

Charnwood 2021:

Planning for Our Next Generation

Core Strategy Preferred Options

February 2006



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Foreword

Part of the job of your local council is to plan for the expected future needs for homes and jobs in the Borough (alongside all the more obvious things like collecting your rubbish and recyclables, running the leisure centres, keeping the streets clean etc.)

Planning to meet the need for new homes and jobs involves balancing the needs of people who want places to live and work with those people who already have places to live and work. Often these needs are conflicting. Most people agree that we need decent affordable homes and good well paid jobs for this generation and the next. But when it comes to discussing where new homes and new businesses are situated the discussions take on a new character.

For a long time now Charnwood like most other councils has adopted a piecemeal approach to planning for new homes. We need and are required to build a set number of new homes every year and we have generally taken the approach of spreading development around or if you like we have bolted on small numbers of houses to existing towns and villages. However this approach eventually puts pressure on infrastructure like roads, GP surgeries, schools and leisure facilities. Eventually by adding new layers of housing and places to work the infrastructure begins to creak. The bolt on approach can also threaten the individual character of our towns and villages...and I know that some people are worried that their community will gradually be taken over by larger, neighbouring settlements.

Charnwood 2021 sets out a different vision for the future growth of the Borough. Rather than the piecemeal development of old we take a better approach which plans for new communities with new schools, surgeries and play areas built in from the start. We want to find ways in which we can deliver the homes that we are going to need over the coming years whilst still preserving the nature and character of our existing towns and villages.

We also want to site new businesses in places where they have the greatest potential to succeed and become world beaters...thus securing good employment prospects for children. As part of Charnwood 2021, we aim to boost local business and job opportunities through the development of a new Science Park for Loughborough.

Charnwood 2021: Planning for our Next Generation is one of the most important issues facing the borough over the next 15 years...what we do now will decide what our towns and villages will look like in 2021. It will become the blueprint for the borough.

I hope you will read this Core Strategy document and also the separate document setting out our preferred option for a Loughborough Science Park, and take the time to give us your views on this most important of subjects.

Councillor Cameron MacLeod
Cabinet Lead Member for Development

How to Comment:

Complete the response form and return to Director of Development, Charnwood Borough Council, Southfields, Loughborough, LE11 2TN.

Forms are available from the Council Offices, Southfields, Loughborough and local libraries

The form can be completed online at www.charnwood.gov.uk/charnwood2021. Email your views to charnwood2021@charnwood.gov.uk

ALL COMMENTS SHOULD BE SENT TO US BY FRIDAY 31ST MARCH 2006

Chapter 1: Introduction

Charnwood 2021

- 1.1 *Charnwood 2021* is the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the Borough and will replace the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan. It will consist of a series of documents which together will set out the spatial strategy for the Borough up to 2021 and beyond. A key element of the new framework will be a Core Strategy. This will set out our 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.
- 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 an overall approach 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 meet people's needs for homes, jobs, shops, cultural facilities and parks and open spaces, while at the same time safeguarding the cherished character of the Borough's natural and built environment. 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.

Chapter 2: Context

A Picture of Charnwood

- 2.1 Charnwood's diversity and contrasts, from the bustle of urban life to rural tranquility, provide a dynamic mix and make the Borough an attractive place to live, work and visit. With a population of over 153,000 the Borough sits centrally between the three cities of Nottingham, Derby and Leicester. It extends from the main County town of Loughborough in the north to the edge of Leicester to the south.
- 2.2 Just over third of the population (55,000¹) live in the thriving university town of Loughborough. As the largest County town in Leicestershire, Loughborough is an important centre for business, commerce and retailing. Much of the town's vibrancy is due to the mix of cultures present in the town. A string of larger settlements extend northwards from Leicester along the valleys of the River Wreake and Soar. The more rural areas are on the higher rolling landscapes of the Charnwood Forest to the west and the Leicestershire Wolds to the east.
- 2.3 Many of the larger settlements were linked to the textile and clothing trades. With the closure of many of the factories in recent years there have been quite significant impacts on settlements like Syston, Sileby and Anstey which have increasingly become dormitory settlements for Leicester and Loughborough.
- 2.4 The Charnwood Forest area, part of the National Forest, has a distinctive character of wooded upland areas with rocky outcrops. It draws many visitors particularly to Bradgate Park. With the Forest and the river valleys the Borough is rich in flora and fauna and the Council is proud of its record in preserving and nurturing these wildlife habitats. The Borough contains some 31 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and over 150 sites important for nature conservation.
- 2.5 Charnwood's historic environment is rich and varied, with some 900 listed buildings (of which 50 are on the "at risk" register); 36 conservation areas; 20 Scheduled Ancient Monuments; 3 historic parks and gardens and 250 properties on the locally prepared list of buildings of interest.
- 2.6 Loughborough is a thriving commercial centre with strong associations, not only with further and higher education, but also engineering and pharmaceuticals. It is the main retail and cultural centre in the Borough, boasting a varied shopping experience, Leisure Centre, Museum and the successful Town Hall Theatre. The presence of Loughborough University is significant and brings many benefits for the Borough, not least for the local economy. The presence of the University means that Loughborough is quite different in character from other market towns in Leicestershire. There are issues relating to the impact of a large student population on the town, particularly in terms of student accommodation and pressures on the local housing market.
- 2.7 Because of its location close to the Three Cities, Charnwood's housing market is relatively buoyant. Over the last 10 years new housing development has been concentrated in

¹ Term-time population. As a University town, the population of Loughborough varies in and out of term time. The population is some 10,000 fewer out of term time.

Loughborough and Shepshed and the larger Soar and Wreake valley settlements. However much of the Borough experiences real problems of affordability. Recent research to inform the Regional Housing Strategy found that across much of the Borough house prices were more than 4 times average incomes. There is a range and mix of house types and sizes in the Borough, although the Housing Needs Survey 2003/05 identified a shortage of flatted accommodation compared with demand.

