). In relation to the New Local Plan, the LDS must specify:

- the subject matter of the document to be prepared and the geographical extent to which it relates;
- whether the document will be prepared jointly with one or more other local authority; and
- the timetable for the preparation of document

2.4 Local Development Schemes must be publicised and kept up to date. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that a Local Development Scheme is expected to be reviewed and updated at least annually but may need updating more frequently if there are any significant changes in the timescales or the plans being prepared. It is therefore likely that timescales will change over time, leading to the revision of the Local Development Scheme if necessary.

### **3. Current development plan**

3.1 The development plan is at the heart of the planning system with a requirement in law that planning decisions must be taken in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As such it is essential that plans are in place and kept up to date.

3.2 As of November 2023, the development plan for Harborough District comprises:

- [Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031](#) (adopted 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019)
- [Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan to 2031](#)
- [Broughton Astley Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014)

- [Billesdon Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014)
- [Scraftoft Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016)
- [Lubenham Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017)
- [North Kilworth Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017)
- [Great Easton Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018)
- [Houghton on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018)
- [Medbourne Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018)
- [Swinford Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018)
- [South Kilworth Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019)
- [Shearsby Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019)
- [Burton Overy Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019)
- [Arnesby Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019)
- [Tur Langton Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019)
- [Great Glen Neighbourhood Plan Review](#) (made on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020)
- [Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan Review](#) (made on 26 June 2018, reviewed (minor amendments) 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020)
- [Fleckney Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made 27 May 2021)
- [Husbands Bosworth Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made 27 May 2021)
- [Hallaton Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made 11 June 2021)
- [Misterton with Walcote](#) (made 11 June 2021)
- [Hungarton Neighbourhood Plan Review](#) (made 20 July 2017, reviewed (minor amendments) 19 July 2021)
- [Saddington Neighbourhood Plan Review](#) (made 17 Jan 2019, reviewed (minor amendments) 4 June 2021)
- [Foxton Neighbourhood Plan Review](#) (made 2 November 2021)
- [Gilmorton Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 24 January 2022)
- [Leire Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 16 May 2022)
- [East Langton Neighbourhood Plan Review](#) (made on 2 Nov 2022)

- [Tugby and Keythorpe Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made on 2 Nov 2022)
  - [Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan Review](#) (made 31 May 2023)
  - [Dunton Bassett Neighbourhood Plan](#) (made 4 July 2023)
- 3.3 [Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031](#). The Local Plan was adopted on 30th April 2019 and sets out the vision and strategic objectives for the district to 2031. It includes site allocations to meet identified development needs and a range of development management policies to help in the determination of planning applications. The Local Plan is accompanied by a Policies Map which illustrates the policies and proposals across the district.
- 3.4 [Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Up to 2031](#). The County Council formally adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan Up to 2031 on 25th September 2019. It includes a spatial vision, strategic objectives, and core policies which set out the key principles to guide the future extraction of minerals and the form of waste management development in the County over the period to the end of 2031.
- 3.5 [Neighbourhood Plans](#). In addition to the ‘made’ neighbourhood plans listed in para 3.2, above, which form part of the Development Plan for Harborough District, several other neighbourhood plans are in the process of being prepared or reviewed. The up-to-date position in relation to the preparation and adoption of neighbourhood plans is available on the Council’s [website](#). Once neighbourhood plans are ‘made’ (adopted) by the Council, they form part of the development plan for the district and must be taken into account in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.6 [Supplementary Planning Documents](#). Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide additional information on policies and proposals in a local plan and are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.7 The Authority previously published several [Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes](#), the majority of which were linked to the former 2001 Local Plan policies. These policies no longer form part of the development plan.
- 3.8 The [Development Management SPD](#) was adopted on 13 December 2021 and replaces the previous Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes.
- 3.9 The [Planning Obligations SPD](#) was adopted on 20 June 2022. It provides detailed guidance on the policies in the Local Plan and has

replaced the January 2017 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

## **4. New Local Plan**

- 4.1 Central to the planning system is the preparation of a Local Plan which is in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.2 The Harborough Local Plan was adopted in April 2019. An officer review of the Local Plan carried out in May 2021 found that, although it remains up-to-date and continues to deliver sustainable development in the district, the issue of Leicester City's unmet housing need is likely to require an update. Additionally, in January 2023, Leicester City Council published its Regulation 19 pre-submission local plan. This has triggered the current local plan implementation, monitoring and review policy, IMR1, to commence preparation of a new local plan. The Council have therefore taken the decision to begin the preparation of a new Local Plan.
- 4.3 The Local Plan preparation timetable as set out in this Local Development Scheme was approved by the Council's Cabinet at its meeting on [to be inserted following Cabinet]. The report is available on the Council's website [link to be inserted following publication].

<b>Description of the New Local Plan</b>	
Role and Subject:	<p>The New Local Plan will provide the strategic planning framework for the district for at least 15 years from its adoption. The current Local Plan spatial strategy will be updated by a new strategy to deliver the required scale of development in appropriate and sustainable locations. Current Development Management policies will be reviewed and updated as necessary.</p> <p>In line with NPPF (September 2023) paragraphs 20-23, strategic policies in the New Local Plan will set out the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for development needs and supporting infrastructure. It will also provide for the conservation and enhancement of the district's natural, built and historic environment as well as planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the New Local Plan will also set out non-strategic, more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development in line with NPPF (September 2023) paragraphs 28-30. Such policies can also be set out in neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>The Local Plan will support the continued preparation of neighbourhood plans across the district by providing a clear strategic policy framework. It will identify which policies are strategic and provide the policy context for the preparation or review of neighbourhood plans prepared by Parish Councils or neighbourhood forums on behalf of their local communities.</p>
Geographical Area:	District wide
Status:	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity:	NPPF
Joint Production?	<p>No but there is a 'duty to cooperate' on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those relating to strategic priorities. Paragraph 27 of the NPPF (2023) is clear that in order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policy making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more Statements of Common Ground (SoCG), documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. The Council will continue to prepare joint evidence across the Housing Market Area (Leicester and Leicestershire) or other geographical area, as appropriate, and to address cross-boundary strategic issues through the preparation of SoCGs as appropriate.</p>
<b>Timetable – Key Stages</b>	
Reg 18 Issues and Options Consultation	Between January and February 2024
Reg 19 & 20 Proposed Submission Local Plan Consultation	Between January and March 2025
Reg 22	Between

Submission of Local Plan for Examination	May and June 2025
Reg 26 Local Plan Adoption*	Between May and December 2026*

*\*Indicative only at this stage as dependent on detailed arrangements for Examination by the Planning Inspectorate and decisions/recommendations by the Inspector including the need for and scope of any main modifications arising out of the Examination.*

## 5. Supplementary planning documents

- 5.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are prepared to add further detail to the policies in an adopted local plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.
- 5.2 Over the Local Development Scheme timeframe, the Council will continue to deploy the following SPDs:
- **Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document** - adopted by the Council on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022. This replaced the Planning Obligations SPD from January 2017. It informs developers, landowners, infrastructure providers and local communities about the approach of the Council to securing community infrastructure and affordable housing through planning obligations. It is available on the Council's [website](#).
  - **Development Management Supplementary Planning Document.** This provides additional guidance to assist with the interpretation and implementation of several Local Plan policies. It helps applicants to make successful applications and will be taken into account as a material consideration, when appropriate, as the Council makes decisions on planning applications. It is available on the Council's [website](#).
- 5.3 As SPDs are not development plan documents, the Council is not required to include them in the Local Development Scheme. They are included here for information only.
- 5.4 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The Council will review the option of introducing a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), as part of its forthcoming new Local Plan, to fund certain elements of future infrastructure, potentially of a District wide significance. The latest Government policy, guidance and emerging legislation will be considered in this review.

## 6. Other documents

- 6.1 **Policies Map:** The Local Plan Policies Map will be revised as appropriate as part of the new Local Plan. The Policies Map will identify policy designations, proposals and sites allocated for particular land uses.
- 6.2 **Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment):** A Sustainability Appraisal will be undertaken for the new Local Plan and for Supplementary Planning Documents where required. The main aim of this process, which runs in parallel with the preparation of plans, is to ensure that the social, economic and environmental effects of emerging policies are understood and taken into account. The process will follow guidance at the time.
- 6.3 **Appropriate Assessment:** An Appropriate Assessment is prepared at each published stage of a Development Plan to show whether the policies will have significant effects on sites subject to the constraints of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of European Importance.
- 6.4 **Monitoring and Review – Authority’s Monitoring Report:** Local planning authorities are required to publish a report that monitors the progress and implementation of each document set the Local Development Scheme. It must specify whether adopted policies are meeting their stated objectives. In addition, it must include:
- Details of any neighbourhood development order or a neighbourhood development plan made by the Council;
  - Any Community Infrastructure Levy related receipts and expenditure; and
  - Details on where the Council has worked with other authorities in accordance with the ‘Duty to Cooperate’.

The latest Council monitoring report is available [here](#).

- 6.5 **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** This document explains how parties with an interest in planning issues in the district can engage with the planning system. Essentially its sets out who, when and how the authority will consult when developing new planning policy and processing planning applications. The latest version of the Statement of Community Involvement was adopted by the Council in February 2020 and is available [here](#). The Council is keen to encourage the use of the [Strategic Planning Consultation Portal](#) as a means of



engaging stakeholders and the public and this is reflected in the Statement of Community Involvement.

## **7. Other factors impacting on Local Plan preparation**

- 7.1 Evidence Base: A number of studies were prepared to support the production of the current Local Plan. Updated and additional evidence will be prepared to inform the preparation of the new Local Plan. This is published on the Council's website on the [supporting evidence](#) webpage wherever possible. Otherwise, a hard copy will be made available for inspection.
- 7.2 Duty to Cooperate: Given the importance attached to the 'Duty to Cooperate', the Council is putting procedures into place to ensure effective collaboration with neighbouring local authorities, other local authorities within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area and other public bodies, particularly on strategic planning issues that span district council boundaries. Both member and officer groups are established to facilitate this process.
- 7.3 Council Procedure and Reporting: The preparation of the Local Plan will be informed, monitored and approved as appropriate by Harborough District Council through:
- Member engagement, including the Planning Portfolio Holder and Chairman of Planning Committee and other councillors;
  - Cabinet; and
  - The full Council.
- 7.4 Resources: The following officers of Harborough District Council will be involved, to varying degrees, in preparing the Local Plan:
- Director of Planning
  - Head of Strategic and Local Planning
  - Principal Planning Policy Officer
  - Local Plan Project Officer
  - Senior Planning Policy Officer
  - Planning Policy Officer

- Planning Policy Assistant
- Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Officer
- Heritage and Conservation Officer
- Environment Coordinator
- Additional external support as necessary.

7.5 Risk Assessment: It is important that the risks associated with delivery of the Local Plan are acknowledged and mitigating measures put in place to avoid adverse impact on the delivery of the LDS. The main risks to delivery have been identified together with proposed mitigation measures:

- **Staffing**

The need for additional staff resources may occur through sickness, staff turnover or volume of work.

Mitigation measures: succession planning, continual professional development through appraisals, liaison with Local Planning Advisory Panel, liaison with Director of Planning over recruitment, secondment arrangements, temporary cover arrangements, additional external resources.

- **Evidence**

Delay to Plan progress if relevant evidence at Leicestershire-wide level is delayed.

Mitigation measures: Full involvement in process, timely provision of information/comments for consultants, close monitoring of adherence to project timescales, ensure project group are aware of Local Plan deadlines. Should significant delay be experienced in the preparation of evidence, which the Local Plan relies upon, an amendment to the Local Development Scheme will be prepared and presented for consideration.

- **Political Decision-making**

Politically contentious issues may require unforeseen procedures to resolve.

Mitigation measures: Internal process arrangements provide a number of opportunities for district councillors to meet and discuss emerging policies and proposals with officers including Portfolio Holder meetings, Member engagement in Local Plan

preparation, all-Member workshops and briefings, the formal approval of documents at Cabinet and Council meetings.

- **Duty to Cooperate (DtC)**

Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the Duty to Cooperate at the independent examination of their local plan. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate to the examination inspector that it has complied with the Duty, then the local plan will not be able to proceed further in the examination process. In preparing local plans, local planning authorities have to bear in mind that cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters.

Mitigation measures: Ensure a good understanding of the requirements of the duty to cooperate at an early stage through clarity on the legislative framework, accompanying guidance and lessons from inspectors' reports. This then needs to be translated into officer and member involvement in appropriate structures for evidence gathering and agreement on strategic issues. Appropriate ongoing engagement with partners on identified Duty to Cooperate issues will take place involving one to one engagement where appropriate, stakeholder meetings and workshops. The preparation of Statements of Common Ground with relevant partners will identify strategic cross boundary issues and identify the mechanisms to address such issues, including the preparation of joint evidence.

- **Changes to National Planning Policy and legislative framework**

From time to time the NPPF and National Planning Practice Guidance is updated. The NPPF was most recently updated in September 2023 and is likely to be reissued later in 2023, at a date to be confirmed. The Planning Practice Guidance is updated regularly. Any changes to these documents will need to be considered. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) has recently received Royal Assent. In addition to the LURA, several Government consultations on planning reforms have been tabled in the last 3 years, with significant primary and secondary legislative changes likely to come into effect in 2024, these include but are limited to:

- [Planning White Paper in August 2020](#),
- [Levelling-up and Regeneration Aill: reforms to national planning policy in December 2022](#) and

- [Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation in July 2023.](#)

Mitigation measures: Closely monitor new policy and practice guidance, anticipate changes to national policy and its implications at the Housing Market Area level, build flexibility into the plan and work closely with neighbouring local authorities in respect of the Duty to Cooperate on strategic priorities. Should changes to Government policy or legislative framework impose additional requirements and therefore additional time to resolve, an amendment to the Local Development Scheme will be prepared and presented for consideration.

- **New / Revised Procedural Requirements**

The preparation of the Local Plan will be carried out under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Mitigation measures: Pay close attention to the new regulations and any revised legal processes. Should changes to the legislative framework impose additional requirements and therefore additional time to resolve, an amendment to the Local Development Scheme will be prepared and presented for consideration.

- **Financial Resources**

Undertaking evidence gathering projects, public consultation events and the formal Examination of the final new Local Plan require significant financial resources. Any additional unforeseen costs would place a further burden on the budget.

Mitigation measures: Close monitoring of the new Local Plan preparation budget and likely future commitments.

- 7.6 Equality Impact Assessment: An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken in conjunction with the preparation of the Local Plan to consider the likely effects of new and/or changing policies on people with protected characteristics (see the Council's [website](#)). This will help the Council to ensure that the needs of people are taken into account when developing and implementing the Local Plan.

## 8. Timetable for new Local Plan

- 8.1 The following timetable sets out the key stages in the preparation of the new Local Plan for Harborough District.

## Local Development Scheme (November 2023): New Local Plan preparation timetable

	2023				2024												2025												2026													
Stage	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
Issues and Options consultation (Regulation 18)																																										
Proposed Submission Consultation (Regulation 19)																																										
Submission for Examination																																										
Local Plan Adoption*																																										

Figure 1: An illustration of the timeline for local plan preparation, with key project milestones indicated on a calendar; Issues and Options consultation (Jan-Feb 2024), Proposed Submission consultation (Jan-Mar 2025), Submission for Examination (May-Jun 2025), and Adoption in mid-late 2026.

\*Estimated to be 11 months from Submission for Examination (the current Local Plan was adopted 11 months after Submission for Examination), i.e. the Local Plan Adoption Date is indicative only at this stage – it is dependent on detailed arrangements for Examination by the Planning Inspectorate and decisions/ recommendations by the Inspector including the need for and scope of any main modifications arising out of the Examination. The Government's [recent consultation on plan-making reforms](#) states that all plans Examined under the current legislative framework (Submitted for Examination by 30 June 2025), should be adopted by 31 December 2026.









