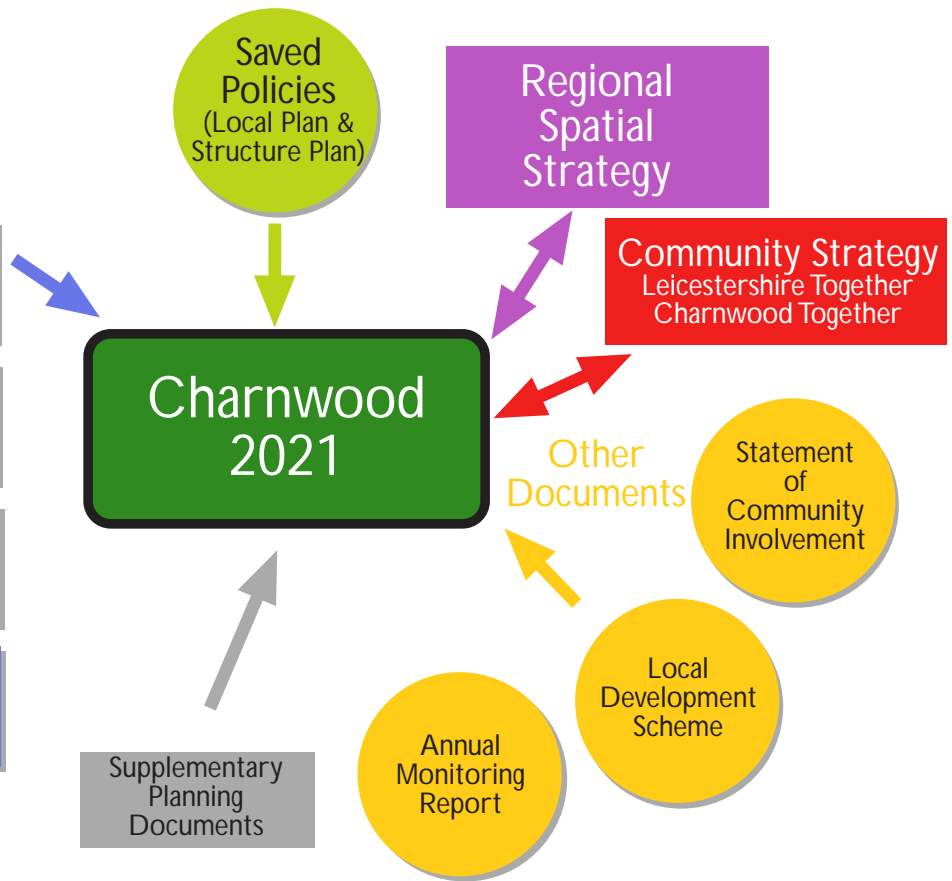


Figure 1

Development Plan Documents

- Core Strategy
- Science Park
- Development Control Policies
- Site Allocations
- Proposals Map



Chapter 1: Introduction

Charnwood 2021

- 1.1 As required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Borough Council is producing the Charnwood Local Development Framework (LDF) to replace the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan. The Charnwood LDF will consist of a series of documents which together will set out the spatial strategy for the Borough. The Core Strategy will be a key document, setting out the Council's overall strategy for future development in the Borough over the next ten years or so.
- 1.2 We have published a Local Development Scheme detailing the various documents we intend to prepare and the timescales for their production over the next three years. Figure 1 illustrates the documents to be produced and how they relate to the Regional Plan- the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8), and existing plans. The scheme sets out the Council's intention to prepare two Development Plan Documents (DPDs) as a priority- the Core Strategy and Science Park DPDs.
- 1.3 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) will outline our spatial vision for the Borough along with key objectives and core policies to deliver the vision, and a monitoring and implementation framework. All the other documents produced as part of Charnwood 2021 will need to reflect the Core Strategy.
- 1.4 The strategy seeks to establish the overall spatial strategy to guide future development in Charnwood over the period to 2021. It also provides the basis for a longer term vision to address the social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough. The strategy indicates broad directions for future growth to deliver future requirements for homes, jobs and other strategic development requirements. These directions for growth will provide for these requirements up to 2021 and beyond.
- 1.5 This Preferred Options paper and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report represents the first formal stage in the production of the Core Strategy. It is an important opportunity for all parties to comment on the various options available including what is considered at this stage to be our preferred option. The strategy has not been finalised- no decisions have been made. We want to know what you think.
- 1.6 The purpose of the consultation is to invite comment from the local community and stakeholders to help us determine the content of the final document. It is hoped that the final version of the Core Strategy will be approved for submission to the Secretary of State in November 2006.