- 2.8 Whilst Charnwood is relatively affluent, there are pockets of deprivation where communities suffer from poor access to jobs, poor housing and lack of facilities. This can be a problem that affects both urban and rural communities. Recent work has identified areas of relatively higher need in eastern Loughborough, Shepshed, settlements in the Soar Valley and South Charnwood.
- 2.9 The Borough is easily accessible from the M1, the Midland Mainline between Sheffield and London and the nearby Nottingham East Midlands Airport. The A6 linking Loughborough with Leicester, the A60 to Nottingham, and the A46 to Newark are the main trunk roads in the area. While there is a good local road, and reasonable bus and rail services to larger settlements based on services between Loughborough, Leicester and Nottingham, accessibility is an issue for those wishing to travel away from these main routes or living in the more rural areas. There are problems of congestion in the peak hour on the main A6 and A60 approaches to Loughborough and on the A6 and A46 towards Leicester in the south of the Borough. A number of rural communities, particularly The Wolds villages of Wymeswold and Burton on the Wolds suffer from the impact of heavy goods vehicles using the east- west route from the A46 towards the M1. Traffic congestion has resulted in air quality problems in parts of the Borough, particularly along the A6 and A512 in Loughborough and Melton Road in Syston.

The Strategic Context

- 2.10 Like any other area the spatial strategy for the Borough is not being prepared in a vacuum. The strategy needs to take account of national planning policy statements and guidance for the East Midlands region provided by the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan, together with the Development Plan Documents proposed as part of *Charnwood 2021*, will make up the statutory Development Plan for the Borough and will provide the basis for planning decision making in the area. For the time being the adopted Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan also provides relevant strategic planning guidance, in particular in terms of the number of new homes and jobs we should be planning for up to 2016.
- 2.11 The Community Strategy is also an important document that needs to be taken into account. Charnwood Together, the local strategic partnership involving the Borough and County Councils, public service providers and statutory agencies, local businesses, voluntary organisations and the local community, produced a Community Strategy for Charnwood in 2003. The strategy is currently being reviewed. The strategy and the review provide an important input to the Core Strategy. An equivalent partnership, Leicestershire Together, acting across Leicestershire has also produced a Community Strategy for the whole of the County which also needs to be taken into account.
- 2.12 The visions and policies of these various documents have been important in framing the spatial vision, key objectives and proposed policies for the Core Strategy.

National Planning Policy

2.13 The Core Strategy for the Borough needs to be consistent with national planning policy as set out in Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and earlier Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) where still relevant.

2.14 A key feature of this national planning policy is the principle of sustainable development. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out the duty of planning to secure sustainable development.

2.15 Sustainable development is a commonly used term. It basically means that we should plan for a better quality of life for everyone, now and in the future. A well used definition is:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.16 Delivering more sustainable communities is at the heart of the new planning system. It is the purpose of planning to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. "Securing the Future- Delivering the UK Development Strategy" is the national strategy for sustainable development. It sets out the purpose for achieving sustainable development and some guiding principles.

The Purpose- The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

This should be pursued in an integrated way through:

- a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment; and
- a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal wellbeing;
- this will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible.

The Priorities for UK Action:

- sustainable consumption and production;
- climate change and energy: tackling the effects of a changing climate;
- natural resource protection and environmental enhancement: understanding environmental limits;
- sustainable communities- embodying the principles of sustainable development at the local level.

2.17 This national strategy sets the context for the Core Strategy which must set out the local strategy to deliver sustainable development in Charnwood.

2.18 Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) sets out the key elements of national planning policy. It emphasises the key role planning plays to facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development and the creation of sustainable communities that will stand the test of time, where people want to live, and which will enable people to meet their aspirations and potential. To help deliver sustainable development planning authorities should seek to:

- Provide a positive planning framework for sustainable economic growth;
- Promote urban and rural regeneration;
- Promote communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free whilst respecting the diverse needs of communities;
- Bring forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing, industrial development, retail and commercial development and for leisure and recreation taking into account accessibility and sustainable transport needs, provision of essential infrastructure and the need to avoid flood risk;
- Provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car, while recognising that this may be more difficult in urban areas;
- Focus developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development;
- Reduce the need to travel and encourage accessible public transport to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development;
- Promote the more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and in the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings;
- Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character;
- Address the causes and impacts of climate change, the management of pollution and the safeguarding of natural resources.

PPS1

The Regional Plan

2.19 The Regional Plan, which incorporates the Regional Transport Strategy, was issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in March 2005. The Plan provides the broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2021. It adopts a sequential approach to development to promote more sustainable patterns of development and urban renaissance. The strategy defines 5 Principal Urban Areas including Derby, Leicester and Nottingham which will be the focus for significant levels of new development, and Sub-Regional Centres

including Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire where appropriate development to a lesser scale will be located. For Leicestershire the strategy sets out an annual housing requirement of 3,150 dwellings over the period 2001 to 2021.

- 2.20 The Regional Plan sets out more detailed policies for five sub-areas. Charnwood is at the heart of the Three Cities Sub Area. For more details of the Regional Plan go to www.goem.gov.uk/goem/psc/suscom/rss.
- 2.21 The East Midlands Regional Assembly has commenced a review of the Regional Plan. This review will roll the plan forward 5 years from its current end date of 2021 to 2026 and will include a strategy for the Three Cities Sub-area. It will also identify the scale of future housing and employment requirements for districts up to 2026. The review will take place through 2006/2007. In preparing the *Charnwood 2021* Core Strategy we need to take into account the Regional Plan and ensure that *Charnwood 2021* is "in conformity" with its policies. Our preferred option for the Core Strategy is to adopt a flexible approach to future development and growth looking towards the longer term beyond 2021 to take account of the possible implications of the Regional Plan review. Taking this more flexible long term view should mean that the Core Strategy will not need to be reviewed following completion of the Regional Plan review.