# **Harborough District Council New Local Plan**

## **Issues and Options Consultation January 2024**

## Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Overview .....	3
2. Background .....	4
3. Vision & Objectives .....	7
<b>Strategic Policies: Spatial Strategy.....</b>	<b>11</b>
4. Strategic Context .....	11
5. Amount and Location of Housing Growth .....	14
6. Amount and Location of Employment Growth.....	32
7. Small and Medium Housing Sites Requirement.....	39
8. Call for Sites.....	39
9. Site Selection Methodology.....	41
10. Strategic Green Designations .....	42
11. Design Quality.....	43
<b>Environment and Sustainability Policies.....</b>	<b>45</b>
12. Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change .....	45
13. Flood Risk.....	47
14. Water Supply and Wastewater Management.....	48
15. Biodiversity and Geodiversity.....	49
16. Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment.....	50
<b>Health and Well-being policies .....</b>	<b>52</b>
17. Healthy communities.....	52
18. Blue-Green Infrastructure.....	53
19. Open Space, Sport and Recreation .....	54
20. Local Green Spaces .....	55
<b>Housing Needs Policies .....</b>	<b>57</b>
21. Affordable Housing .....	57
22. Mix of Housing .....	58
23. Older Person and Specialist Housing .....	59
24. Space Standards .....	60
25. Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.....	60
26. Self-build and Custom Housebuilding .....	61
<b>Town Centres, Retailing, Leisure and Tourism Policies .....</b>	<b>64</b>
27. Town Centres, Retailing and Leisure .....	64

28.	Tourism .....	65
	<b>Transport, Local Services and Infrastructure Policies .....</b>	<b>67</b>
29.	Transport.....	67
30.	Local Services and Infrastructure.....	68

# Introduction

## 1. Overview

- 1.1. Harborough District Council is preparing a new Local Plan and is holding a six-week public consultation on what it should contain. Consultation runs from January to February 2024.
- 1.2. This is the first stage of public consultation on the preparation of the new Harborough Local Plan. It seeks views on a range of planning issues and potential options for the future development of the District. Details on how to respond are available on the Harborough District Council website [link to be inserted].
- 1.3. Your consultation responses and further work will inform the next version of the Local Plan, which will contain more detail. The next version will also be subject to further public consultation.
- 1.4. Alongside this consultation the Council is carrying out a 'Call for Sites' [link to be inserted] which is an opportunity for landowners and site promoters to put forward potential development sites for consideration during preparation of the new Local Plan.
- 1.5. We have also published a Sustainability Appraisal of this Issues and Options consultation document. This is the first stage of the sustainability appraisal of our new plan and will be updated at each stage as the Local Plan progresses to ensure the potential social, environmental and economic effects of the plan are appropriately considered and inform the Local Plan. It is not a decision-making document.

### What is a Local Plan?

- 1.6. Local planning authorities are required to prepare a local plan to deliver sustainable development in their area. The Local Plan will set out the strategy for the amount, location and design of new built development (such as homes, schools, employment, retail etc.) whilst helping to protect the countryside, important green spaces and our built and natural heritage from inappropriate development.
- 1.7. Preparation of the new Local Plan provides an opportunity for local people and other interested parties to help shape what the District will look like over at least the next 15 years.
- 1.8. Once adopted the new Local Plan will be used to make development decisions and determine planning applications.

### Why are we doing a new Local Plan?

- 1.9. The Council needs to ensure its Local Plan remains up to date so it can positively manage built development and protect areas from inappropriate

development. The current [Local Plan](#) was adopted in April 2019. Although it is considered to be up to date, it takes a number of years to prepare and adopt a new Local Plan so the Council is preparing a new one to ensure it remains up to date in future.

- 1.10. The Local Plan 2019 also contains policies requiring it to be updated in certain circumstances. One of these is linked to the publication of the [Leicester City Local Plan](#) which was published in January 2023. This means we must update the Local Plan to set timescales. A new local plan is beneficial to provide long term certainty, allocate development in sustainable locations and protect important natural spaces and built heritage.

### What is the timetable for preparing the Local Plan?

- 1.11. The Council's timetable for Local Plan preparation is set out in its [Local Development Scheme](#). The timetable is as set out below. For clarity, this current consultation is the 'Issues and Options Consultation (Regulation 18)' the timetable and is the first public consultation on the preparation of the new Local Plan.

#### Local Development Scheme (November 2023): New Local Plan preparation timetable

	2023				2024												2025												2026													
Stage	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
Issues and Options consultation (Regulation 18)																																										
Proposed Submission Consultation (Regulation 19)																																										
Submission for Examination																																										
Local Plan Adoption*																																										

- 1.12. The timetable may be updated and published on the Council's website as Local Plan preparation is progressed to reflect the latest position.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. Local plans are not prepared in isolation, they need to take into account a range of national, regional and local policies and strategies.

### National Planning Policy and Guidance

- 2.2. The Local Plan must take into account the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) and [Planning Practice Guidance](#) (PPG). This requires local plans to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of

development, and make sufficient provision for: Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development; Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal management, and the provision of materials and energy (including heat); Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- 2.3. Government has made clear its intention to reform the planning system through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which sets out parameters for the process and content of new-style local plans. To this end Government has set a deadline for local plans produced under the current system to be submitted for examination by June 2025.
- 2.4. Plans submitted after this deadline will need to follow the new system. Under the new system plans take 30 months to prepare from start to finish and Government intends to have in place regulations, policy and guidance by autumn 2024 to enable the preparation of the first new-style local plans to start.
- 2.5. To ensure a smooth transition to the new system, Government has sought views on options for a phased roll out. The Harborough Local Plan was adopted in 2019 so the Council is unlikely to be in an early phase which means it will take several years to get a new plan in place under the new system (taking into account potential start dates for the new system and the 30-month timescale for plan preparation).
- 2.6. This Issues and Options consultation has been prepared in the context of the current legislation, policy and guidance which provides the legal basis for plan making. In progressing the preparation of the Local Plan, the Council will carefully follow national developments and ensure any new national requirements are incorporated into the Plan making process as appropriate. All the proposed options in this document must therefore be accompanied by a clear caveat that they are proposed in the context of the current situation and may need to be amended as the new Local Plan progresses.

### **Strategic Growth Plan**

- 2.7. The [Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan](#) was prepared by the 9 local authorities in Leicester & Leicestershire and published in 2018. It is a non-statutory strategic plan that provides a framework to help guide individual local plans. It focuses on four key matters: delivering new housing, supporting the economy, identifying essential infrastructure, and protecting the environment and built heritage.

- 2.8. The Strategic Growth Plan recognises that significant new development cannot be accommodated within Leicester and Leicestershire without significant investment in infrastructure and services.
- 2.9. It proposes:
- Focusing growth in areas close to existing employment clusters and opportunities and new infrastructure proposals
  - Focusing growth in major strategic locations and reducing the amount that takes place in existing towns, villages and rural areas
  - Five key growth areas are identified. Those relevant to Harborough District are Leicester Our Central City, the A46 Priority Growth Corridor and the A5 Improvement Corridor
  - Delivery of the strategic growth areas will be as 21st century garden towns, villages and suburbs. New housing and employment will be planned together with new and improved roads, public transport, schools, health services, local shops and open space.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

- 2.10. Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. It provides tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs.
- 2.11. All Neighbourhood Plans need to be produced in broad conformity with the strategic policies set out within the District Council's Local Plan.
- 2.12. There are currently 29 made Neighbourhood Plans in the District and a significant number being prepared or updated.
- 2.13. Neighbourhood plans should be kept up to date if circumstances change and some may need updating to align with strategic policies in the new Local Plan. This is because Government policy requires neighbourhood plans to support the delivery of strategic policies in local plans.
- 2.14. We are required to set out a housing requirement for neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development in the new Local Plan. The current Local Plan (2019) does this for the plan period to 2031 and the new Local Plan is likely to do it for the period up to 2041 (to meet Government requirements for plans to cover a 15-year period from the date of adoption).
- 2.15. Some neighbourhood areas currently working on new plans or updating existing plans have been given indicative requirements to 2036 as required by Government policy to enable them to progress. These figures may need to be updated as the new Local Plan progresses.

### 3. Vision & Objectives

3.1. A key element of the new Local Plan will be a clear Vision and Objectives for achieving that vision. Together they set a framework for the policies and proposals of the plan. The Vision and Objectives will be developed alongside consideration of key issues and options for the new Local Plan, other relevant plans and strategies, and the views of the local community.

3.2. The [Harborough Corporate Plan 2022-2031](#) is the Council's overarching strategic document which prioritises a clear set of commitments and actions, including the preparation of the new Local Plan. It sets out a clear vision for the District:

*"Working with our communities, we will build a future for the people of Harborough district that gives them the best life chances and opportunities through:*

- *Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place*
- *Promoting health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices*
- *Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations*
- *Supporting businesses and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy".*

3.3. The new Local Plan will be an important element (along with other policies and strategies) to help achieve the Corporate Plan. It will set out a spatial strategy helping to achieve the spatial elements of the Corporate Plan. We would therefore welcome your views on what the Vision for the new Local Plan should say.

#### [Local Plan Vision](#)

[Question 1: Should the Corporate plan be used as a basis for preparing a Vision for the new Local Plan?](#)

[Question 2: What should the Local Plan Vision say?](#)

#### **Emerging Objectives**

3.4. The following set of objectives have been drafted for the new Local Plan for public consultation:

**Objective 1: Delivering the right amount and type of housing to meet need**



- Establishing need and ensuring housing choice (size, tenure, type) and location to meet the needs of the population. This includes:
  - Affordable housing across all tenures
  - Accessible and adaptable housing to support people throughout all the stages of life
  - Sheltered accommodation for people with additional needs
  - Care homes
  - Self-build and custom build plots
  - Gypsy and Traveller needs
  - Travelling Show-people
  - First Homes.
- Making an appropriate contribution to meeting the justified unmet housing needs of other authorities within the Leicester and Leicestershire housing market area.

**Objective 2: Protecting and delivering enough business and employment land to meet need and support economic aspirations for growth**

- Resisting the loss of existing employment land and supporting the delivery of new employment land to encourage inward investment, increased employment diversity and the growth of existing businesses.
- Supporting the continued use and re-use as well as intensification, where appropriate, of our existing employment land.
- Ensuring support of existing industries within the District while also supporting emerging sectors.
- Acknowledging the high level of rural business within the District, their different needs and supporting rural diversification.
- Supporting our tourism and hospitality offers both within our centres and in more rural locations across the District. Specialising in local and sustainable tourism focused on the attractive countryside and settlements across the District. Developing new and expanded markets for this type of tourism.

**Objective 3: Ensuring a spatial strategy which supports sustainable development**

- Maintaining and enhancing the quality of life offered in Harborough District which attracts people to live, work and play here.
- Ensuring new employment and housing are located in sustainable locations.

**Objective 4: Protecting and enhancing our villages and towns as centres of the communities they serve**

- Maintaining and improving the resilience, vitality and viability of our centres, acknowledging the ever evolving and changing role of town and other urban, sub-urban and rural centres.

- Supporting all our different scales of centres by protecting sustainable local services as well as encouraging the provision of additional sustainable local services and facilities where possible and appropriate.

**Objective 5: Securing sustainable, high-quality places through design-led development**

- Ensuring a strong emphasis on quality urban design, physical place-making and shaping across all scales of development to positively respond to the new Office for Place and the Government's 'Building Beautiful' initiative.
- Ensuring that all new development is high quality, sustainable and enhances the character of the District.
- Using design to ensure new development is integrated and connected to the wider place.
- Securing excellent design at all scales of development from initial concept and master planning to detailed design of individual schemes.
- Ensuring increased emphasis on context and place-making/shaping when planning new developments through the Local Plan and policies that support and enable their delivery. Place increased emphasis on local Design Coding and site-specific development briefs and master plans to ensure local effect is given to District wide design coding.
- Supporting the development of new spaces that are safe, social and inclusive for all ages, life stages and accessibility levels.
- Using design to support health, well-being and active lifestyles as well as to prevent anti-social behaviour.

**Objective 6: Supporting the Council's climate emergency agenda**

- Supporting an improvement in air quality across the District through encouraging and making provision for sustainable travel choices to reduce reliance on the private car.
- Requiring new development to minimise carbon emissions through building design and fabric as well as renewable technologies.
- Encouraging waste minimisation and waste prevention through the reuse (and recycling) of building materials.
- Supporting the delivery of charging points for electric modes of transport and emerging/alternative technologies.
- Supporting and encouraging retrofitting of existing buildings with renewable technologies and other appropriate interventions to help support the zero-carbon target.
- Supporting the provision of renewable energy in appropriate locations.
- Addressing the risk of flooding from all sources to both new development and established communities through the location of new development and ensuring green infrastructure includes sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) that are appropriate to the scale and location of each development.

### **Objective 7: The continued protection and enhancement of our heritage assets**

- Ensuring the protection and enhancement of the District's conservation areas, listed buildings, parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.
- Ensuring new development within our conservation areas are of a high standard to reflect their distinct character as well as preserving and enhancing the wider heritage assets.
- Supporting the continued use and re-use of our heritage assets to ensure their protection for this and future generations.

### **Objective 8: Improving open space and biodiversity**

- Maximising and enhancing our open space to help tackle climate change, create flood risk resilience, reverse biodiversity decline and provide health and wellbeing for the immediate and wider community.
- Incorporating amenity greenspace, natural and semi-natural greenspace and parks and gardens into all scales of new development as appropriate.
- Ensuring all new green space is multi-functional with a range of habitats, rewilding some open spaces where appropriate and linkages to established habitats for tackling the biodiversity deficit in the District.
- Incorporating play space for all ages and abilities of children into all scales of new development as appropriate.

### **Objective 9: Developing options for sustainable infrastructure within the District**

- Improving walking and cycling accessibility across the District where possible through provision of all-weather cycle and pedestrian links as part of new development and town centre improvements making places accessible and easy to move around places.
- Mitigating the highways and transportation impact of new development.
- Supporting the County Council in delivering sustainable public transport options to support new development.

### **Objective 10: Monitoring delivery and review of the Local Plan**

- Ensuring that delivery of the Local Plan is effectively monitored and used to inform any future review of the Local Plan.

3.5. The objectives will form the framework for the plan, and the policies and proposals of the Local Plan should all contribute to achieving them in a balanced way. This consultation seeks views on the potential objectives above.

## *Local Plan Strategic Objectives*

*Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed objectives for the new Local Plan?*

*Question 4: Are there any additional suggestions that should be included in the proposed objectives?*

# **Strategic Policies: Spatial Strategy**

## **4. Strategic Context**

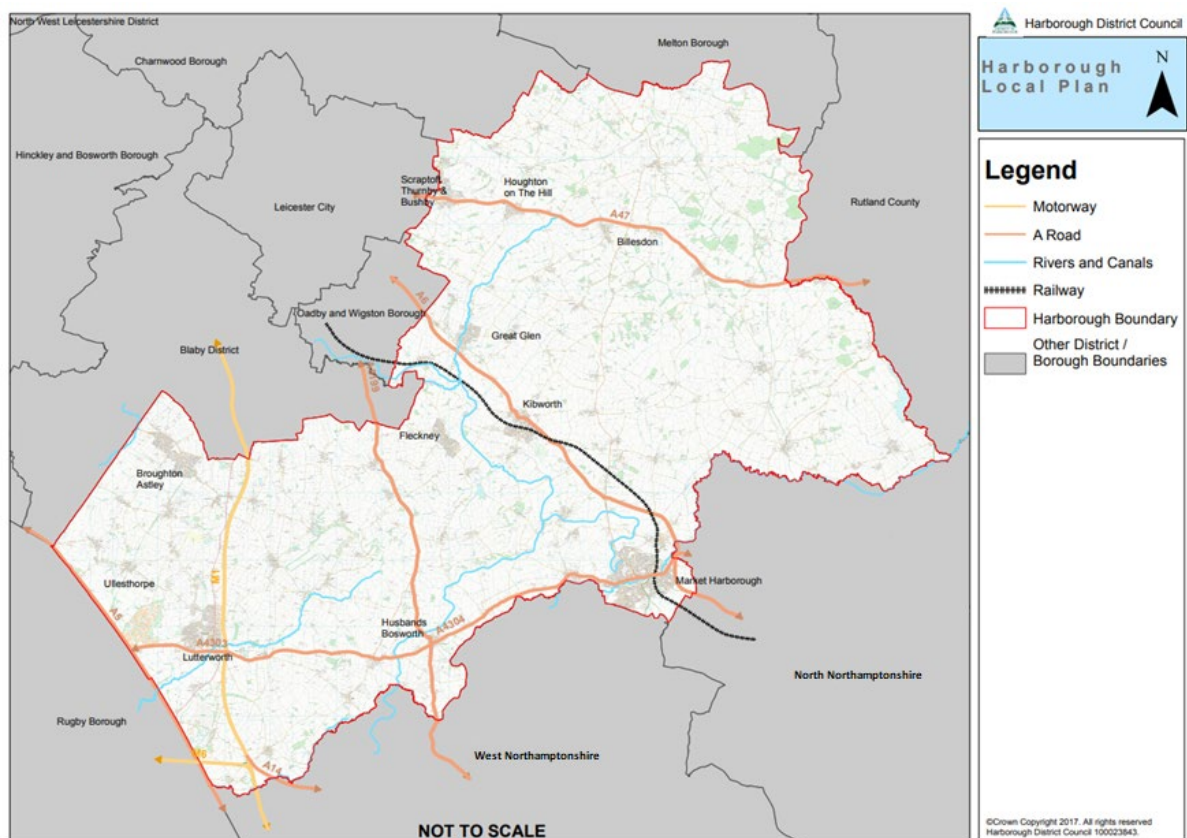
### **The Duty to Cooperate and Cross-Boundary Matters**

4.1. The Duty to Cooperate was established through the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils and other public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to ensure matters that affect more than one local authority area are addressed adequately within plans. Alongside the statutory Duty, Government policy also sets certain requirements on joint working which we need to follow, including:

- Joint working between local authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of local plans
- We should collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which we need to address through the new Local Plan and engage with local communities and relevant bodies
- Joint working should help determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a neighbouring authority's area could be met elsewhere
- Authorities are required to prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address them. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning guidance.