What Has Happened So Far?

- 1.7 In putting together this preferred option paper we have consulted with the local community and key stakeholders on the issues facing the Borough, and what the vision and key spatial objectives of the strategy should be.
- 1.8 In May 2004 we published an Issues Paper and asked local community groups, businesses and other bodies what they thought were the main issues facing Charnwood. A wide range of comments were received and they have helped inform the preparation of this paper. In June 2005 an Issues and Options Paper was published inviting comment on key issues such as the

appropriate timescale for the Core Strategy, the scale of future development we should plan for and possible growth options.

- 1.9 For both the Issues Paper and Issues and Options paper consultations, one day sessions were held with the Local Strategic Partnership Forum to provide the opportunity for local resident and interest groups and other key stakeholders to discuss issues in more detail. Summaries of the responses to these consultations and feedback from the session held in June 2005 are available on our web site - www.charnwood.gov.uk/environment/corestrategyarchive.html
- 1.10 There have also been ongoing discussions with a range of key stakeholders to investigate the feasibility and possible constraints associated with possible growth options.
- 1.11 Alongside this work we have undertaken a sustainability appraisal of the options available. Following consultation on the proposed scope and approach to the sustainability appraisal, assessments of the main directions for growth options and the other preferred policies have been undertaken. Alternative approaches submitted in response to the consultation have also been appraised. A Sustainability Appraisal Report has been prepared and is available as a separate consultation document. As part of the appraisal process the findings have been discussed with key local service providers. As well as helping to inform the selection of the preferred option, the appraisal process has helped to identify mitigation measures and other policy requirements that will need to be reflected in the Core Strategy and subsequent more detailed site allocation documents. This process has ensured that sustainability considerations have been a central part of the preparation of the preferred options document.
- 1.12 It is important that the decisions on the Core Strategy are informed by a robust evidence base. A number of studies have helped to inform the work on the Core Strategy. As work progresses we will commission further studies where necessary. Work undertaken so far includes:

- Urban Capacity Study (2004);
- Housing Needs Study (2005);
- Loughborough Retail and Leisure Study (2003);
- Central Leicestershire Retail Study (2003);
- Employment Land Study (2005);
- Green Spaces Strategy(2004);
- Loughborough Car Parking study (2005);
- Survey of Sites of Biodiversity Interest ;
- Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (2005);
- Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (Joint Study with other Leicestershire Districts – ongoing).



The Next Steps

- 1.13 The responses received on this Preferred Options paper will help us put together the final Core Strategy document for submission to the Secretary of State. There will be the opportunity to comment on the submission document over a similar 6 week consultation period. The submission document will be examined by an independent Inspector who will test the soundness of the strategy and consider any representations received. The Inspector will produce a report with recommendations which we will have to take on board. Any changes required by the Inspector will be incorporated into the document before it is finally adopted.

The Preferred Options Paper

- 1.14 This paper is split into 4 chapters:

Chapter 2: Context - sets out the context for the Core Strategy, outlining the main national, regional and local policies that we have taken into account;

Chapter 3: Our Vision for Charnwood - outlines the key issues facing the Borough, sets out our vision for what we would like Charnwood to be like in 15 years time and our objectives to achieve this vision;

Chapter 4: Our Development Strategy - considers the development we need to plan for- how many new homes and jobs are required, and where these should go;

Chapter 5: Delivering Sustainable Development - sets out a series of key policies to ensure that we meet our future development needs in the most sustainable way.

- 1.15 For each issue we have set out our preferred approach and outlined the other options we have considered but rejected. We want to know whether you agree with our preferred approach or whether you feel another option would be a better solution to meeting the future development needs in the Borough and addressing the key issues we face.
- 1.16 We have also set out first drafts of Core Strategy policies. We will continue to work on these policies as we prepare the submission draft. We would welcome your comments on these draft policies and how we could improve them.