The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996-2016

- 2.22 The Structure Plan was adopted by the Leicestershire and Rutland County Councils and Leicester City Council in 2005. Although *Charnwood 2021* does not have to conform to the Structure Plan, it remains part of the development plan pending the review of the Regional Plan, and is therefore an important consideration. The Structure Plan establishes the scale of new housing and employment development required in Charnwood over the period to 2016.
- 2.23 As with the Regional Plan the Structure Plan adopts a sequential approach to the location of new development. In order to make the best use of the capacity for development within Leicester and secure the balanced provision of new homes and jobs, the Plan identifies a "Central Leicestershire Policy Area" (CLPA) covering the City and its adjoining settlements. The Plan sets out requirements for new homes and jobs for districts, where appropriate split between areas within and outside the CLPA. Settlements in south Charnwood fall within the CLPA area. For Charnwood the plan requires the provision of 9,400 dwellings and 206 hectares of employment land between 1996 and 2016. For more details of the Structure Plan go to:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/index/your_council/council_plans_policies/structure_plan.htm#

Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991-2006

- 2.24 The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan was adopted in January 2004. Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it is "saved" for three years and will continue to provide relevant planning policy to guide decisions on planning applications in this period. The policies in the plan will be replaced by policies in the various development plan documents that will form part of *Charnwood 2021*. For more details of the Local Plan go to www.charnwood.gov.uk/environment/adoptedlocalplan

The Community Strategy

2.25 In preparing *Charnwood 2021* we must take account of the Community Strategy for the area and also the Community Strategy for Leicestershire.

2.26 Charnwood Together produced a Community Strategy for Charnwood in 2003. The strategy aims to improve public services and promote the economic, social and environmental well being of the Borough. The strategy focuses on joint action to deliver the vision of an improved quality of life for everyone living and working in Charnwood. The strategy sets out 9 wellbeing aims;

- To improve learning, skills and employability;
- To develop business competitiveness and growth;
- To reduce crime and promote community safety;
- To improve health and encourage healthy living;
- To sustain our environment;
- To meet local transport needs more effectively;
- To promote social inclusion;
- To develop leisure and culture opportunities;
- To secure decent homes for all.

2.27 *Charnwood 2021* will be an important tool in helping to deliver the Community Strategy by setting out policies for those elements of the strategy which relate to the development and use of land.

2.28 A revised strategy has recently been produced which focuses on themes and areas where joint working by the partners will add value, adopts a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach over the long term, seeks to ensure transparency and participation by the wider community and a clear ownership of actions. Four key themes have been identified:

- People matter- nurturing healthy and strong communities;
- Places matter- creating safe and liveable areas- greener, cleaner and safer living environments with a focus on deprived areas;
- Prosperity matters- maximising opportunities for a dynamic economy for Charnwood;
- Partnership matters- supporting and developing joined up thinking and action.

2.29 As well as the Charnwood Community Strategy we also need to take account of the Leicestershire Community Strategy, prepared by Leicestershire Together- the equivalent of the local strategic partnership at the County level. The Strategy provides a framework for making Leicestershire a County to be proud of, where there are quality and co-ordinated

services for all, and where young people feel that they have a successful and bright future. The strategy was originally published in 2003 and a review was produced in 2005. The review identified key priorities to reduce traffic congestion and work towards lowering crime levels, road safety, the condition of roads and pavements, health services, public transport and the cleanliness of streets.

2.30 Appendix 1 looks at the Charnwood and Leicestershire Community Strategies and identifies the key land-use implications that will need to be addressed through *Charnwood 2021*.

Other Plans and Strategies

2.31 As well as reflecting the Regional Plan and Community Strategies, the Core Strategy will also need to take account of the spatial implications of other plans and strategies including:

- Destination 2010, The Regional Economic Strategy- outlines emda's aim to make the East Midlands one of Europe's top 20 regions by 2010;
- The Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011- sets out the strategies, targets and spending programmes for transport in the County over the five years to 2011. One of the major schemes proposed is the Loughborough Integrated Transport scheme. This will support the Town Centre Masterplan, aid town centre regeneration, address the air quality problems in the town centre and help to improve bus facilities and reduce road accident casualties;
- Leicestershire Minerals Local Plan 1995;
- Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Waste Local Plan 1995-2006;
- Plans and policies of adjoining areas. Our strategy needs to take account of policies of adjoining local authorities, including Leicester City Council, North West Leicestershire District Council, Melton Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Blaby District Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council;
- The National Forest Strategy- provides the framework for the continuing creation of the National Forest over the period to 2014;
- Leading in Leicestershire, the Borough Council's Corporate Plan- describes what the Council plans to do up to 2001/12 to contribute to the vision it has for the future of Charnwood;
- Charnwood Renewal Framework- produced as part of the Charnwood Community Cohesion Pathfinder Project. The Framework provides a solid base of evidence and policy context for renewal and identifies 3 geographical priority areas for renewal.
- The Charnwood Economic Development Strategy 2004- outlines a 10 year vision for Charnwood's economy. The core principle of "growth through quality" underpins the strategy;

- The Green Space Strategy 2004- assesses the current green space provision in the Borough, identifies areas of deficiency and establishes a strategy for the future provision, management and improvement of green space in the Borough;
- The Charnwood Housing Strategy 2005- outlines our strategy for dealing with key housing issues including creating sustainable communities; balancing housing markets; delivering affordable housing; providing decent homes; promoting affordable warmth and “healthy” homes; protecting the community; tackling homelessness; supporting vulnerable people;
- The Charnwood Climate Change Strategy 2005- sets out our commitment to addressing climate change and achieving significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from our activities including energy sourcing and use, travel and transport, waste production and disposal and the purchasing of goods and services. The strategy sets out how we will respond to the challenges of climate change, the commitments we have made in signing the Nottingham Declaration and how we will encourage others in the borough to take similar steps;
- Charnwood Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2005- outlines a range of options to improve air quality in parts of the Borough;
- Charnwood Biodiversity Action Plan 1998- outlines the contribution the Borough can make to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Parish Plans produced by Parish Councils – provide an important insight into local issues affecting Charnwood’s communities.

2.32 These various strategies have been taken into account in developing the spatial vision and objectives for the Borough and determining the preferred option for the Core Strategy. Where appropriate key aspects of these strategies are referred to in the relevant sections of this report.

Chapter 3- Our Vision for Charnwood: Issues, Vision and Objectives.

What are the Issues?