### **How does Harborough District relate to neighbouring places?**

4.2. Given Government's requirement for joint working and the geography of the area, Harborough District cannot be viewed in isolation from neighbouring areas. The map below shows the local authorities which neighbour Harborough District. Harborough has a particularly strong relationship with Leicester and the rest of Leicestershire. It is dependent on the Leicester urban area not only for the significant amount of employment located there, but also for higher order health, retail and cultural facilities and services. Therefore, the regeneration and economic well-being of the Leicester urban area is an important consideration in any future strategy for the District.



- 4.3. The District lies within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) and Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA), which both cover the whole of Leicester and Leicestershire. These have been defined in recognition of the central economic role of Leicester and the fact that people generally travel to work and move house across local authority boundaries within this area. The Leicester and Leicestershire HMA and FEMA are shown in the map below:



4.4. Taking into account the above statutory and Government policy requirements for joint working as well as how the District relates to neighbouring places, the Council has published a Summary of Duty to Cooperate Engagement [link to be inserted] setting out collaboration carried out so far, ongoing joint work and potential future areas for joint working. Strategic Planning Matters identified to date which require cooperation with partners include the following:

- Housing requirements and distribution (including unmet need issues)
- Affordable housing, housing mix, homes for older persons and others with specialist needs
- Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Economy and employment requirements and distribution including strategic warehousing (strategic B8)
- Retail, leisure and other commercial development
- Highways and transport
- Water issues (supply, wastewater, water quality, flood risk);
- Other infrastructure including telecommunications, security, waste management, minerals and energy
- Community facilities (health, education, cultural infrastructure)
- Conservation of the natural environment including biodiversity net gain/local nature recovery strategy/landscape/green and blue infrastructure
- Conservation of the built and historic environment, including quality and character

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation including renewable energy
  - Green wedges
  - Cross boundary sites/impact of potential strategic sites.
- 4.5. As the new Local Plan is at a relatively early stage, cooperation on strategic matters has primarily involved the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities. The authorities have a long history of joint working and evidence gathering. As work progresses on the new Local Plan, further cooperation and dialogue with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies will be needed.

#### *Duty to Cooperate and Effective Joint Working*

*Question 5: Do you agree with the strategic matters identified by the Council and are there any changes or additions you consider should be made at this stage?*

## **5. Amount and Location of Housing Growth**

- 5.1. Government policy requires plans to be an appropriate strategy taking into account 'reasonable alternatives' and based on proportionate evidence. Regulations also require us to assess 'reasonable alternatives' when producing spatial strategies such as the new Local Plan.
- 5.2. This consultation therefore contains alternatives/options for the scale and location of growth across the District over the proposed new Local Plan period 2020 to 2041.
- 5.3. This stage of the process is about the overall strategy, not specific development sites. The outcomes of this consultation and further evidence will then inform the Council's Preferred Strategy. It is possible that alternative or additional options could emerge, and the Preferred Strategy may be a hybrid containing elements from different options.

### **Housing Requirement**

- 5.4. The starting point for determining the amount of housing we should plan for is to calculate our Local Housing Need using the Government's standard method, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. Analysis undertaken in the [Housing and Economic Needs Assessment](#) (2022) does not point to any exceptional circumstances to depart from the standard method starting point for Harborough District.
- 5.5. Government policy says that, in addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas (referred to as unmet need) should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.



- 5.6. Neighbouring Leicester City Council has an unmet housing need because it doesn't have sufficient land available in its area to meet its own housing need in full. In September 2020 the City published a Draft Local Plan for public consultation which indicated a potential unmet housing need of about 8,000 homes. Immediately after the consultation closed, Government increased the number of homes by 35% for the 20 biggest cities (including Leicester) to meet its national target to build 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s and help regenerate cities. This added a further 10,000 homes to Leicester's housing need between 2020 and 2036.
- 5.7. Providing for this number of additional homes in the City would have required more than a doubling of the housing allocations set out in their Draft Local Plan consultation. The City's evidence shows it will not be possible to meet their housing need and other Government policy obligations of a sound and deliverable plan. The latest version of the [City's Local Plan](#) indicates an unmet need of 18,700 homes to 2036. In this context, it is necessary to seek to agree a Statement of Common Ground to deal with this matter.
- 5.8. Government policy requires Harborough District to work with neighbouring authorities. To get a new Local Plan in place we have to demonstrate that our plan is, amongst other things:
- Informed by agreements, so unmet need is accommodated where practical to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
  - Based on effective joint working on cross-boundary matters (like the City's unmet need) that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by a statement of common ground.
- 5.9. To meet Government requirements, the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities jointly commissioned independent consultants to prepare a [Housing Distribution Paper](#) setting out an evidence-led approach to apportioning Leicester's unmet housing need to neighbouring authorities including Harborough. This evidence informed a [Leicester & Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground](#) (SoCG) apportioning Leicester's unmet housing and employment needs to the surrounding Districts/Boroughs from 2020 to 2036.
- 5.10. The starting point for this work was each authority's Local Housing Need figure which for Harbough was 534 homes per year. Taking into account various factors, including the District's functional relationship with Leicester (migration and commuting) and the alignment of the number of jobs and homes, this evidence suggests Harborough's housing requirement should be increased by 123 homes per year to 657 homes per year to help meet Leicester's housing need.



5.11. Taking the above into account, three alternative options for the scale of housing requirement have been considered at this stage:

Option	Scale of Growth	Potential Housing Requirement (Homes Per Year)	Justification
A	Low	534	Local Housing Need - Calculated using Governments Standard Method.
B	Medium	657	Local Housing Need plus a contribution of 123 homes per year towards meeting Leicester's unmet need
C	High	780	Local Housing Need plus 246 homes per year

Note: The Local Housing Need (LHN) for the District in the Housing Distribution Paper and Statement of Common Ground is 534 homes per year based on Governments standard method for calculating housing need and data published in 2022. Although more recent 2023 data has been published this does not significantly impact LHN for the District. The LHN figures used in the Housing Distribution Paper and Statement of Common Ground have therefore been used for consistency.

### **Housing Supply**

5.12. To ensure the housing requirement is met the new Local Plan will need to identify a supply of housing land to achieve this target. This means identifying a supply of homes greater than the requirement (known as a supply buffer or contingency) to ensure the housing requirement in the Plan is met in the event something unexpected slows build rates over the next 15 years or so, such as economic factors or site-specific issues.

5.13. A decision on the scale of any supply contingency will depend on a number of factors and will be informed by the outcome of this consultation and further evidence. We are therefore interested in people's views on this. Examples nationally range significantly, but housing supply contingencies generally range between 5% and 25% above the housing requirement. At the time of its adoption in 2019, the current Local Plan contained a housing supply contingency of about 16%.

### *Scale of Housing Growth*

*Question 6: What should the housing requirement be in the new Local Plan?*

*Question 7: What level of housing supply contingency should we plan for?*

### **Plan Period**

5.14. A base date of 2020 for the plan period has been chosen for this consultation because it aligns with the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2022) and associated Housing and Employment Distribution Papers. An end date of 2041 is chosen because Government policy requires us to plan at least 15 years ahead from the date we adopt the new Local Plan which is currently scheduled for 2026 as per the timetable above.

### *Plan Period*

*Question 8: Do you agree the start of the plan period should be 2020 and an end date of 2041?*

### **Amount of Homes Remaining to be Planned**

5.15. The amount of homes that need to be identified or planned for through the new Local Plan will largely be determined by the scale of annual housing requirement, the length of the plan period and the size of any housing supply contingency.

5.16. However, we already have a supply of homes that we can count towards meeting the amount we need to plan for in the new Local Plan. Our monitoring data shows we have a pipeline of 10,427 homes that have been built since 2020 or are already committed with planning permission/allocated in a plan.

5.17. To give some context of the scale of housing growth we may need to plan for, if we take the medium housing requirement of 657 per year (2020 – 2041) and include a supply contingency of 20% we would need to identify a total supply of 16,556 homes between 2020 and 2041. Assuming the pipeline of 10,427 homes are built before 2041 (including the two Strategic Development Areas at Scraftoft North and Lutterworth East allocated in the current Local Plan 2019) we would need to plan for a further 6,129 homes – i.e. 6,129 homes on top of the 10,427 home pipeline.

## **Options for the Location of Housing Growth**

### **Settlement Hierarchy**

- 5.18. The Council has published a new Settlement Hierarchy Assessment [link to be inserted] to understand which settlements are the most sustainable in the District. The settlement hierarchy does not set the level or distribution of development. Appropriate levels of development for settlements will be informed by the outcome of this consultation and further evidence which will feed into the next version of the Local Plan.
- 5.19. Government policy requires local plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development and play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, while taking local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
- 5.20. As a large rural district, Harborough has approximately 100 settlements ranging from those adjoining the urban area of Leicester, market towns to very small villages and hamlets. The classification of towns, villages and rural settlements is therefore important.
- 5.21. Settlements in higher tiers of the hierarchy will often be more sustainable locations for new development due to residents being able to access a wider range of services and facilities more easily. Settlements work by providing a range of services for their residents and for a wider area. Typically, larger settlements have more services and serve a wider area.
- 5.22. The settlement hierarchy is being updated to form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. The current settlement hierarchy is set out in the Local Plan 2011-2031 (2019). The new assessment has allowed for a new approach to be taken in terms of the range of services and facilities audited and the categorisation of settlements so that they can continue to benefit and serve residents in both urban and rural areas.
- 5.23. The proposed Settlement Hierarchy is set out below:

<b>Settlement Hierarchy Tier</b>	<b>Settlement</b>
<b>Adjoining Leicester Urban Area</b>	Scraptoft/Thurnby/Bushby
<b>Market Towns</b>	Lutterworth Market Harborough
<b>Large Villages</b>	Broughton Astley Fleckney Great Glen

Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Settlement
	The Kibworths
Medium Villages	Billesdon Great Bowden Houghton on the Hill Husbands Bosworth Ullesthorpe
Small Villages	Arnesby Bitteswell Church Langton Claybrooke Magna Dunton Bassett Foxton Gilmorton Great Easton Hallaton Leire Lubenham Medbourne North Kilworth South Kilworth Swinford Tilton on the Hill Tugby Walcote
Other village/hamlet	Other settlements

### *Settlement Hierarchy*

*Question 9: Do you agree the proposed settlement hierarchy is appropriate. If not, how should it be changed?*

### **Spatial Options for the Location of Housing**

5.24. Taking into account the Settlement Hierarchy, six broad spatial options for delivering the three different scales of growth (Low, Medium, High) between 2020 and 2041 have been identified:

- Option A: Local Plan Strategy
- Option B: Proportional Growth
- Option C: Urban Area Focus
- Option D: Strategic Sites Focus

- Option E: Market Town Focus
- Option F: Large Village Focus

5.25. These options have been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal [link to be inserted].

5.26. For each option an indicative map has been produced below, to give a broad visual illustration of where new housing will be focussed under each spatial option between 2020 and 2041 – large circles indicate more housing growth and small circles indicate less. The size of the circle reflects the relevant housing requirement over the entire plan period. (Note: due to the scale of growth in medium and small villages the size of circle used for these settlements is the same).

5.27. To give an indication of the potential amount of housing that each option generates for each tier of the settlement hierarchy, a table shows the potential housing requirement 2020-2041 for each tier based on the medium scale of growth above (657 homes per year) with a 20% housing supply contingency added. Alongside this the current pipeline of housing completions and commitments for each tier and the remaining amount of housing to be planned is also included.

5.28. The colour of each circle on the map reflects the colour of each tier of the settlement hierarchy in the table.

### **Option A: Local Plan Strategy**

5.29. This option is based on a continuation of the strategy in the currently adopted Local Plan 2019. It focuses significant growth towards the Market Towns in line with the current Local Plan strategy. Settlements adjoining the Leicester Urban Area and Large Villages accommodate a broadly similar level of housing growth overall, but due to the relatively low number of commitments in the Large Villages, the amount of additional homes to be planned/allocated in the new Local Plan would be higher than in the settlements adjoining Leicester.

## Option A - Local Plan Strategy



Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Housing Requirement 2020-2041 (Option A)	Current Housing Completions/ Commitments	Housing Remaining to be Planned
Adjoining Leicester Urban Area	2,627	1,668	959
Market Towns	8,124	6,176	1,948
Large Villages	3,241	1,320	1,921
Medium Villages	865	355	510
Small Villages	1,110	703	407
Other	590	205	385
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,556</b>	<b>10,427</b>	<b>6,129</b>

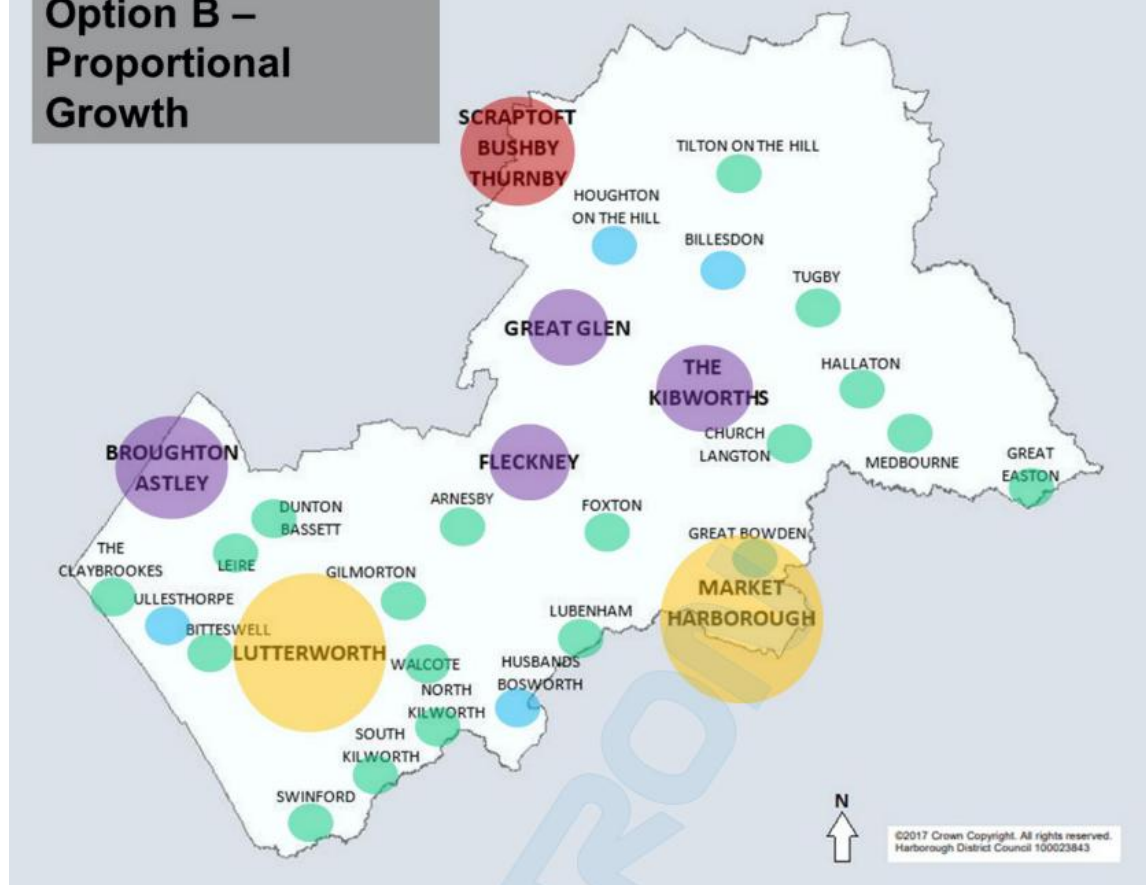
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall development would be directed to sustainable locations.</li> <li>• It is less likely to be dependent on delivery of new strategic infrastructure (which could delay delivery) compared to some other potential options.</li> <li>• The approach may present opportunities to improve existing infrastructure capacity.</li> <li>• Services, facilities and businesses in existing sustainable settlements, including town and village centres, would be supported.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sticking with the existing strategy may not respond to development capacity in all larger settlements or opportunities presented by strategic sites.</li> <li>• This strategy may not make the best use of available land as it focuses on where growth has already been planned, meaning that the most appropriate sites may already be delivering, have planning permission or be allocated.</li> <li>• The amount of new development close to Leicester is lower than the District's contribution to Leicester's unmet housing need.</li> <li>• It may constrain the ability to respect or orientate growth to existing settlement form, delivering growth further and further away from town and village centres with potentially a strong reliance on car usage.</li> <li>• The strategy may impact on existing Green Wedge and Area of Separation designations.</li> <li>• The approach is based on whole plan figures which included a large amount of speculative development. Where certain settlements experienced high levels of speculative development prior to the Local Plan's adoption, this would be perpetuated.</li> </ul>

### **Option B: Proportional growth (Census 2021 household numbers)**

5.30. This option is based on proportional growth. It spreads development according to the number of households in each settlement.

5.31. This option reduces the amount of growth in settlements at the top end of the hierarchy and increases growth at the lower end, particularly in the Medium Villages, Small Villages and Other settlements which see their highest levels of growth under this option compared to the other options. The key differences compared to Option A: Local Plan Strategy is a significantly reduced role for settlements adjoining the Leicester Urban Area; a reduced role of Market Towns; and greater amounts of growth for the Large, Medium, Small and Other Villages/Settlements.

## Option B – Proportional Growth



Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Housing Requirement 2020-2041 (Option B)	Current Housing Completions/ Commitments	Housing Remaining to be Planned
Adjoining Leicester Urban Area	1,668	1,668	0
Market Towns	7,026	6,176	850
Large Villages	3,862	1,320	2,542
Medium Villages	1,026	355	671
Small Villages	1,619	703	916
Other	1,356	205	1,151
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,556</b>	<b>10,427</b>	<b>6,129</b>



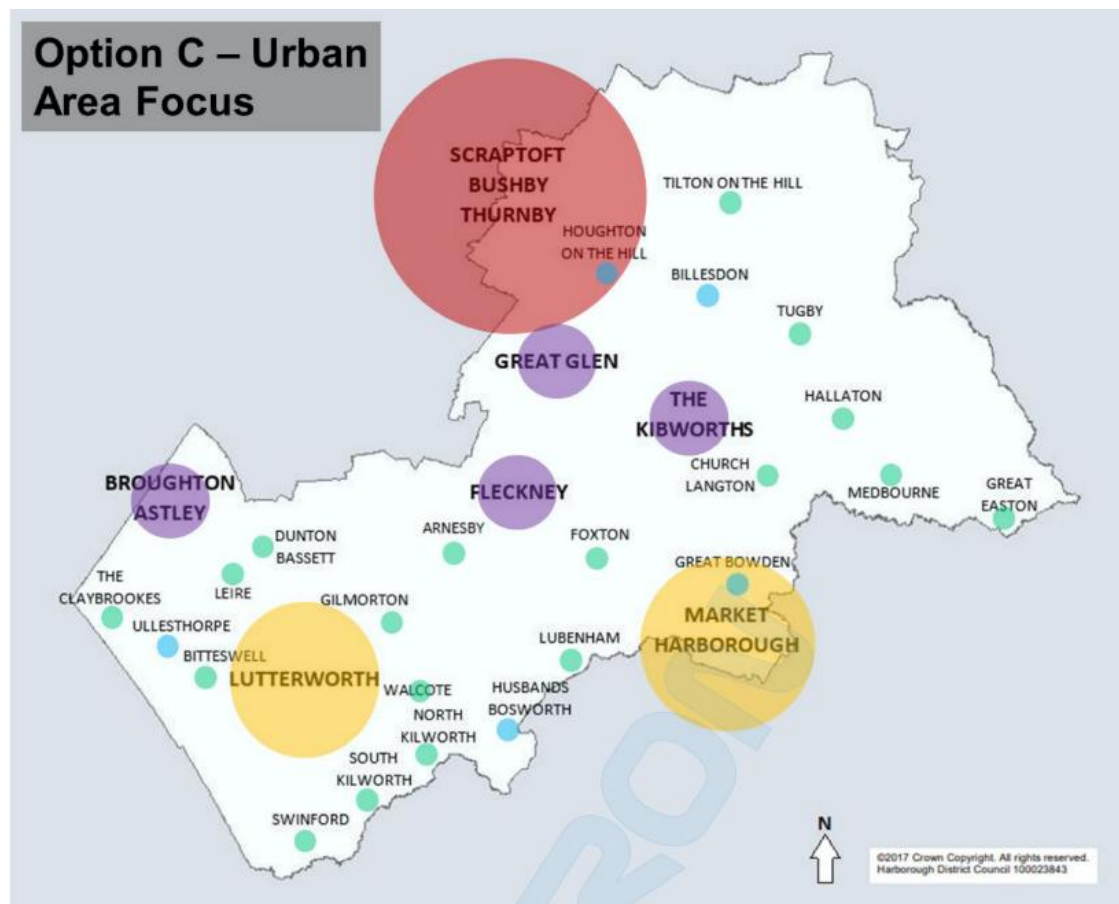
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under this option, the level of housing growth generally reflects the size of the settlements.</li> <li>• The impact of growth is spread more evenly across the District.</li> <li>• With development spread more across all settlements, the option could help sustain rural services and businesses.</li> <li>• Development under this option could be perceived as a 'fair' distribution of housing growth.</li> <li>• Given the spread of development, it would be well suited to fulfil NPPF requirement for 10% growth on small sites of 1ha or less.</li> <li>• This option is more likely to sustain a steady rate of housing delivery than very large-scale growth focussed in one or two locations.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The option sees a high proportion of development in less sustainable tiers of the settlement hierarchy.</li> <li>• With a relatively low proportion of growth adjoining the Leicester Urban Area, the opportunity to locate development in the most sustainable part of the District may be missed.</li> <li>• Similarly, housing growth does not make the most of proximity to employment opportunities within the Leicester Urban Area.</li> <li>• Given the spread of development under this option, it creates the greatest reliance on car and lowest opportunity to access sustainable transport.</li> <li>• It may be challenging to support increased service capacity (e.g. school places, medical centres) due to dispersed nature of growth.</li> <li>• Similarly, the option may not be most effective in delivering affordable housing in appropriate locations.</li> <li>• This option has the most potential to affect the character of smaller settlements.</li> <li>• It has the potential to exacerbate rural isolation unless public transport improvements become viable. In addition, growth is likely to be too dispersed to generate active travel opportunities.</li> </ul>

### Option C: Urban Area Focus

5.32. This option focuses development towards the District's most sustainable locations: the settlements adjoining the urban area of Leicester (Scraptoft/Thurnby/Bushby). Sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500 homes in [Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(SHELAA\)](#) are not included in this option. They are considered through Option D: Strategic Sites (see below).

5.33. This option seeks to focus as much growth as possible towards settlements adjoining the urban area of Leicester with lower levels of growth in the rest of the District.

## Option C – Urban Area Focus



Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Housing Requirement 2020-2041 (Option C)	Current Housing Completions/ Commitments	Housing Remaining to be Planned
Adjoining Leicester Urban Area	5,935	1,668	4,267
Market Towns	6,973	6,176	797
Large Villages	2,117	1,320	797
Medium Villages	593	355	238
Small Villages	734	703	31
Other	205	205	0
Total	16,556	10,427	6,129

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option focuses growth on the most sustainable settlements (i.e. adjoining the Leicester Urban Area).</li> <li>• This option would lead to shorter journeys to access jobs and services in the City and provide potential opportunities for sustainable transport improvements into Leicester.</li> <li>• It maximises development opportunities in locations closest to the Leicester Urban Area and its wide range of higher order services, facilities and employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Development close to Leicester responds to the District's contribution to Leicester City's unmet housing need.</li> <li>• Growth in these settlements may improve the range and capacity of local services/facilities.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlements adjoining the Urban Area would have their highest levels of growth under this option which could impact on current Green Wedges and Area of Separation designations.</li> <li>• In terms of employment, there is no existing economic centre in these settlements so there would be a reliance on new employment areas and/or improved transport links to the City.</li> <li>• There may be a need for more small sites to come forward to fulfil requirement for 10% of allocations to be on sites of 1ha or less.</li> <li>• By concentrating growth, the development potential within other sustainable locations may not be realised.</li> <li>• Further development could exacerbate transport issues in the local area and into the City unless sustainable transport/active travel solutions are provided.</li> </ul>

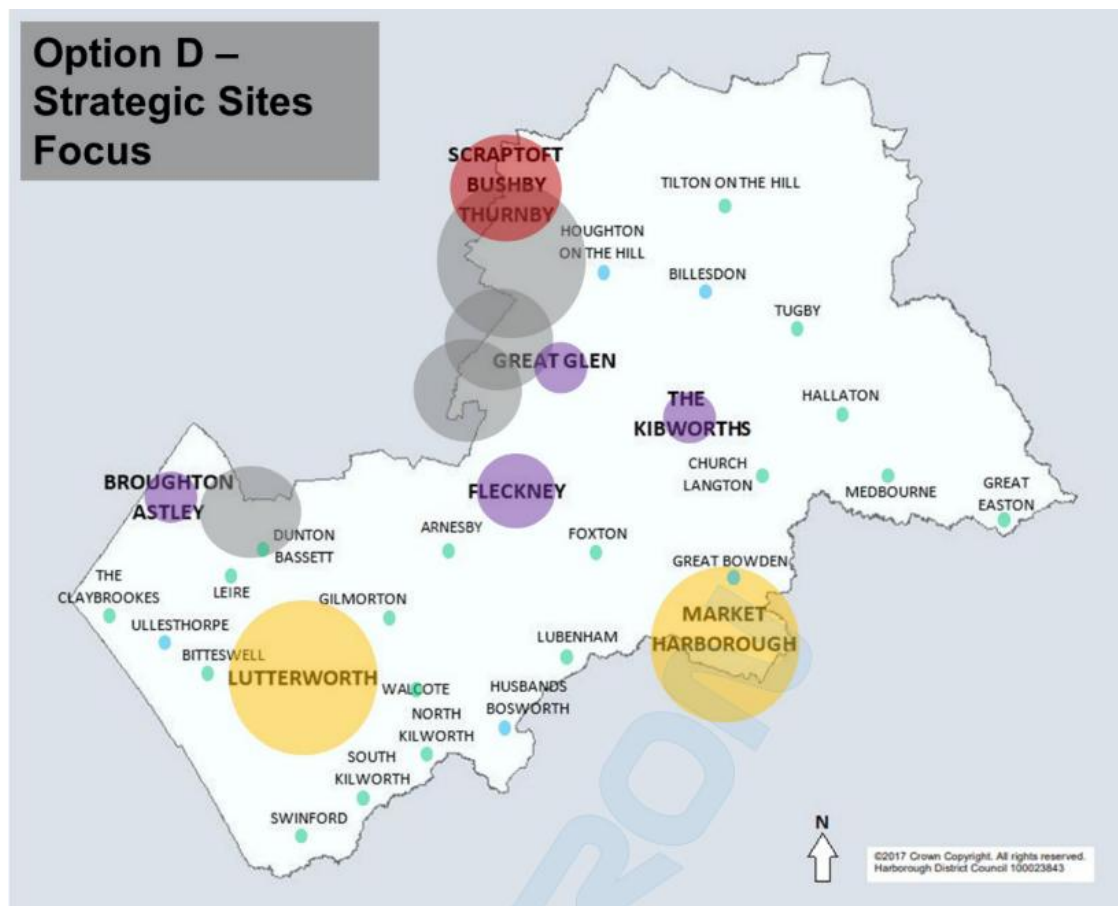
### **Option D: Strategic Sites Focus**

5.34. This option focuses development towards large strategic sites capable of accommodating more than 1,500 homes in total from the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. These large strategic sites are generally located around the South and East of the Leicester Urban Area and may require strategic infrastructure to be delivered. The sites are:

- Farmcare Estate, Stoughton (SHELAA site reference: 21/8229)
- Land at Stretton Hall Farm, Chestnut Drive, Great Glen (SHELAA reference: 21/8093)
- Land at Newton Harcourt (Newton Croft) (SHELAA site reference: 21/8178)
- Whetstone Pastures Garden Village, Willoughby Waterleys (SHELAA site reference 21/8217)
- Land east of Broughton Astley and North of Dunton Bassett and Ashby Magna (SHELAA site reference: 21/8192)

5.35. This option seeks to focus as much growth as possible into large Strategic Sites, with less growth in the rest of the District.