- 3.1 To gain an understanding of the key issues the Core Strategy needs to address we consulted on an Issues Paper in May 2004 when we invited local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders to highlight the issues that they felt needed addressing through *Charnwood 2021*. Subsequently we published an Issues and Options Paper in June 2005, which set out a range of issues which had been identified through this earlier consultation. The June 2005 paper was also informed by work on the Sustainability Appraisal Framework. Consultants were engaged to undertake a “baseline assessment” of the Borough to identify key sustainability issues. The findings are set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which can be viewed on our web site.
- 3.2 Consultation on the Issues papers and work on the baseline assessment for the sustainability appraisal have helped to identify the following key issues for Charnwood:
- i) the lack of affordable housing. Increasing house prices in recent years has meant that affordability issues increasingly affect communities throughout Charnwood;
 - ii) the need for new homes to meet the needs of existing and future residents. The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan requires the provision of 9,400 additional homes in the Borough between 1996 and 2016- an annual requirement of 470 homes. The Regional Plan review outlines a range of options that would provide between 370 and 740 new homes each year;
 - iii) a concentration of certain types and tenures of housing in some locations. Particular issues are associated with the concentration of student accommodation within parts of Loughborough;
 - iv) areas of poorer quality housing. There are areas of poorer quality housing where improvements are needed to not just the houses but the wider neighbourhood;
 - v) congestion, pollution and the impact of heavy volumes of traffic. This is particularly an issue in and around Loughborough and in South Charnwood in settlements close to Leicester;
 - vi) the adverse impacts of heavy goods vehicle movements on rural communities particularly the Wolds villages;
 - vii) real travel choice by public transport, cycling and walking is limited outside the main urban areas, with particular problems in the more rural communities;
 - viii) the need for additional employment land to meet strategic requirements, in particular high quality employment sites including a new Science Park at Loughborough;
 - ix) loss of existing employment areas to housing and other uses. The decline in the local textile industry has resulted in the loss of significant employment opportunities

in some villages. There are also particular issues in relation to rural employment needs;

- x) whilst the Borough is relatively affluent there are pockets of deprivation where residents suffer poor access to housing, jobs and social and community facilities;
- xi) with the close proximity of the Three Cities there is a need to consider how Loughborough's role as an important sub regional shopping and cultural destination can be strengthened. There is also a need to safeguard and improve existing local shopping facilities in the main villages;
- xii) the presence of Loughborough University, with its reputation as a centre of research and sporting excellence, provides the potential for real benefits for the Borough, especially in the lead up to the London Olympics in 2012. We need to make the best use of the advantages brought by the University for the wider benefit of Charnwood;
- xiii) tackling the identified deficiencies in green space provision. The Greenspace Strategy identifies a need for further Country Park facilities, district parks in Loughborough, Birstall, Shepshed and Syston and smaller parks and recreation grounds across the Borough;
- xiv) addressing the potential impacts of climate change, particularly in relation to flooding along the Rivers Soar and Wreake;
- xv) dealing with crime and the fear of crime in local communities;
- xvi) the 900 listed buildings, 36 conservation areas, 20 scheduled ancient monuments and 3 historic parks and gardens reflects the Borough's rich built heritage. There are problems resulting from development pressures and neglect. 50 buildings are "at risk". Clear policies for the protection and enhancement of the built heritage are required;
- xvii) loss of local identity through standard design solutions that don't take account of the local distinctiveness of Charnwood's towns and villages;
- xviii) safeguarding settlement identity- green wedge and local separation policies have long recognised the importance of safeguarding the separate identities of settlements in Charnwood. The Core Strategy needs to demonstrate how the strategic policy of urban concentration can be taken forward in the Borough without threatening the separate identities of existing communities;
- xix) maintaining local landscape character- The Borough is made up of a series of distinct landscapes from the Charnwood Forest to the Wolds. It includes the eastern edge of the National Forest. Policies are needed to ensure that where development does take place, it reflects the character of the Charnwood landscapes.

Our Vision: Charnwood in 2021

3.3 The Community Strategy vision for the Borough is of an improved quality of life for everyone living and working in Charnwood. Our Corporate Plan takes forward many of the Community Strategy themes and sets out our vision for the Borough up to 2015. The Corporate Plan sets the main priority as being:

to ensure that the Borough is recognised as Leading in Leicestershire for the quality of the living environment for all.

3.4 Six key aims are set out in the strategy to deliver this priority:

- A sustainable environment- designing new public places, based on excellent urban and rural planning, supporting integrated public transport provision, cycling and the interests of pedestrians. Protecting the best of Charnwood's heritage;
- A clean, safe and healthy environment- working with the community to ensure that waste is minimised or recycled, litter graffiti and refuse is removed and our neighbourhoods are enjoyable and safe places to be;
- Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for all- providing leisure and sports facilities, parks, playgrounds, allotments, museums, the arts, youth programmes which will provide a healthy living environment for all;
- Decent homes and neighbourhoods- raising the standards of homes, and the surrounding environment. Fostering sustainable communities and providing quality advice to those in housing need;
- An economically prosperous Environment- regenerating areas in decline, developing industries and businesses, and ensuring vibrant commercial and retailing sectors;
- An excellent Council- running an efficient and effective Council administration, sensitive and responsive to customers' needs and providing access to all services.

3.5 The Corporate Plan's vision needs to be supplemented to provide a clear expression of how we can develop a spatial strategy that makes the best use of future development opportunities to provide real and lasting benefits, and deliver the changes necessary to make Charnwood's towns and villages more sustainable communities. It is about a vision and spatial strategy that moulds and directs future development and growth to transform our main towns and villages into truly sustainable communities fit for the 21st century. This requires a clear and focussed vision, and positive proactive planning to deliver the changes necessary to make the government's vision of an urban renaissance and sustainable communities a reality in Charnwood.

3.6 Our vision for the Core Strategy outlines the key spatial implications of delivering the key Community Strategy and Charnwood Corporate Plan objectives:

By 2021 Charnwood will be widely regarded as an excellent place to live, work and visit. Well-founded and clearly articulated policies preserve the essential characteristics and diversity of the Borough's landscape, ecology, heritage and built environment. The variety of lifestyle choices, from urban to suburban and from

larger village to rural isolation makes the Borough attractive to established residents and new arrivals alike.