## Option D – Strategic Sites Focus



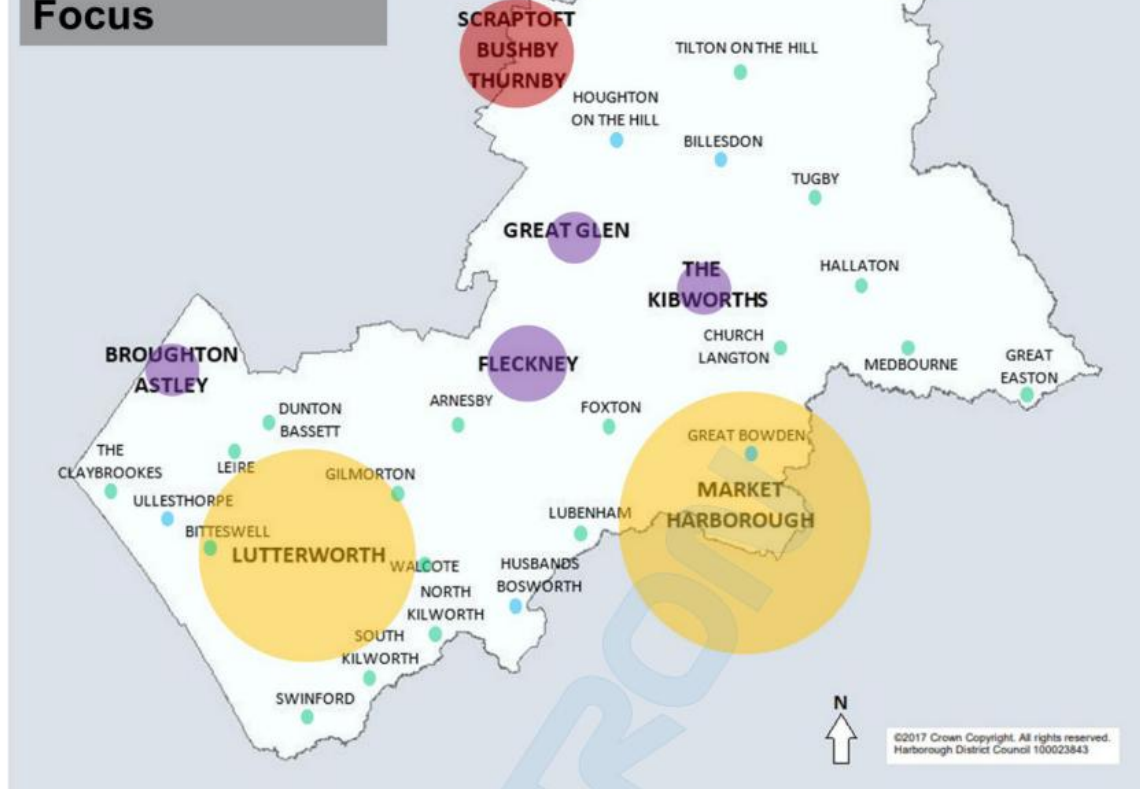
Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Housing Requirement 2020-2041 (Option D)	Current Housing Completions/ Commitments	Housing Remaining to be Planned
Strategic Sites	6,129	0	6,129
Adjoining Leicester Urban Area	1,668	1,668	0
Market Towns	6,176	6,176	0
Large Villages	1,320	1,320	0
Medium Villages	355	355	0
Small Villages	703	703	0
Other	205	205	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,556</b>	<b>10,427</b>	<b>6,129</b>

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In bringing forward strategic sites, this option would establish a strategy for subsequent plan periods to carry forward.</li> <li>• It has the potential to deliver social benefits insofar as it would deliver Leicester's unmet housing need close to where it is needed.</li> <li>• Strategic sites have a critical mass which could enable the delivery of strategic and local infrastructure (e.g. schools, healthcare, open space, sustainable travel) which helps internalise some of the more direct impacts development can have on existing areas and infrastructure.</li> <li>• A focus on strategic sites presents the opportunity to plan comprehensively (placemaking) to create well designed places, with a focus on sustainability and active travel.</li> <li>• There is an opportunity to ensure employment land is incorporated into these strategic sites resulting in the co-location of jobs and homes which could complement employment opportunities within the Leicester Urban Area and potentially reduce the need to travel.</li> <li>• Further economic growth opportunities as a result potential new strategic infrastructure could emerge.</li> <li>• The pressure for growth in other less sustainable settlements would be relieved particularly in the long term.</li> <li>• This option is the most aligned with the Strategic Growth Plan.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is uncertainty around timescales relating to strategic sites and how much development is deliverable within the plan period to 2041.</li> <li>• Delivery of strategic sites can be vulnerable to delay, particularly in relation to provision of strategic infrastructure, including strategic transport infrastructure.</li> <li>• With a focus on strategic sites, which typically have long lead-in times to deliver homes, it may be challenging to maintain supply of homes in the short/medium term across the District.</li> <li>• No new development in other tiers of the settlement hierarchy beyond those already committed could impact on meeting local needs in the longer term.</li> </ul>

### **Option E: Market Town Focus**

5.36. This option focuses growth towards the Market Towns (Lutterworth and Market Harborough) with less growth in the rest of the District.

## Option E – Market Town Focus



Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Housing Requirement 2020-2041 (Option E)	Current Housing Completions/ Commitments	Housing Remaining to be Planned
Adjoining Leicester Urban Area	1,668	1,668	0
Market Towns	12,305	6,176	6,129
Large Villages	1,320	1,320	0
Medium Villages	355	355	0
Small Villages	703	703	0
Other	205	205	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,556</b>	<b>10,427</b>	<b>6,129</b>

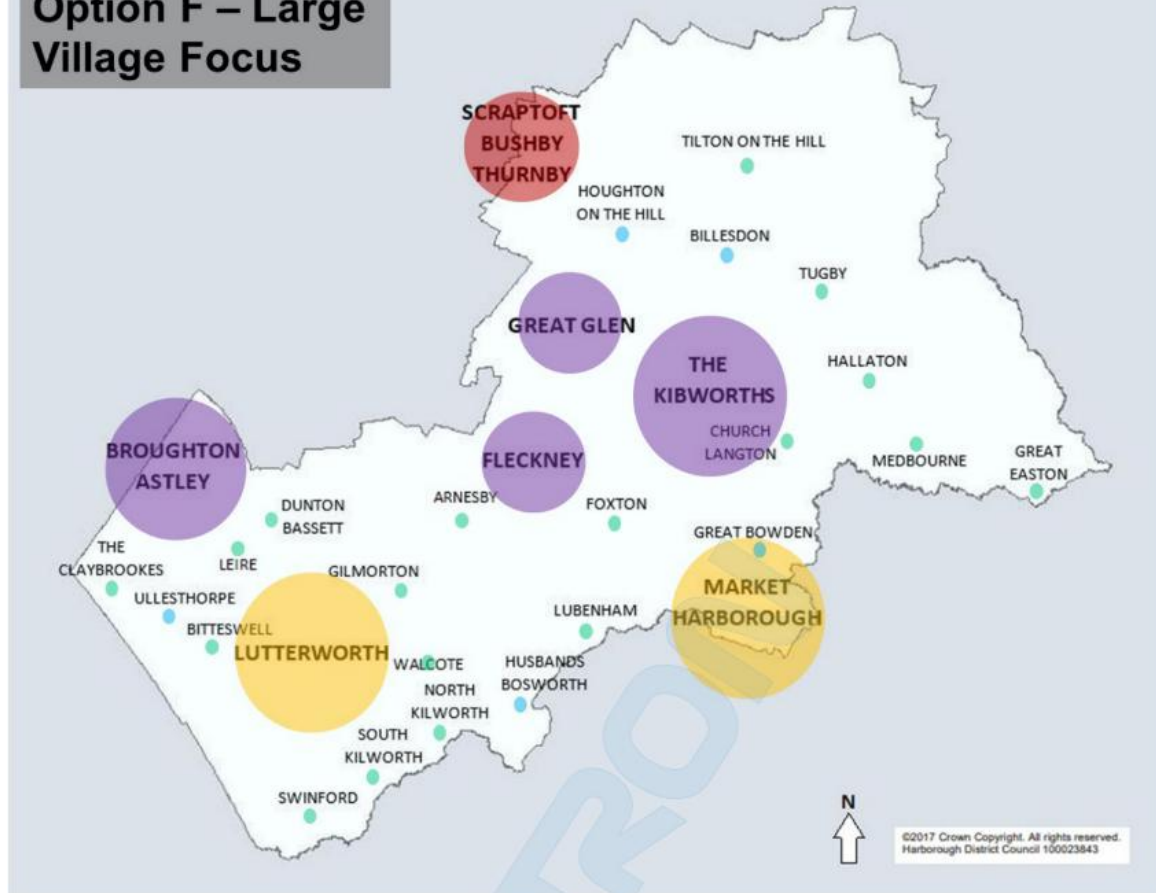
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option has the potential to promote and deliver active travel alongside development.</li> <li>• Development could support the long-term economic health and vitality of the District's two town centres.</li> <li>• There may be an opportunity to alleviate pressure on Market Harborough town centre by providing more local services and facilities to north of Market Harborough (where most potential development sites are located).</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under this option there would be no additional planned growth adjoining the Leicester Urban Area which is the most sustainable part of the District.</li> <li>• Potential allocations are increasingly distant from town centre, particularly in Market Harborough, and may not relate well to existing settlement form.</li> <li>• Delivering the high and medium scales of growth to 2041 on appropriate sites in the two market towns would be challenging.</li> <li>• Delivering this scale of growth in Market Harborough and Lutterworth would potentially impact on character of, and separation with, nearby villages.</li> <li>• Achieving sustainable transport options and/or active travel solutions between new sites and existing town centre services may be difficult.</li> <li>• With the focus on Market Towns, other villages may not be able to meet their local need for housing in the longer term and secure growth to support or improve local services/facilities.</li> </ul>

### **Option F: Large Village Focus**

5.37. This option focuses growth towards the Large Villages (Broughton Astley, Great Glen, Fleckney, The Kibworths) with less growth in the rest of the District.



## Option F – Large Village Focus



Settlement Hierarchy Tier	Housing Requirement 2020-2041 (Option F)	Current Housing Completions/ Commitments	Housing Remaining to be Planned
Adjoining Leicester Urban Area	1,668	1,668	0
Market Towns	6,176	6,176	0
Large Villages	7,449	1,320	6,129
Medium Villages	355	355	0
Small Villages	703	703	0
Other	205	205	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,556</b>	<b>10,427</b>	<b>6,129</b>



Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The considerable housing capacity of potential sites within the Large Villages is maximised.</li> <li>• The option would support existing and, potentially, the delivery of new infrastructure, services and facilities in Large Villages which act as services centres for lower order settlements.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under this option there would be no additional growth beyond existing housing completions and commitments in more sustainable settlements.</li> <li>• The potential for housing growth within more sustainable locations would not be realised.</li> <li>• By locating growth in Large Villages, access to most higher order services would involve travelling to Market Towns and Leicester Urban Area and encourage use of the private car.</li> <li>• By spreading growth over the four Large Villages, the benefits of large scale or strategic growth may not be realised.</li> </ul>

### *Housing Spatial Options*

*Question 10: Do you agree with the options considered for the location of housing development? Should any of the options be changed or additional options included?*

*Question 11: Which option or options for the location of homes do you consider to be the most appropriate? This could be one of the options or a mix of several.*

## **6. Amount and Location of Employment Growth**

- 6.1. Government policy sets out an economic role for the planning system to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy by ensuring sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.
- 6.2. Harborough District is part of the Leicester and Leicestershire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) and has a close interrelationship with Leicester, other authorities within Leicestershire and adjoining authorities beyond. In terms of employment, Market Harborough and Lutterworth are our main economic centres. The District, particularly the west as home to Magna Park, benefits from its central location at the heart of England with good motorway connections proving popular with companies in the logistics sector.
- 6.3. Delivery of employment land has averaged 0.3 Hectares per year for Offices including Research & Development and 1 Hectare per year for

Industrial & Distribution (excluding strategic warehousing) since 2011, and the density of businesses per 1,000 population remains high which in recent years has supported developments such as the Harborough Innovation Centre and Grown On Centre. The rural and wider economy continues to adapt and diversify, responding to structural economic change including the impact of BREXIT and the COVID19 pandemic.

- 6.4. Government policy requires plans to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt taking into account local business needs, wider opportunities for development and the specific locational requirements of different sectors. As with housing, this requires an appropriate strategy considering reasonable alternatives based on proportionate evidence and taking into account any needs that cannot be met in neighbouring areas (unmet need).
- 6.5. This consultation therefore sets out options for the scale and location of employment growth across the District over the proposed plan period 2020 to 2041.

### Scale of Economic Growth

- 6.6. The starting point for determining the amount of economic growth, or employment land and jobs, we should plan for is an economic needs assessment. [The Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment](#) (HENA) was published in June 2022. This identifies what we need to provide for the period to 2041. Figures are provided in Hectares with an equivalent floorspace in square meters.

Total Employment Needs 2021 - 2041		
Harborough District	Square metres	Hectares
Offices including Research and Development	29,200	8.3
Industrial and Distribution (excluding strategic warehousing)	194,100	48.5
Total	223,300	56.9

- 6.7. The need for strategic warehousing (B8 in units >9,000sqm) has been identified in another separate evidence study (see section below).
- 6.8. The figures above do not take into account development built or lost since 2020, nor do they take account of sites in the pipeline that we expect to come forward in the period to 2031 (e.g. sites allocated for employment in the adopted Local Plan, made Neighbourhood Plans, and planning permissions) including:
  - Airfield Business Park, Market Harborough (Policy MH5 undeveloped part)

- Compass Point Business Park, Market Harborough (Policy MH6 undeveloped part)
- Wellington Business Park, Market Harborough (Policy MH4 allocation)
- East of Lutterworth SDA, Lutterworth (Policy L1e/f allocation)
- Land south of Lutterworth Road/Coventry Road, Lutterworth (Policy L2 allocation)
- Land off Marlborough Drive, Fleckney (Policy F2 allocation)
- Beauchamp Business Park, The Kibworths (Policy K1 allocation)
- Elm Business Park, Broughton Astley (Broughton Astley Neighbourhood Plan Policy EMP1 allocation)

6.9. All existing commitments will contribute towards meeting the need.

How much new employment land is required to be identified to 2041?

	Offices including Research and Development		Industrial and Distribution (excluding strategic warehousing)		Total
	Hectares	Sqm	Hectares	Sqm	
Need to 2041	8.3	29,200	48.5	194,100	56.9 hectares (223,300sqm)
<u>Minus</u> Total (Net) Completions 2020/21 – 2022/23	-0.5	-301	4.1	12,629	3.6 hectares (12,328sqm)
<u>Minus</u> (Net) Commitments at 31/3/23	17.2	70,900	45.3	157,656	62.5 hectares (228,556sqm)
Residual requirement to 2041	<b>-8.4</b>	<b>-41,399</b>	<b>-0.9</b>	<b>+23,815</b>	<b>-9.2 hectares (-17,584sqm)</b>

Shading denotes an over-supply

6.10. Taking account of supply shows that the amount of new land needed to 2041 (the residual requirement) is negative which means we already have enough land identified for both offices and industrial uses. However, looking longer term to 2051 and taking into account the current oversupply the HENA indicates that we will need to plan for an additional 10.2 hectares. This is driven by a need for more industrial land.

6.11. Neighbouring Leicester City has an unmet industrial need to 2036. To meet Government requirements, the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities commissioned consultants to prepare an [Employment Distribution Paper](#) apportioning the unmet industrial need to neighbouring districts. This evidence, which informed the Statement of Common Ground, suggests there should be no increase to Harborough's employment requirement. The situation regarding any unmet employment needs in the FEMA beyond 2036 is unknown.

6.12. Taking the above into account three alternative options for the scale of employment growth have been identified:

	Scale of Growth	Justification
Option A	Make no additional allocations of employment land in Harborough District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the basis that there is evidence of an over-supply</li> </ul>
Option B	Adopt a longer-term approach and allocate additional land for employment to maintain a flexible supply and support sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harborough's employment need is forecast to increase beyond the plan period to 2051.</li> <li>Unmet need may arise in the FEMA beyond 2036.</li> <li>To counteract strong pressure for housing land, and the comparatively marginal viability and historically long delivery periods for employment development.</li> <li>To ensure employment land is an integral part of any planned growth of sustainable settlements</li> </ul>
Option C	Plan for greater growth to meet any enhanced economic aspirations or regeneration priorities for the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To attract new employers (inward investment) to the District to enhance the prosperity and resilience of the local economy.</li> <li>To have regard to Harborough's <a href="#">Economic Development Strategy</a> (2018-23) which is currently under review.</li> </ul>

6.13. Any growth above the HENA level, for example under Option C, may require further evidence and could increase the District's housing requirement.

### *Scale of Employment Growth*

*Question 12: Is the HENA an appropriate evidence base on which to formulate our employment land policies? If not, why not?*

*Question 13: Which option do you consider most appropriate to include in Harborough's new Local Plan?*

*Question 14: If Option B or C, are there any other evidence base studies which are required? If so, why?*

*Question 15: Are there any other options that we could consider?*

## Options for the Location of Employment Growth

6.14. If additional employment land is to be planned for, we need to consider where growth will go and how it will be delivered. Government policy requires local plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development.

6.15. The current focus for employment development is within and adjoining Market Harborough and Lutterworth, and to a lesser extent some of the District's larger villages. Going forward any distribution of employment growth will need to address local business needs and be informed by the outcome of this consultation and further work.

6.10. Depending on the scale of growth, three broad locational options have been identified:

Option A: Intensifying the density of employment uses in existing employment areas in appropriate and sustainable locations. This option focuses on making more efficient use of land and recognises the marginal viability of employment development in Harborough District

Option B: Continue with the current approach of focussing new employment land in the District's main economic centres (Market Harborough, Lutterworth) and larger sustainable settlements. This would concentrate growth in our most sustainable settlements which accommodate or are most accessible to the resident workforce.

Option C: Align new employment land provision with areas of significant housing growth. This would achieve a balance of jobs and homes in areas of significant growth, be that settlements or strategic sites.

6.16. These options have been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal [link to be inserted]. Each of the above options would integrate with the preferred spatial strategy to deliver employment growth that also addresses the other emerging objectives of the Plan.