Loughborough is the primary sub-regional centre for shopping, leisure and entertainment within the Three Cities sub area. It is also a key business and commercial centre, offering a clear alternative to the cities of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. Pedestrianisation has been extended and Loughborough's reputation as a "green" and "walkable town" has been secured with the inner relief road taking traffic out of the centre. This is complimented by the local facilities and employment opportunities available in many of our other towns and villages.

The local environment is clean and safe and a clear emphasis on recycling, sustainable development and energy efficiency means that the Borough is contributing actively to reducing global environmental problems. Our targets for recycling have been met and good progress has been made in implementing our "Zero Waste" strategy.

Air quality has improved in those locations where traffic congestion was problematic, the congestion reduced through increased use of quality, integrated public transport and other alternatives to motor vehicle use. There has been a substantial reduction in the incidents of severe flooding across the Borough.

The quality and coverage of public bus services has improved alongside integration with rail services. Loughborough railway station and its forecourt have been enhanced as part of the redevelopment of the eastern gateway of the Town, and there are regular mainline rail services from Loughborough and frequent local services serving Loughborough, Barrow upon Soar, Sileby and Syston. The road network is in good condition.

The population is decently housed and a good variety of housing types and tenures is available, making living in the Borough more achievable for people of all ages and incomes. In meeting the Borough's housing and employment needs development has been directed to the main urban centres of Loughborough and Shepshed, and locations adjoining Leicester including Birstall and Thurmaston.

Whilst full use has been made of available previously developed land and buildings, it has been necessary to identify areas for growth to meet the future requirements for new homes and jobs. The first phase of comprehensively planned mixed use sustainable urban extensions west and south of Loughborough have come forward. In the south of the Borough northern extensions of Hamilton/ Thurmaston and Birstall provide for future housing and employment needs. Through these strategic land allocations a clear strategy for longer term growth in Charnwood up to 2021 and beyond has been established.

In the smaller towns and villages some small scale growth reinforcing local character and distinctiveness has helped meet local needs for affordable housing and additional community facilities.

In Loughborough the student population is making positive contributions to the Borough's economy and diversity. Steps to manage and reduce adverse impacts on particular parts of the town in conjunction with Loughborough University and other partners have been successful in achieving a more balanced residential mix and a consequent improvement in those environments.

The effect of designing out crime principles as a matter of routine has also reduced the opportunities for criminals.

The economy of Charnwood is strong and is a key contributor to the East Midlands Regional economy. Unemployment remains below the national average and those pockets of higher than average unemployment in 2004 are now close to the rate for the Borough as a whole. Decline in the traditional manufacturing sector has been more than offset by expansion in high added value manufacturing, hi-tech and knowledge based industry and the development of sports and cultural industry clusters.

A second Science Park has been provided as part of the western expansion of Loughborough. The presence of Loughborough University plays a pivotal role in the local economy through education, research, and dynamic business initiatives. The growth needs of the University have been accommodated through a western expansion of the Campus. Large companies such as FKI, AstraZeneca, Lafarge and 3M continue to thrive alongside a wide range of small and medium enterprises and the priority given to new business and inward investment has enabled new talent to become established. Improved conference and hotel facilities draw people to the Borough.

Everyone in the Borough, young and old, has the opportunity of enjoying the healthy lifestyle offered by quality leisure and sporting activities, as well as national health care facilities and treatment. The availability of diverse and exciting cultural opportunities in towns and rural areas contributes to healthy living. The planned western extension to Loughborough has secured the provision of a new County Park based on the historic Garendon Park providing informal recreational access for the benefit of Charnwood's residents.

Spatial Objectives

- 3.7 In order to deliver this vision we have identified a set of key spatial objectives. The objectives reflect national and regional planning policy and provide the basis for the preferred spatial strategy including core policies. The objectives tackle the key themes of a vibrant local economy, strong, healthy and inclusive communities and protecting Charnwood's unique natural and built environment.

CHARNWOOD'S ECONOMY- VIBRANT AND DIVERSE

SO1: to sustain and enhance Loughborough town centre as a successful, attractive and vibrant destination for shopping, entertainment and leisure as well as a place to live;

SO2: to ensure that there is a network of vibrant district centres so residents have access to a range of shops, services and facilities;

SO3: to meet needs for homes, including affordable housing, and jobs, including a new science park at Loughborough, through balanced housing and employment provision in North and South Charnwood in line with strategic requirements;

SO4: to raise the profile of Charnwood to attract local and inward business investors and promote tourism;

SO5: To provide access to quality jobs and improved standards of life by safeguarding key sites and creating opportunities for new high quality employment;

SO6: to support thriving and diverse sustainable rural enterprise and farming.

CHARNWOOD'S COMMUNITIES- STRONG, HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE

SO7: to address social exclusion and reduce deprivation in those parts of the Borough identified as areas of relatively higher need including Loughborough, Shepshed, the Soar Valley villages and south Charnwood;

SO8: to reduce the need to, and distance of, travel by car and increase walking, cycling and public transport. In particular to improve access by bus to key services and facilities;

SO9: to create safe, healthy, accessible and distinctive places for local people by encouraging quality and sustainable design and construction;

SO10: to promote mixed balanced communities, in particular to address the extent and distribution of student accommodation within Loughborough;

SO11: to ensure residents have access to an interlinked system of parks and greenspaces, the countryside and built facilities for sport, recreation and community activities;

CHARNWOOD'S NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT- SAFEGUARDED AND ENHANCED

SO12: to promote prudent use of resources through patterns of development, transport measures, reducing the use of minerals, energy and water and minimising waste and increasing the use of renewable energy sources;

SO13: to concentrate most new development in the main urban areas of Loughborough, Shepshed and the settlements of Birstall and Thurmaston and other locations adjoining Leicester giving priority to previously developed land;

SO14: to develop integrated transport schemes and measures to improve safety and reduce the adverse environmental and other impacts of traffic, especially in and around Loughborough and settlements close to Leicester;

SO15: to protect the built heritage and separate identity of the Borough's locally distinctive towns and villages;

SO16: to reduce the risk to life and property through flooding in vulnerable locations along the Soar and Wreake valleys;

SO17: to protect distinctive landscapes, in particular the Charnwood Forest and support the National Forest Strategy;

SO18: to maintain and enhance a diverse range of habitats and the biodiversity of wildlife in line with the Charnwood Biodiversity Action Plan.

Chapter 4- Our Development Strategy

Delivering Sustainable Communities- Defining A Charnwood Settlement Hierarchy

Background

- 4.1 The development strategy seeks to deliver the vision and objectives outlined in Chapter 3. The strategy needs to reflect the Regional Plan and in particular deliver the new homes and jobs required over the period to 2021.
- 4.2 The strategies of the Regional Plan and the adopted Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan reflect national planning policy which promotes sustainable patterns of development and a “sequential approach” to choosing the appropriate locations for new development by making best use of previously developed land and buildings. Both adopt locational strategies which promote urban concentration.
- 4.3 The Regional Plan seeks to direct most development to the largest urban centres in the East Midlands- the Principal Urban Areas, with a smaller amount of development directed to smaller Sub Regional Centres. Within the Three Cities sub-area the Principal Urban Areas are Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, and the Sub-Regional Centres are Loughborough, Coalville and Hinckley. Within Leicestershire other Sub-Regional Centres include Melton Mowbray and Market Harborough. The strategy for rural areas is to sustain villages and reverse the decline in rural services. The strategy sets a regional target of 60% of new homes being provided on previously developed land and through the conversion of buildings.
- 4.4 The Structure Plan also aims to secure sustainable development by directing new development to the main urban areas. Leicester, as the main urban area in the County, is the focus of this strategy. The Plan defines a “Central Leicestershire Policy Area” as a way of helping to direct development towards Leicester. This policy area is made up of the City, Oadby and Wigston, and parts of Hinckley and Bosworth, Blaby, Harborough and Charnwood districts. The Plan identifies Leicester as an urban conurbation made up of the City and settlements on its boundaries including Birstall and Thurmaston. This is called the Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area.
- 4.5 Outside this Central Leicestershire Policy Area development is directed to the main towns- for Charnwood, Loughborough and Shepshed. Rural Centres can be identified for small scale growth to help safeguard important rural services. The Structure Plan’s approach is to direct development to the Leicester conurbation and the main towns and then to Rural Centres or other settlements well served by public transport. In all these locations the aim is to make the best use of previously developed land before releasing greenfield land for development. The Structure Plan aims for at least 50% of new homes in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland being provided on previously developed land.
- 4.6 The Core Strategy needs to reflect this strategic guidance and establish a clear settlement hierarchy as the basis of our locational strategy for the period to 2021.

Identifying the Charnwood Settlement Hierarchy- The Preferred Approach

4.7 In establishing the settlement hierarchy for the Core Strategy we have sought to reflect the national, regional and strategic policy context. We have analysed the key characteristics of Charnwood settlements in terms of the availability and accessibility of services and facilities, size and function, geography and interactions between settlements. This assessment is available on our web site . The key local influences are:

- The main urban centres of Leicester in the south of the Borough and the Loughborough urban system in the north as well as the other nearby towns and service centres such as Coalville, Melton Mowbray, Groby, Markfield and East Leake in adjoining districts;
- The small town of Syston and other large villages concentrated along the Soar and Wreake valleys have well established service bases able to serve local residents and surrounding areas, including the more rural parts of Charnwood;
- The proximity of strong urban influences across most of the Borough suggests that no settlements in Charnwood function as Rural Centres for a wider rural catchment

4.8 These features make Charnwood's settlement pattern quite unique in Leicestershire. The Borough is characterised by its proximity to the city of Leicester- the main **urban centre**, the influence of the County Town of Loughborough- the **sub-regional centre** and the ribbon of larger settlements extending along the Soar and Wreake Valleys- the **service centres**. For the rural communities in the Wolds and Charnwood Forest, residents tend to look to the service centres for their services and facilities rather than one of the rural settlements within these areas meeting these needs.

4.9 Whilst it is considered that no settlements in Charnwood should be defined as Rural Centres, some limited small scale development might be appropriate in those smaller rural settlements with a reasonable range of services and facilities providing for the day to day needs of the local community. Development could help meet local needs, in particular for affordable housing, support existing services and facilities and sustain local community life. Key facilities and services include:

- A primary school;
- A general store selling groceries and basic provisions;
- A post office outlet open at least 3 days a week;
- A village or community hall;
- A public house;
- A significant Class B employment site within 3km walking distance of the village;
- An hourly weekday daytime return bus service to at least one main urban or sub-regional centre.

4.10 On this basis the preferred settlement hierarchy for South and North Charnwood is set out below:

South Charnwood	North Charnwood
<p>MAIN URBAN CENTRE</p> <p>LEICESTER PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA Includes: Birstall and Thurmaston</p>	<p>MAIN URBAN CENTRE</p> <p>No equivalent settlement</p>
<p>SUB REGIONAL CENTRE</p> <p>No equivalent settlement</p>	<p>SUB REGIONAL CENTRE</p> <p>Loughborough / Shepshed</p>
<p>SERVICE CENTRES</p> <p>Anstey, East Goscote, Rothley, Syston</p>	<p>SERVICE CENTRES</p> <p>Barrow upon Soar, Hathern, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Sileby</p>
<p>OTHER SETTLEMENTS</p> <p>Barkby, Barkby Thorpe, Beeby, Cossington, Cropston, Queniborough, , Rearsby, Thurcaston, Wanlip</p>	<p>OTHER SETTLEMENTS</p> <p>Burton on the Wolds, Cotes, Hoton, Newtown Linford, Prestwold, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Seagrave, South Croxton, Swithland, Thrussington, Ulverscroft, Walton on the Wolds, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Woodthorpe, Wymeswold.</p>

4.11 This settlement hierarchy will guide the scale and distribution of new development in the Borough to secure the most sustainable pattern of development. In accordance with Government guidance, in seeking to direct development to the main urban areas, priority will be given to the development of previously developed land and buildings. Over the period 1996 to 2021 it is estimated that around 52% of new homes will be provided on previously developed land. This represents a realistic assessment of urban capacity potential in the Borough. The government target of 60% of dwellings being provided on previously developed land is a national one which recognises that some areas will achieve substantially higher or lower percentages.