6.11. Once we have identified a Preferred Strategy for distributing growth, we will need to consider which sites are the most appropriate. A long list of sites has been identified through the SHELAA, this includes relatively few sites proposed for a single economic use (except strategic distribution) and a greater number for a mix of economic uses either with or without housing development. Amongst the long list of sites, the capacity for employment is greatest in larger villages with relatively few opportunities in or adjoining Market Harborough and Lutterworth or which were assessed as deliverable in the short term (i.e. 0-5 years).

- 6.12. Alongside the allocation of any new employment sites, policies that protect existing employment areas will be retained. Further evidence may be required in this regard.
- 6.13. Currently we also have specific policies for Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground and Leicester Airport. These recognise the importance and specialist nature of these sites and control development to manage its impact on their rural locations. A continuation of this approach is envisaged going forward.

#### *Location of Employment Growth*

*Question 16: Which option do you consider most appropriate to include in Harborough's new Local Plan?*

*Question 17: Are there any other options that we could consider?*

*Question 18: Is the approach to Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground and Leicester Airport appropriate? If not, why not.*

#### **Strategic Storage and Distribution uses**

- 6.14. Harborough, specifically areas to west of the District along the M1 corridor, is a very attractive location for strategic storage and distribution uses (strategic B8 in units >9,000sqm) or large warehouses. It falls within what is known as the 'golden triangle' for the sector due to its central location and excellent access to the M1, M6, A5 and A14 (the Strategic Road Network). The sector is dynamic, globally driven and its' functional requirements change to respond to business and society's demands.
- 6.15. Interest in warehousing in the district has been high since the early 1990's when Magna Park at Lutterworth was first established, and in recent years with its significant extensions known as Magna Park North and Magna Park South which are well under construction.
- 6.16. Strategic warehousing and logistics is an acknowledged strategic cross boundary issue for local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire who, together with the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, have collectively commissioned evidence on the sector.

#### **Scale of Strategic Warehousing Growth**

- 6.17. The [Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and Change \(April 2021\)](#) study forecasts future need for strategic warehousing (B8 in units >9,000sqm) to 2041 and 2051.

- 6.18. The study recommends that Leicester & Leicestershire need to provide for circa 2,570,000sqm of additional floorspace between 2020 and 2041. Based on 43% of future need at rail-served sites, 1,106,000sqm is needed at rail-served sites and 1,466,000sqm at non-rail served sites.
- 6.19. The study has a base date of 1st April 2020. Taking into account the supply at that time (land with planning permission, allocations, and vacant units) there was a remaining balance of 768,000sqm (or approximately 307Ha) at rail served sites and 392,000 sqm (or approximately 112Ha) at non-rail served sites which should be planned for to 2041. Joint monitoring by the authorities has since updated the supply position on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 which reduces the amount to planned for rail served sites to 718,875sqm and 301,293sqm at non-rail served sites.
- 6.20. Rather than split the requirement by District the study identifies general broad areas across Leicestershire, termed Areas of Opportunity, where strategic warehousing could be located. Area of Opportunity 6 (M1 corridor south of Leicester) impacts on Harborough District and is identified for non-rail served provision only. The amount of growth to be apportioned to Areas of Opportunity has not yet been agreed with other local authority partners in Leicester and Leicestershire.

### **Options for the Location of Strategic Warehousing**

- 6.21. Harborough and local authority partners have entered into a [Statement of Common Ground relating to Strategic Warehousing and Logistics](#) (Sept 2021). The SoCG sets out 'next steps' for planning for the future needs of the sector to 2041.
- 6.22. A joint evidence study to consider the apportionment of the rail and non-rail served shortfall within the sub-region is currently underway. This will inform an approach to meeting the Leicester & Leicestershire need.
- 6.23. Harborough's current approach (set out in the adopted Local Plan) focuses all strategic warehousing growth at Magna Park in the form of the two extensions which are currently under construction. However, Area of Opportunity 6 encompasses a wider geographical area. In addition, current policy safeguards Magna Park for strategic warehousing including ancillary uses in units greater than 9,000sqm.

### *Approach to Strategic Warehousing*

*Question 19: Is the Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and Change (April 2021) study an appropriate evidence base on which to formulate policy for strategic warehousing? If not, why not?*

*Question 20: Is the approach to focus strategic warehousing at Magna Park still appropriate? If not, why not?*

*Question 21: Should uses other than strategic warehousing or other flexibility be allowed at Magna Park to ensure it can adapt to the market needs of the sector? If so, what, and why?*

## **7. Small and Medium Housing Sites Requirement**

- 7.1. National Policy requires us to identify sufficient land to accommodate at least 10% of the Local Plan housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare unless it can be shown there are strong reasons why this cannot be achieved.
- 7.2. As of 1 April 2023, there were 275 homes already committed or allocated in Neighbourhood Plans on sites of one hectare or less. There are 53 sites in the SHELAA of one hectare or less with the potential to provide about 700 dwellings. However, not all of these sites may be appropriate for development.
- 7.3. We may need to consider opportunities to find smaller sites to provide housing but they must be in sustainable locations. One potential option is to sub-divide larger sites to allow for small and medium-sized housebuilders to provide diversity in the housing market.

### *Small and Medium Housing Sites Requirement*

*Question 22: How should we diversify the housing market in the District to meet the requirement to provide more housing on smaller sites (one hectare or less in size)?*

*Question 23: If you have promoted a site for development, would you consider sub-dividing the site to allow small and medium housebuilders or self-builders to enter the housing market?*

## **8. Call for Sites**

- 8.1. Alongside this consultation the Council is running a Call for Sites. The Call for Sites is an opportunity for landowners, developers, agents, and site promoters to submit sites within or partially within Harborough District which they consider have potential for development.
- 8.2. National policy requires the Council to have a clear and up-to-date understanding of potential development land in the District. The Council carried out a Call for Sites between March and June 2021. An initial



assessment of these sites has been carried out in accordance with Government Guidance through the [Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(SHELAA\)](#) and Sustainability Appraisal [link to be inserted]. We are aware of the sites submitted for consideration in 2021 and they should not be resubmitted again through this Call for Sites process.

- 8.3. The Council would welcome the submission of potential new sites for a wide range of land uses such as:
- Housing including:
    - General housing
    - Specialist housing for older people
    - Affordable housing only (e.g. rural exception sites)
    - Build to rent
    - Self-build and custom housebuilding
    - Gypsy and Traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation
  - Employment including:
    - Office
    - Industrial
    - Non-strategic warehousing
    - Large warehousing (i.e. strategic distribution)
  - Retail
  - Leisure, recreation and community facilities
- 8.4. After this consultation closes, the Council will update the SHELAA and relevant evidence to take account of any new sites submitted as appropriate.
- 8.5. More details and how to submit a site for consideration through the Call for Sites process is available on the Council's website [link to be inserted].
- 8.6. It is important to understand that no decisions have been made on which sites should come forward for development through the new Local Plan at this stage. The SHELAA and Sustainability Appraisal are not decision-making documents and do not allocate sites for development. They form part of the Local Plan evidence base that will be used to help inform the site selection process carried out later in the Local Plan process along with other considerations (see site selection methodology below).

## 9. Site Selection Methodology

- 9.1. The Council has published a Site Selection Methodology [link to be inserted]. This sets out the methodology we intend to follow to assess and compare the suitability of potential development sites. It draws on a range of evidence to help to identify sites that have the greatest potential to deliver environmental, economic and social benefits for the local community.

9.2. There are number of stages to the methodology including:

### **Stage 1 – Identification of sites**

- 9.3. The site selection process will consider sites that are deliverable and developable as assessed through the [Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment](#) (SHELAA).
- 9.4. The current SHELAA includes sites submitted for consideration through the Local Plan process so far. This will be updated to include additional sites submitted through the current Call for Sites process.

### **Stage 2 – Sustainability Appraisal**

- 9.5. For each developable site, the sustainability appraisal considers a range of social, environmental and economic factors. The approach taken, list of factors considered and site assessments undertaken so far are available in the Sustainability Appraisal report [link to be inserted] published alongside this consultation.

### **Stage 3 – Assessment of sites against the preferred spatial strategy**

- 9.6. The Council is consulting on a range of potential options for the scale and distribution of development (see section 5). The outcomes of this consultation and further work will then inform the Council's Preferred Spatial Strategy which may be one of the options above or a hybrid containing elements from different options.
- 9.7. Sites will be assessed to determine whether they could contribute to meeting the preferred spatial strategy. Sites that fall outside of the preferred spatial strategy will not be taken further forward in the site selection process.

### **Stage 4 – Technical Assessment and Deliverability of Sites**

- 9.8. At this stage numerous technical details will be examined and an assessment of the delivery of the sites carried out. Factors that will be considered include constraints, infrastructure, deliverability and viability, and place-making.

### **Stage 5 - Emerging new Local Plan policies and Neighbourhood Plan policies**

- 9.9. Consideration will be given to emerging new Local Plan policies and Neighbourhood Plans.

### **Stage 6 – Site Appraisal Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 9.10. The final stage of the process is to draw conclusions and to make recommendations about the suitability of the site for inclusion in the new Local Plan, informed by the previous stages above.

#### *Site Selection Methodology*

*Question 24: Do you agree with the stages in the site selection methodology?*

*Question 25: Are there any other factors you think should be considered when selecting sites for development?*

## **10. Strategic Green Designations**

- 10.1. The locational strategy of the Local Plan is not just about where new development should be located. It is also about identifying locations that should be protected from development.
- 10.2. The current Local Plan includes Green Wedge, Areas of Separation and Countryside designations. Green Wedges have long been used in Leicester and Leicestershire as a tool to influence and direct development. They are important strategic areas designated to prevent the merging of settlements, guide development form, provide access from urban areas to green spaces/open countryside and provide recreational opportunities. There are two Green Wedges in the current Local Plan.
- 10.3. Areas of Separation perform the important function at the localised level of protecting the identity and distinctiveness of settlements by preventing them from merging. Countryside is generally those areas of the District outside the built-up area of larger settlements which are not subject to other designations such as Green Wedge or Area of Separation.
- 10.4. We recognise that these are longstanding designations. However, they may need to be reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose and are not acting as an inappropriate constraint to sustainable development. Any review will consider areas designated through Neighbourhood Plans.

#### *Strategic Green Designations*

*Question 26: Do you agree the existing approach of using Green Wedges, Areas of Separation and Countryside designations to manage development?*

*Question 27: Should the detailed boundaries of Green Wedge and Areas of separation be reviewed to take account of any new Local Plan allocations where appropriate to do so?*

## **11. Design Quality**

- 11.1. Government policy is clear that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and the development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and creates better places in which to live and work.
- 11.2. Since our current Local Plan was adopted in 2019, government has placed greater emphasis in national policy on the design quality of new development and has published the [National Design Guide](#) and [National Model Design Code](#).
- 11.3. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act goes further by requiring every local authority have a design code in place covering their entire area (once enacted by secondary legislation). These area-wide codes are expected to act as a framework for subsequent detailed design codes to come forward, prepared for specific areas or sites and led either by local planning authorities, neighbourhood plan groups or by developers. Through our approach to the new plan, we need to respond locally to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and the potential requirement for an area-wide design code for Harborough District.
- 11.4. Currently our adopted Local Plan 2019 contains a design policy setting out the expectation that all development should achieve a high standard of design quality to ensure it is both sustainable and attractive. It aims to safeguard and improve the character of the District and achieve well designed places that relate well to their environment, are attractive and safe, and offer an improved quality of life for those that live and work in the District. The district also has a [Development Management SPD](#) which includes guidance on design principles, and advice on different types of development e.g. residential, commercial and development in different circumstances.
- 11.5. The Local Plan also encourages neighbourhood plans to develop appropriate design guides, as they can take into account the special qualities of each area. Site specific Master Plans are also required for specific strategic developments allocated through the plan. These should meet the master planning requirements set out in the Local Plan and be informed by key design principles, an independent design review and community consultation.

- 11.6. Design guides and codes can be produced as part of a plan (e.g. local plan or neighbourhood plan) or as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).
- 11.7. A design code is an illustrated set of design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters (or rules) for the physical development of a site or area that should build upon a design vision such as a masterplan or other design / development framework for an area or site. A design guide is less prescriptive or strict, providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice.

### *Design Quality*

*Question 28: Is preparing a district-wide design code, related to an updated design policy in the Local Plan, an appropriate approach?*

*Question 29: Do you consider further design codes to be necessary, if so, what should they cover?*

*For example:*

- Large development sites.*
- Locations / settlements identified for significant development.*
- Particular character areas such as town centres, village centres, suburbs.*
- Specific topics such as climate change and sustainable development.*

# Environment and Sustainability Policies

## 12. Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

- 12.1. Climate change is a cross-cutting theme which impacts on all aspects of new Local Plan policy. Presenting growing risks, globally and locally, it is widely accepted that human activity is the main reason for increased concentration of greenhouse gases and rising global temperatures. Unless steps are taken it will impact not just this but also future generations.
- 12.2. Locally, the more visible impacts of rising temperatures include more extreme weather events including flooding and changes in air and soil quality. The response to the challenge posed by climate change affects many aspects of life and society, several of which can be influenced positively by the new Local Plan. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and in 2021 published its Climate Emergency Action Plan for the period 2022 – 2030 which is in the process of being updated. The implications of the Council's [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) will need to be incorporated into the Local Plan, its spatial strategy and individual policies.
- 12.3. National planning policy is clear that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate by helping to shape places in ways that contribute to “radical reductions” in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience. As part of that, it is tasked with supporting renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- 12.4. Whilst the Local Plan cannot do everything (it has very limited influence over existing buildings, for example), it should ensure that significant new development is directed to locations that are sustainable or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Local plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change alongside policies supporting appropriate measures to build future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.
- 12.5. As with many aspects of planning policy, it is important to establish an evidence base so that an appropriate policy response can be formulated. Recognising that Climate Change is a strategic, cross-boundary challenge, the Leicester and Leicester local authorities are currently in discussion about the scope of a potential joint climate change/zero carbon study which would look at the scope of what can be done through local plans to address climate change.

12.6. In the meantime, it is expected that the new Local Plan policy will contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation through:

- Locating development in the most sustainable locations where walking, cycling and public transport options are, or can be made, available to access local shops and services
- Supporting the generation of energy through renewable and low carbon technologies in appropriate locations (including within developments where possible)
- Improving the energy performance of buildings (without duplicating standards required by Building Regulations or expected future changes to Building Regulations)
- Encouraging the use of sustainable materials and construction methods in new development which encourage waste minimisation and prevention through the reuse and recycling of building materials
- Encouraging passive design measures that reduce the need for artificial lighting, heating, cooling and ventilation systems, through siting, design, materials, layout and building orientation
- Locating and designing new development to take into account flood risk from all sources, so that it does not place itself or other communities at increased risk of flooding
- Supporting to the use of sustainable drainage systems which contribute to green and blue Infrastructure network where possible
- Minimising water consumption in new development
- Ensuring the incorporation of multifunctional green and blue infrastructure into developments which delivers environmental as well as health and well-being benefits by encouraging active lifestyles
- Promoting sustainable modes of transport/active, giving priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas
- Ensuring the District contributes to a comprehensive network of electric vehicle charging points to support electric modes of transport and emerging technologies
- Supporting an improvement in air quality across the District, particularly in respect of the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) at The Kibworths and Lutterworth, by providing sustainable travel choices to reduce the reliance on the private car.

12.5. In essence, most policies in the new Local Plan will have a role in addressing climate change and delivering sustainable development. It is likely that national planning policy and guidance in respect of climate change and zero carbon ambitions will keep evolving as the Local Plan is progressed. Such changes will be taken into account alongside relevant evidence in formulating a suite of policies on climate change. It will also be important to understand how any requirements relating to climate change will impact on the viability of development when considered alongside other

policy requirements (e.g. affordable housing, open space provision, biodiversity net gain).