The Other Options

4.12 We consider the preferred option reflects strategic guidance and the policy of urban concentration. Other possible settlement hierarchies considered involve new settlements or major expansions to smaller villages, or an approach that would result in a more even spread of development between villages. Responses to the Issues and Options paper consultation have also promoted the specific identification of Rural Centres.

4.13 The option of a new settlement or a large freestanding single use development away from existing settlements, even those able to make use of previously developed land, do not perform well against the sequential test and sustainability criteria. The Regional Plan and Structure Plan do not promote new settlements. They would not be consistent with established strategic policy for the region and County of directing development to the existing main urban centres. Such an option would be likely to require substantial investment in supporting infrastructure that might be better used in existing urban areas.

4.14 A number of new settlement options have been considered in the past, including east of Loughborough at Cotes, west of Hathern, east of Rearsby, Wymeswold Airfield and east of

Cossington. In response to the Issues and Options consultation, Wymeswold Airfield has also been suggested as a possible location for the proposed Second Science Park for Loughborough.

- 4.15 A new settlement/ freestanding development would not be in keeping with the strategy of urban concentration established in regional and strategic guidance. From the assessment of possible options there appears to be sufficient land available in higher priority locations to meet our development needs.
- 4.16 A settlement hierarchy which allowed for a more even spread of development between settlements would again not be consistent with a strategy which seeks to focus development in those centres where most services and facilities are available.
- 4.17 There have been suggestions that we should define Rural Centres in the proposed settlement hierarchy. As has been explained above, because of the particular geography of Charnwood, it is not considered that any of the more rural settlements function as a rural centre. It is also considered that it would be inappropriate to direct development to a rural settlement so that it can become a rural centre. The proximity of the main urban areas and the larger Soar and Wreake valley settlements and centres just outside the Borough means that there is no need to develop one of the more rural villages as a Rural Centre. This approach would be likely to be damaging to the form and rural character of the settlement.
- 4.18 This does not mean that rural settlements will not accommodate any more development. The strategy should allow for limited small scale development in keeping with the level of services and facilities and the character of these rural communities to meet local needs for affordable housing and to support rural services.
- 4.19 The principle of the settlement hierarchy is to identify those settlements best able to support sustainable development and growth due to the range of facilities and services available and the accessibility to public transport. Smaller settlements with few services and facilities are less sustainable locations and should only accommodate limited new development.
- 4.20 Targets for development on previously developed land must be realistic. Other options would be to strictly limit the amount of greenfield land released for housing or alternatively to take a more conservative estimate of the potential contribution from previously developed land. Too strict a control of greenfield land release could mean housing supply is constrained if previously developed sites do not come forward. Greenfield release without control would also be unsustainable. The proposed target coupled with the suggested phasing policy represents a realistic assessment of the potential contribution from previously developed land in Charnwood and would provide sufficient control over future land release to enable the Council to respond to changes in circumstances.

The Preferred Policy Option

4.21 Draft Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy

In order to create and maintain sustainable communities in Charnwood, the Borough Council will guide the scale and distribution of new development based on the following settlement hierarchy:

North Charnwood:

- i) Loughborough/ Shepshed as the primary Sub-Regional Centre with the Three Cities sub area;
- ii) Service Centres- Barrow upon Soar, Hathern, Mountsorrel, Quorn and Sileby;
- iii) Other settlements having three or more key facilities/services.

South Charnwood:

- i) Birstall and Thurmaston and other locations adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area;
- ii) Service Centres- Anstey, East Goscote, Rothley, Syston;
- iii) Other communities having three or more key facilities/ services.

The majority of new development will be directed to locations within or adjoining Loughborough/ Shepshed, Birstall and Thurmaston and other locations adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area.

Development that cannot be accommodated within or adjoining these areas will be directed to locations within or adjoining the Service Centres.

Small scale development to meet an identified local need may be accommodated within or adjoining other settlements with 3 or more key facilities/ services.

In all cases priority will be given to the development of previously developed land and buildings and where appropriate the provision of mixed use developments. The strategy will seek to achieve a target of 52% of all additional housing to be developed on previously developed land and buildings.

Reason for Preferred Option:

To reflect government objectives for the development of sustainable communities and reflect the strategy of urban concentration set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy and Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan.

Directions for Growth

Background

4.22 The *Charnwood 2021* Core Strategy needs to be in conformity with the Regional Plan and also needs to take account of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan. The Structure Plan provides relevant strategic guidance pending the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. In particular it establishes the scale of development for new homes and jobs that we need to plan for over the period up to 2016.

4.23 This strategic guidance sets some clear “ground rules” in relation to the locational strategy which we must follow. This strategy for urban concentration is reflected in Draft Core

Policy 1 above which establishes the Charnwood settlement hierarchy. The Core Strategy needs to make some key decisions about the most sustainable approach locally to accommodate future development.

4.24 There are a limited number of realistic options that would fit with the established national, regional and strategic policy and reflect the characteristics of the Borough. The identification of the preferred directions for growth has been based on the following principles:

- The application of the sequential approach set out in the Regional Plan and Structure Plan;
- Making the best use of previously developed land within urban areas;
- Safeguarding the separate identities of Charnwood's settlements;
- Considering the suitability of possible directions for growth in terms of their transport and accessibility, physical constraints, impact on resources and environmental assets, development viability and costs and the need to develop balanced communities;
- The potential for larger allocations to offer the best prospects for securing significant planning contributions towards services, infrastructure, open space and high quality design;
- The suitability of smaller towns and larger villages as locations for modest development to support service provision and meet local needs.

4.25 Pending the review of the Regional Plan for the East Midlands there is some uncertainty about the scale of additional homes and jobs that will need to be planned for over the period to 2026. The current Regional Plan sets out an annual housing requirement of 3,150 dwellings for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland over the period 2001 to 2021 but does not set a figure for new employment growth. It does not include figures on district level housing and employment requirements- this is the purpose of the Regional Plan review. Indicative figures for Districts have been set out in the Regional Plan Review Options for Change paper, published for consultation in October 2005. The paper outlines 9 housing growth options based on alternative growth and locational strategies but does not identify a preferred regional option. For Charnwood these options indicate a requirement ranging from 370 to 740 new homes each year (the current strategic requirement is 470). The various options and their implications for the Borough are illustrated in figure 2.