### *Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change*

*Question 30: Are there any other policy approaches to climate change issues that the Local Plan should consider?*

## **13. Flood Risk**

- 13.1. While flood risk is a longstanding issue, climate change will increase the likelihood of extreme flood events occurring more frequently in the future, with the potential to affect residents, businesses, heritage and other assets across parts of the District. Planning has a key role to play in managing and reducing flood risk.
- 13.2. National planning policy is clear that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development is necessary in such areas, it needs to be made safe for its lifetime and not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- 13.3. An up-to-date Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) plays a key role in ensuring that the risk of flooding is taken into account in the preparation of strategic policies, including the location of development and the allocation of sites for development. Given that current SFRA dates from 2017, a new assessment will be undertaken to map and identify sources of flooding across the District. With early engagement of the Environment Agency (EA) and the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), this new assessment will take account of:
  - significant changes to planning policy over the intervening period, particularly relating to calculating the risk of flooding due to climate change
  - requirements set out in Planning Practice Guidance and the Environment Agency SFRA guidance, including Climate Change Allowances
  - latest EA models for the District, including for the Welland catchment (published in 2018).
- 13.4. On completion, the SFRA will be a key piece of evidence in site selection work, allowing the application of a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property. The aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source.



- 13.5. Alongside the site selection work, a policy relating to managing flood risk in the District will be developed which takes account of up-to-date national policy and local evidence. In addition, the current commitment to the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will be retained as part of the new Local Plan. Their potential for providing an effective way of both managing surface water while contributing to biodiversity net gain, through the creation of diverse habitats for wildlife, will be highlighted.

#### *Flood risk*

*Question 31: Do you agree with the Council's intention to undertake an updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to feed into Local Plan preparation?*

### **14. Water Supply and Wastewater Management**

- 14.1. National planning policy makes it clear that strategic policies, as well as setting out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, should make sufficient provision for infrastructure including water supply and wastewater.
- 14.2. Harborough District lies within the Severn Trent Water and Anglian Water areas, both classified as areas of serious water stress, meaning that more water is taken from the environment than the environment can sustain in the long term. Alongside this, new development will have an impact on the wastewater facilities which needs to be considered. To understand more fully the issues around water resources/supply and wastewater network/treatment, a Joint Water Cycle Study Scoping Report is being prepared with Blaby District Council, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council and Hinckley & Bosworth Council. Engaging with key partners such as the EA, LLFA and the water companies (Severn Trent, Anglian Water), the study will look at:
- whether there is enough water resource available to serve the total amount of growth
  - whether the water can get to where it is needed
  - sewage treatment works likely to be impacted by development and their capacity to accommodate growth
  - water quality and environmental impact.
- 14.3. The findings will feed into the selection of an appropriate spatial strategy and the site selection process. It will be the start of a dialogue with the water infrastructure providers and inform policy preparation relating to water supply and wastewater infrastructure to support new development.
- 14.4. Other aspects of the water environment to be covered in policy include:

- the quality of water courses
- the protection of ground water quality (Source Protection Zones)
- the removal of any contamination on development sites that could have an impact on the water environment
- prevention of adverse impact on water environment and its enhancement wherever possible.

### *Water Supply and Wastewater Management*

*Question 32: Do you agree that understanding the water supply and wastewater capacity is important in preparing the Local Plan?*

## **15. Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

- 15.1. The natural environment continues to be impacted by climate change, industry and agriculture, leisure and the need for development. As the current Local Plan acknowledges, Harborough District is relatively poor in biodiversity terms due to the predominance of agriculture. The [Environment Act 2021](#) introduces a mandatory approach to biodiversity net gain (BNG), offering the opportunity to secure improvements to Harborough's biodiversity.
- 15.2. In essence, mandatory BNG means that development will be required to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. It means that most planning permissions granted will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain from January 2024 (April 2024 for small sites). BNG can be delivered both on-site and off-site, on local authority owned or privately owned land and via green-blue infrastructure features. BNG will have to be secured, managed and maintained for at least 30 years.
- 15.3. While current Local Plan policy specifies that development should contribute towards improving protecting biodiversity, the approach to securing mandatory BNG of at least 10% will be embedded in new Local Plan policy to ensure it is delivered locally and appropriately. Local planning authorities can include higher BNG than the statutory minimum (10%) but this would need a local viability assessment to support it.
- 15.4. To help support the recovery of nature and the delivery of BNG, the Environment Act 2021 also introduced a new system of spatial strategies for nature called [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) (LNRS). Across England, there are 48 responsible authorities which will lead on preparing a LNRS for their area. Leicestershire County Council is the responsible authority for preparing the LNRS for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. As well as working closely with Natural England and with the local planning authorities, including Harborough District Council, the County Council will

involve a wide range of groups to ensure the LNRS reflects local priorities and benefits from local knowledge.

- 15.5. The LNRS will set out priorities for nature's recovery, map the most valuable existing areas for nature and map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals. The LNRS is expected to be finalised in spring/summer 2025 and will be a valuable source of evidence in understanding locations for conserving and enhancing biodiversity.
- 15.6. Separate Government guidance will be published on how local authorities will be expected to comply with their duty to take account of the LNRS when preparing local plans. In the meantime, the emerging LNRS will be an important source of evidence in setting out local habitat priorities and in the approach to BNG delivery in the new Local Plan.

### *Biodiversity and Geodiversity*

*Question 33: Do you think agree with the proposed policy approach to biodiversity and geodiversity? Is there anything else we should be considering to enhance biodiversity?*

## **16. Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment**

- 16.1. National planning policy defines the historic environment as all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. The District has a rich and varied historic environment which helps us to understand the past. It is evident in the buildings and spaces and through the stories of the people who lived and worked in them. The historic environment has wider environmental, social cultural and economic benefits. It helps define an area, create a sense of place and serves as a focal point for civic pride, tourism and inward investment. Careful management of the historic environment is necessary to ensure that its importance is recognised and that it can continue to contribute to the on-going evolution of the District.
- 16.2. Heritage assets are part of the environment that are valued for their architectural, historic archaeological and artistic interest. They range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance. Within the District there is a significant number of heritage assets, both designated and non-designated which are a key part of its character. These include 65 scheduled monuments, 6 registered parks and gardens, 1284 listed buildings, 62 designated conservation areas and the

Grand Union Canal in the area has also been separately designated as a Conservation Area. In addition, there are non-designated heritage assets identified through the neighbourhood planning process and through the District-wide Local List of non-designated heritage assets and there are entries on the Historic Environment Record. All these assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

16.3. Conserving the historic environment is the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance. The Local Plan will achieve this through policies which:

- Protect and enhance nationally and locally listed buildings and other identified heritage assets, including the protection and enhancement of key views.
- In addition to the national and local planning policies, where the Council identifies a particular risk to a heritage asset it can consider applying an Article 4 direction. (Article 4 directions are a tool available to the Council which can be used to withdraw permitted development rights from a heritage asset where it is considered necessary in order to safeguard its special architectural or historic interest).
- Achieve creative re-use of heritage assets, so that they continue to contribute to the unique character of their location.
- Encourage all development to contribute to the unique character of the area by protecting and enhancing existing heritage assets. All development should the celebrate local distinctiveness of its location and create memorable places that are visually attractive and offer a unique experience to its users.

### *Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment*

*Question 34: Do you agree with the proposed approach to heritage assets and the historic environment?*

# Health and Well-being Policies

## 17. Healthy communities

17.1. In accordance with the NPPF local planning authorities are expected to prepare planning policies aimed at achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles.

17.2. The NPPF states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has also elevated the importance of the health and wellbeing of our communities when planning for the future.

17.3. The adopted Local Plan currently incorporates health into a range of different topics such as green infrastructure, open space and design.

17.4. In order to consider how to promote healthy lifestyle and improve the well-being of communities we firstly need to consider the social and demographic profile of the District. The Census 2021 contains a lot of information about the District including data about the health of its residents which is summarised as follows:

17.5. Harborough's population profile:

### Age

- Aged 15 years and under 17.6 %
- Aged 16 to 64 years 60.4 %
- Aged 65 years and 22%

### Life Expectancy

- Female life expectancy: 84.7 (above England average of 82.8)
- Male life expectancy: 80.7 (above England average of 78.7)

### General Health

- Very good health 52.8%
- Good health 33.1%
- Fair health 10.6%
- Bad health 2.7 %
- Very bad health 0.7%

17.6. As part of the current evidence gathering process Harborough will work closely with the other Leicestershire authorities and other relevant stakeholders to prepare a Health Impact Assessment to support the preparation of policies for the Local Plan.

17.7. At this stage in the plan preparation process we would like to hear your views regarding what you consider to be the best approach to incorporate health and well-being into the new Local Plan.

17.8. Currently we have identified two options:

- 1) Continue with the current approach of incorporating health and wellbeing with the other themes and issues explored in the Local Plan, such green infrastructure, open space and design codes.
- 2) Based upon evidence create a specific planning policy that encourages healthy lifestyles and improves the well-being of the communities in the District.

### *Healthy communities*

*Question 35: Which of the above options do you think should be pursued? Are there any other options?*

## **18. Blue-Green Infrastructure**

18.1. Blue-green infrastructure (BGI) refers to a strategic and interconnected network of natural and semi-natural features designed to manage and enhance the environmental, social, and economic well-being of a local community or region.

18.2. This infrastructure incorporates a combination of water bodies, such as rivers, lakes, and wetlands (the "blue" elements), as well as green spaces, such as parks, forests, and green roofs (the "green" elements).

18.3. It is a multifunctional approach to urban and rural planning that aims to provide a range of benefits, including flood mitigation, improved water quality, biodiversity conservation, recreational opportunities, and enhanced urban aesthetics. Blue-green infrastructure seeks to promote sustainability, resilience, and quality of life by integrating nature-based solutions into the built environment, ultimately creating more liveable and environmentally friendly places for present and future generations.

18.4. There are several ways in which BGI can improve the health and well-being of communities and provide additional biodiversity opportunities including:

- Urban greening
- Integrating green and blue infrastructure into new developments
- Green and active travel corridors
- Green links from urban to rural areas

6.17. The adopted plan identifies the following interconnected strategic BGI assets:

- The Welland, Sence, Soar, Swift river corridors
- Grand Union Canal
- Dismantled railway lines
- Saddington, Stanford and Eyebrook reservoirs
- Traffic free cycle routes, and long-distance recreational paths and bridleways.

6.18. The Council will work with partners and stakeholders to assess and review these assets within the District and as part of the wider BGI network to identify the best course of action for their protection and enhancement. A recently completed [Open Space Strategy \(2021\)](#) will provide a useful starting point in this BGI review process.

### *Blue-Green Infrastructure*

*Question 36: Do you agree that the existing approach should continue to protect, improve and enhance strategic Blue-green infrastructure within the district?*

*Question 37: Is there an alternative approach to Blue-green infrastructure?*

## **19. Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

19.1. The NPPF considers open space to include all open space of public value that can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. Open spaces can make a positive contribution towards creating a sense of place, improving biodiversity and mitigating climate change. Also, improving access and connections between open spaces to create a green infrastructure network provides important opportunities for sport, recreation and physical activity that improve the health and well-being of communities.

19.2. An up-to-date assessment of the need for open space, sports and recreation facilities is required to inform the preparation of planning policies for the Local Plan, so the Council has updated the [Open Space Strategy \(2021\)](#). This study identifies the different typologies of open space within the District and assesses the quantity, accessibility, quality and value of open spaces up to 2036. The implementation of this strategy is discussed in the [Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation Delivery Plan 2021](#)

19.3. Other recently completed studies include:

- [Built Sports Facility Strategy \(2020\)](#) : Assessment of the need for sports and recreation facilities

- [Playing Pitch Strategy \(2022\)](#) identifies supply and demand for a variety of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities.

19.4. The information collected from these assessments and studies identify the amount and type of open space, sport and recreational provision that is required in the future within the District. Based upon these findings recommendations and standards for development have been suggested in the studies.

19.5. The adopted Local Plan sets standards for open space, sport and recreation requirements for development based on evidence from previous studies. It is proposed that the information and recommendations from the recent studies will inform the planning policy formulation on open space, sport and recreation in the new Local Plan.

### *Open Space, Sport and Recreation*

*Question 38: Based upon this updated evidence do you think we should continue with the similar approach set out in the adopted Local Plan and set standards in planning policies for open space, sport and recreation?*

*Question 39: Is there an alternative approach that you consider to be more appropriate for open space, sport and recreation?*

## **20. Local Green Spaces**

20.1. Open spaces with a local significance for communities can be protected through the Local Green Space designation. National policy specifies that Local Green Space can be designated through the local and neighbourhood plan making process. For an area to be designated as Local Green Space an assessment needs to be carried out to determine whether the site meets the criteria set out in national planning policy.

20.2. The NPPF states that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

20.3. An assessment of Local Green Spaces may be carried out to update the previous study that was carried out in 2013.



20.4. Currently there are 36 Local Green Spaces designated in the adopted Local Plan. In addition, there are 143 Local Green Spaces designated in Neighbourhood Plans. The neighbourhood planning process has given local communities the opportunity to identify Local Green Spaces and prepare policies that preserve and enhance them.

#### *Local Green Space*

*Question 40: Should the new Local Plan identify new areas of Local Green Space or are they more appropriately identified through Neighbourhoods Plans?*

# Housing Needs Policies

## Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA, 2022)

21.1. It is important that new homes delivered provide for an appropriate mix of types, tenures and sizes of homes, including affordable housing (NPPF). The [Housing and Economic Needs Assessment \(HENA, 2022\)](#) includes an assessment of affordable housing need across the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities, and also considers the appropriate mix of housing across the area focusing on sizes of homes required in different tenure groups. The HENA also includes an assessment of need for specialist accommodation for older people and the potential requirements for housing to be built to higher accessibility and wheelchair standards and considers the needs for self and custom build housing and also Gypsy and Traveller needs.

## 21. Affordable Housing

21.2. The NPPF categorises affordable housing into four main types:

- a) **Affordable housing for rent:** owned and managed by a Council or other Registered Provider with rent set at a level which does not exceed 80% of the local market rent or Social Rent set in accordance with the Government's rent policy.
- b) **Starter homes:** new dwellings which are available for purchase by qualifying first-time buyers and are sold at a discount of at least 20% of the market value, subject to a price cap and with restrictions on sale or letting.
- c) **Discounted market sales:** housing which is sold at a discount of at least 20% below market value with eligibility determined by local incomes and house prices and with provisions to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market including shared ownership, equity loans, low cost homes for sale and rent to buy.

21.3. The HENA assessed affordable housing need taking account of the NPPF definition of affordable housing. It found that Harborough's affordable housing need is:

- 254 affordable homes for rent per annum
- 185 affordable home ownership per annum

21.4. Affordable home ownership products include First Homes, Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy. The figures for affordable home ownership represent the highest possible requirement. The HENA analysis states that

the needs for affordable home ownership do not include any reduction due to the availability of market-based initiatives to make homes affordable such as the Help-to-Buy Equity Loan scheme which evidence shows has in the past comprised a significant proportion of new-build delivery. This would significantly reduce the estimated need for affordable home ownership products and therefore point Councils to focus on meeting rented needs where possible. The HENA states that individual local authorities may look to discount a proportion of the identified Affordable Home Ownership numbers to reflect these scenarios.

- 21.5. The Council's approach to meeting the need for affordable housing will be informed by viability evidence for the whole plan and is unlikely to be as high as the need identified by HENA.

### *Affordable Housing*

*Question 41: How should the plan deliver the 254 affordable homes for rent per annum?*

*Question 42: Should Council look to discount the proportion of affordable home ownership dwellings to reflect the scenarios set out above? If so, how should it be discounted?*

## **22. Mix of Housing**

- 22.1. The NPPF requires an assessment of the size, type and tenure of housing needs for different groups in the community to be completed.

- 22.2. The HENA identifies the mix of homes needed in different tenures having regard to demographic changes and how households of different ages occupy homes, together with adjustments to address overcrowding. This is set out in the table below:

	1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3-bedroom	4+ bedroom
Affordable housing (rented)	35%	40%	20%	5%
Affordable home ownership	20%	40%	30%	10%
Market	5%	35%	40%	20%

*Table 1 Table showing the percentage of different bedroom sizes for affordable and market dwellings*

- 22.3. Analysis in the HENA also suggests that the majority of units should be houses rather than flats, with consideration to site specific circumstances. Additionally, it states that the Council should consider the role of bungalows within the mix as such housing can be particularly attractive to older person households downsizing and may help to release larger (family-sized) accommodation back into the market.

### *Mix of Housing*

*Question 43: Should the mix of sizes apply to all developments or only those over a set size threshold?*

*Question 44: How should the plan deal with the demand for bungalows?*

## **23. Older Person and Specialist Housing**

- 23.1. The NPPF makes clear that local planning authorities should seek to address the needs of different groups with specific housing requirements in their communities, including older people and those with disabilities.
- 23.2. The HENA analysis shows that 20.5% of the population across Leicestershire is aged 65+, and that the population aged 65+ is expected to grow by 80,200 persons to 2041. Currently 31% of households across Leicestershire have a long-term health problem or disability, and the number of households with support and care needs is expected to rise over time, driven by demographic changes and a growing older population. The HENA models the needs of households with specialist housing needs. The needs for additional housing units with care are focussed on market housing, with a smaller need for affordable housing units with care as set out in the table below.

<b>Shortfall/surplus by 2041</b>	<b>Need</b>
Housing with support (Market)	893
Housing with support (Affordable)	127
Total housing with support	1021
Housing with care (Market)	428
Housing with care (Affordable)	119
Total housing with care	547
Residential care bedspaces	273
Nursing care bedspaces	391
Total bedspaces	663

*Table 2 Table showing specialist housing needs for older people from 2020-2041*

### *Older Person and Specialist Housing*

*Question 45: Should the plan make specific site allocations for specialist housing, or require a proportion on sites over a specified size threshold?*

23.3. The HENA report also identifies a housing need for Harborough for around 971 wheelchair users up to 2041. Together with the expected growth in residents with mobility problems, as set out in the HENA, this would suggest that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings. The HENA suggests requiring all dwellings meet the M4(2) standard (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and 10%-25% of homes meet M4(3) standard (wheelchair user dwellings) where it is feasible to do so, with a higher proportion in the affordable than market sector.

*Question 46: Should all dwellings be required to meet the M4(2) standard (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and 10%-25% of homes be required to meet the M4(3) standard (wheelchair user dwellings)?*

*Question 47: Should the approach to accessibility standards be different for market housing and affordable homes?*

## **24. Space Standards**

24.1. The NPPF requires planning policies to create places that have a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. It states that policies may make use of the [nationally described space standard](#), where the need for an internal space standard can be justified.

### *Space Standards*

*Question 48: Should this Local Plan include a requirement to use the nationally described space standard?*

## **25. Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers**

25.1. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS, 2015) requires local authorities in producing their local plans to set targets for pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and plots for travelling show people. Local authorities are also required to find sites for the next 5 years against the target and sites or broad locations for at least the next 10 years.

25.2. The most recent evidence in relation to the housing needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was published in May 2017. An updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is likely

to be needed to identify the current and future need for pitches and plots. The Council may need to identify new sites to meet any identified need and would welcome the submission of potential sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation through the Call for Sites process (see section 5).

- 25.3. Once the GTAA evidence has been updated, the Local Plan will need to find sites to accommodate any identified need for gypsy and traveller pitches.

#### *Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers*

*Question 49: How can the Council find sites to accommodate the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches:*

- a) Allocate sites for gypsy and traveller pitches as part of new employment land or housing developments?*
- b) Regularise existing unauthorised sites?*
- c) Extend existing sites?*
- d) Create a new district or county council owned site?*
- e) Other (please explain).*

*Question 50: If we need to allocate sites for new pitches, what size of site should we be seeking to allocate?*

## **26. Self-build and Custom Housebuilding**

- 26.1. Some people want to build or commission their own homes and it is important to ensure communities have the opportunity to do so as part of the Council's strategy for meeting housing need. Such schemes can include individual family homes and community housing projects.
- 26.2. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) requires councils to keep and have regard to a self-build and custom housebuilding register which is a record of the individuals and associations of individuals seeking serviced plots of land in the area to self-build or custom build their own home. The Act places a further duty upon councils to grant permission for enough suitable plots of land to meet the demand in their area. The level of demand is established by the number of entries added to the Council's register during a base period which runs from 31 October to 30 October each year. The local authority then has 3 years from the end of each base period in which to permit an equivalent number of plots.
- 26.3. The Council's register shows that at 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 there were 183 individuals and 1 association on the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding

Register and together they required a total of 185 plots. At this time 27 plots had been granted planning permission to go towards meeting this demand.

### *Self-build and Custom Housebuilding*

*Question 51: How should the Local Plan address meeting demand for self-build and custom housebuilding?*

*Question 52: Should large sites be required to provide a percentage of their plots as serviced plots for self-build?*

*Question 53: Should the plan make site specific allocations for self-build and custom housebuilding?*

### **Local connection test – Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register**

26.4. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) enables relevant authorities to include an optional local connection test to the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding register. This would require any applicants to the self-build register to have a local connection that would be set by the local planning authority. To introduce this test, local planning authorities must have a strong justification. If a local connection test were to be introduced it is proposed to use the same local connection test used by the Council for the Housing Register as set out below.

26.5. *A local connection to join the housing register is:*

*(a) They have normally resided in settled accommodation in the District for at least two years preceding application, (an exception will be made for homeless applicants who do not meet the 2 year residence criteria in Local Connection, where the Council has a statutory duty to discharge to a homeless household).*

*(b) They, or a member of their household is employed on a permanent basis or a temporary contract running for a minimum of twelve months, within the District (confirmation will be required from the employer)*

*(c) Having parents, brothers, sisters or adult children and step equivalents (aged 18+ years) who are living in the District now and have done so far at least the past five years in settled accommodation and where a meaningful relationship exists.*

*(d) They have no local connection but are fleeing violence or threats of violence and have been accepted as priority homeless by the Council.*

*(e) Other special circumstances may exist, and all applications will be considered on their individual circumstances.*

*Question 54: Should the Council decide to introduce a Local connection test, is the Local connection test set out above suitable to use for the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding register?*

*Question 55: Does the Council have strong justification to introduce the local connection test?*



## Town Centres, Retailing, Leisure and Tourism Policies

### 27. Town Centres, Retailing and Leisure

27.1. National policy seeks to promote the vitality of town centres and requires planning policies and decisions to support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities. It advocates taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation which includes promoting their long-term vitality and viability by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that responds to changes in the retail and leisure sectors. As well as allocating a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed (over at least a 10 year period), it emphasises that residential development on appropriate sites can play an important role in supporting the health of town centres.

27.2. Local plans should also define a network and hierarchy of town and retail centres. The current hierarchy is set out in the table below. Centres beyond the administrative boundary are also shown as they potentially have a functional relationship with the District and a role to play in meeting the needs of residents.

Current Town Centre/Retail Hierarchy:

Hierarchy Tier	Within Harborough District	Beyond Harborough District
City Centre		Leicester, Northampton
Town Centre	Market Harborough Lutterworth	Rugby, Kettering, Corby, Wigston, Hinckley, Melton Mowbray, Oakham, Uppingham, Blaby
District centre	Broughton Astley	Oadby, South Wigston, Hamilton, Evington, Narborough, Enderby
Local centre	Kibworth Beauchamp Fleckney, Great Glen	Desborough, Burbage, Stoney Stanton, Cosby, Huncote, Sapcote, Whetstone

27.3. Whilst the District's town and village centres have been evolving over several years, the Covid-19 epidemic greatly accelerated these transformational changes. With an increased number of transactions online, 'High Streets' are no longer just retail centres, but are evolving into destinations where people expect to experience a range of activities, be it going to a park, having a coffee, visiting the gym, enjoying a meal out or visiting a museum. Whilst some of this change is happening organically, it is important that new Local Plan policies support change whilst still ensuring that places remain attractive places, support the needs of local communities, encourage increased visitor numbers and promote an appropriate balance between retail and non-retail uses.

27.4. The current town centre boundaries for Market Harborough and Lutterworth will be reviewed, as will Market Harborough's defined primary shopping area. The policy approach to uses within these boundaries will also be reviewed as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre.

27.5. Town Centre Masterplans have been prepared for both Market Harborough (2022) and Lutterworth (2021) with a remit of ensuring the future viability and vitality of the town centres and securing their role as local destination for retail, leisure and hosting of community networks and events. These masterplans will form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan and its policies relating to the two town centres.

27.6. An up-to-date town centre, retail and leisure study will also be prepared to inform new Local Plan policy. While the scope of the study will encompass the changing role of town centres, it will identify the amount of new retail and leisure floorspace needed over the plan period. This evidence will need to consider the scale and location of additional retail provision needed to support proposed growth across the District. For example, there may be a need for new retail floorspace to be delivered alongside strategic development.

27.7. Key issues which the Local Plan can help address are:

- Positively supporting change within the District's town and local centres, making them attractive places to visit and protecting their character.
- Providing policy flexibility to support the challenges and opportunities faced by each retail centre.
- Allocating land to meet identified needs for retail and mixed-use development.
- Ensuring that strategic development delivers local services and retail facilities to meet day to day needs thus minimising the need to travel.

### *Town Centres, Retailing and Leisure*

*Question 56: Do you agree with the proposed approach to supporting town and village centres?*

## **28. Tourism**

28.1. As part of a prosperous rural economy, the NPPF supports sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside. Building on the District's strengths, one of the aims of the Council's Corporate Strategy is to increase tourism through the showcasing

of the District's culture and heritage. This aspiration will be reflected in the upcoming refresh of the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

- 28.2. Tourism and the visitor economy is seen as a significant and growing sector across Leicester and Leicestershire in the [LLEP Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030 \(2021\)](#). Its potential is reflected in the [Leicester and Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan](#) which is a 5 year plan for further growth in the tourism sector with the aspiration for the county to become a leading leisure and business tourism destination. More locally, the [Visit Harborough](#) website focuses on promoting the District's attractions including market towns, villages, heritage, shopping, eating places and accommodation options to encourage visitors to the area.
- 28.3. The Council will consider how the new Local Plan can support a sustainable tourism economy and promote growth in visitor numbers. Policies to support the enhancement of tourist attractions and the development of new visitor accommodation in appropriate locations will be considered. In doing so the District's main attractions may be identified alongside specific supporting policies. Also work will need to establish the unique selling points and qualities of the District and how policy can support them most appropriately. We will take into account the Councils Economic Development Strategy and other relevant evidence in developing our policy approach.
- 28.4. Growth in tourism, the hospitality sector and the visitor economy is dependent on many aspects of policy. Tourism opportunities and visitor numbers are intrinsically linked with District's cultural and leisure facilities, heritage assets, rural character and its distinctive towns and villages. Policies will need to strike a balance between promoting of tourism and protecting of the character and qualities of the District. Potential impacts on the historic and natural environment, local landscape and residential amenity will need to be considered. Similarly healthy and vibrant town centres with a balance of uses (e.g. shops, cafes, restaurants, leisure activities, parks and open spaces) attract visitors. Therefore, policy to support town centres and an appropriate balance of uses will be important in supporting tourism and visitor activity.

### *Tourism*

*Question 57: Do you agree that the new Local Plan should encourage tourism and the growth in visitor numbers?*

# Transport, Local Services and Infrastructure Policies

## 29. Transport

- 29.1. Government Policy says transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making. In doing so, plans can seek to address any potential transport impacts, encourage more sustainable forms of movement and embrace changing transport technology.
- 29.2. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion, emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in plan-making.
- 29.3. Harborough District is a rural area and the current Local Plan (2019) directs most development to areas which already have capacity to offer sustainable transport choice for local journeys to access services and facilities, such as public transport, walking and cycling.
- 29.4. Parts of the District contain a heavily trafficked road network which experiences congestion, delays and poor air quality, particularly at peak times. There are two Air Quality Management Areas (in Lutterworth and The Kibworths). The only railway station is in Market Harborough giving good access to larger centres such as Leicester and London. The west of the District has good access to the strategic road network including the M1 and A5. The rural nature of Harborough means residents of the District are heavily reliant on private vehicles.
- 29.5. The new Local Plan will need to consider the implications of growth and how best to mitigate any adverse transport impacts. It can encourage growth in locations that have greater access to more sustainable forms of transport.
- 29.6. The Local Plan can strongly influence transport and travel patterns. Minimising the need for journeys using private cars and encouraging more sustainable modes can be achieved through a range of policy approaches and identifying potential allocations in the most sustainable locations.
- 29.7. The plan must be realistic, there will inevitably be a need for people to travel to seek employment, education, shopping, leisure and other services and facilities. The Local Plan should seek to provide growth in a manner that minimises transport impacts.

29.8. Initially, further transport evidence will be required to understand the current pressures on transport and where there are capacity constraints. Growth options will be assessed to understand the transport impacts and implications.

29.9. The development of new policies and allocations will allow the Council to explore options for delivering necessary growth whilst seeking the most sustainable forms of movement and mitigating any adverse impacts identified. There are several potential options including:

Option A: Continue with the approach in the current Local Plan which recognises the rural nature of the District and encourages more sustainable transport modes whilst acknowledging that private cars have an important role for residents. Where adverse impacts are identified at junctions and links, mitigation solutions are required.

Option B: Promote policies that actively encourage sustainable transport. To help shift the emphasis towards more sustainable transport modes consideration could be given to policies which require greater financial contributions towards public transport or improving cycling / walking infrastructure in preference to road and junction upgrades.

Option C: Allow for development and accept that junctions and links will continue to operate above capacity. This may result in 'self-regulating' behaviour where people choose alternatives where routes and junctions become too congested. This approach would place lesser transport constraints on growth but is likely to perpetuate traffic problems on the network.

### *Transport*

*Question 58: Which of the above options or option do you think should be followed in the new Local Plan? Are there any other options to consider?*

## **30. Local Services and Infrastructure**

30.1. Infrastructure planning is an essential part of the Local Plan process. To create sustainable communities we need to ensure development is supported by the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure. By 'infrastructure' we mean essential services and facilities such as schools, health, roads, water, gas, electricity and open space.

30.2. The provision of appropriate infrastructure is an important theme running through national policy. It requires effective and ongoing joint work with relevant bodies so additional infrastructure needs are understood, and local plans are required to set out the infrastructure needed to support the

delivery of the Plan.

- 30.3. The new Local Plan should therefore consider the implications of growth and ensure social and other infrastructure is in place to support the needs of new residents. Large scale growth often has substantial and complex infrastructure requirements. It is therefore vital that the Local Plan adequately plans for this.
- 30.4. The Local Plan will need to identify sites in locations which have the ability to access existing infrastructure (where there is capacity) or provide additional infrastructure through new provision or expansion of existing facilities.
- 30.5. It is therefore important to understand what existing infrastructure is available, and whether it may need to be improved or extended to support new development. The Council will work with infrastructure partners to develop a clear understanding of what infrastructure capacity is available and what will be needed to support new development and use this information to develop an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to sit alongside the Local Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be used to identify the type of infrastructure required, its cost, delivery agency, phasing and funding sources.
- 30.6. To ensure an appropriate range of infrastructure is available in a timely manner, we will carry out new viability testing of the policies and proposals in the plan to ensure the cumulative impact of policies, infrastructure requirements and development costs do not make development unviable.
- 30.7. The Plan may include policies to cover specific types of infrastructure such as water and wastewater, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), transport and open space. Policies relating to allocated sites may also contain site specific infrastructure requirements where appropriate.
- 30.8. We have identified the following potential approaches to local services and infrastructure:
- 30.9. Option A: Continue with current approach of seeking on-site provision and financial contributions to a wide range of infrastructure where new development requires the provision. It ensures that developments support a wide range of services and facilities (including health, education, policing, libraries and other forms of social infrastructure).
- 30.10. Option B: Prioritise infrastructure. This would help to prioritise scarce financial resources towards key infrastructure to be agreed as the Local Plan progresses. This could prioritise certain types of infrastructure helping to focus investment plans of other agencies and support funding bids.

- 30.11. Option C: Focus new development on areas where there is existing capacity or certainty about the delivery of infrastructure improvements. This would result in an infrastructure-led approach where development sites are chosen depending on the existing or potential supply of infrastructure.

*Local Services and Infrastructure*

*Question 59: Which of the above approaches to infrastructure delivery do you prefer? Are there any other options that could be considered?*