4.26 These housing figures have been used as a guide to give an indication of the likely scale of development we need to plan for. We have formed a view on our preferred regional growth option based on an assessment of the local implications of the 9 options. In terms of location, we consider growth should be distributed in line with the current strategy of concentrating development in the Principal Urban Areas and Sub Regional Centres and in areas in need of regeneration. This represents the most sustainable approach to the location of future growth. If an urban concentration strategy is pursued, a level of growth above ODPM trends would have significant environmental implications for the Borough and is not supported. A strategy of limiting growth would be more sensitive to local environmental constraints but could mean people's needs for homes and jobs are not met. Whilst a lower rate of growth would mean less land would need to be released up to 2021,

additional land would need to be found to meet strategic requirements to 2026. In essence this approach would merely postpone strategic decisions that need to be made about the most sustainable options for longer term development in Charnwood.

- 4.27 It is our view that we should plan for a level of growth that reflects the latest Government population and household projections and that this growth should be distributed in line with the current strategy of concentrating development in the Principal Urban Areas and Sub Regional Centres and in areas in need of regeneration. The Regional Plan Options for Change Paper suggests that this strategy could mean a development rate of around 590 new homes a year for Charnwood. We do not support this assessment. In our view the way district housing figures have been derived for the Options for Change Paper is overly mechanistic. We will be encouraging the East Midlands Regional Assembly to develop a more robust assessment of future housing requirements for Charnwood and other districts which produce housing figures more consistent with the most recent ODPM projections. In the absence of this more robust assessment, for the purposes of consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options, we have applied the Regional Plan Options for Change figure of 590 homes per year. There may be revisions to these figures as the Regional Plan review progresses. There is a need therefore for some flexibility in the Core Strategy to take account of possible changes to Regional Plan guidance.
- 4.28 The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan sets out the requirements for new homes and jobs in Charnwood up to 2016. Until the Regional Plan review is complete the Structure Plan provide the clearest strategic guidance on the scale of development we need to plan for. For Charnwood the Structure Plan splits the housing and employment requirements between:
- **South Charnwood-** that part of Charnwood falling within the Central Leicestershire Policy Area. This covers the parishes of Anstey, Birstall, East Goscote, Queniborough, Rearsby, Rothley, Syston, Thurmaston, Thurgaston and Cropston, Barkby, Barky Thorpe, Beeby and Wanlip;
 - **North Charnwood-** the rest of the Borough outside the Central Leicestershire Policy Area. This covers Loughborough and the parishes of Shepshed, Hathern, Barrow upon Soar, Quorn, Mountsorrel, Sileby, Cossington, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Cotes, Hoton, Prestwold, Wymeswold, Walton-on-the-Wolds, Seagrave, South Croxton, Burton-on-the-Wolds, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves, Ulverscroft, Newtown Linford, Swithland and Thrussington.
- 4.29 Over the period 1996 to 2016 the Structure Plan requires the provision of 2,950 dwellings and 72 hectares of employment land in South Charnwood and 6,450 dwellings and 134 hectares of employment land in north Charnwood. The employment figure for north Charnwood includes the requirement to provide for a second Science Park of up to 50 hectares in Loughborough close to the University. In identifying future general employment land requirements the Structure Plan concluded that overall there was a sufficient supply of employment land but it was not necessarily in the most appropriate location or of the right quality to meet modern needs. The Structure Plan employment land allocations in Charnwood are intended to provide a better balance between homes and jobs provision.

Scale of Future Growth- The Preferred Approach

- 4.30 Whilst there is currently some uncertainty about the future scale of housing and employment requirements beyond 2016, it is considered appropriate for the *Charnwood 2021* Core Strategy to establish the long term directions for growth within Charnwood. This will provide certainty for developers, key stakeholders and local residents about the planning strategy for the Borough. The Government have recently published guidance on planning for housing provision which indicates that local planning authorities should plan for a 15 year period. A 15 year time horizon from the expected 2008 adoption date for the Core Strategy would be to 2023. However, to be consistent with the Regional Plan review and provide a clear long term strategy for growth, it is considered appropriate for the Core Strategy to look ahead to 2021- a 13 year period from adoption. This will provide the flexibility to take account of any further housing and employment land requirements emerging from the Regional Plan review. This approach will allow comprehensive planned development to take place on a phased basis to provide for the homes, jobs, transport and social and community needs of the population.
- 4.31 To identify the broad scale of future development we need to plan for, the Structure Plan housing and employment requirements to 2016 and emerging revised Regional Plan guidance have been used to project the rate of growth required to 2021. This has been based on our preferred regional strategy option of trend housing growth coupled with a locational strategy of urban concentration and regeneration. It should be emphasised that whilst we do not support the Regional Plan review figure of 590 homes per year, this figure has been applied in the absence of a more robust assessment of future district housing requirements.
- 4.32 Future employment requirements are harder to predict other than the need for high quality employment sites which can help companies compete in a global marketplace. Work undertaken for the Regional Plan predicted relatively low levels of demand for additional employment land region-wide but stressed the need to take account of losses of employment land to other uses. The Structure Plan employment land allocations are intended to balance the proposed strategic housing requirements to provide for sustainable mixed use urban extensions. Further work has been commissioned to identify future employment land requirements in Charnwood. This will help to inform the submission version of the Core Strategy. For the purposes of the Preferred Options paper, the annual employment land requirement implied by the Structure Plan has been used to give an indication of the likely scale of additional employment land required in the period to 2021.
- 4.33 On this basis the housing and employment requirements over the period 2001 to 2021 have been estimated as follows:

Housing	South Charnwood	North Charnwood	Total
Annual Requirement from Structure Plan.	147	323	470
Assumed Annual Requirement from Revised Regional Plan	185	405	590
Requirement 2001-	1033	2257	3290

Housing	South Charnwood	North Charnwood	Total
2008 (using Structure Plan Annual rate)			
Requirement 2008-2021 (using Regional Plan rate from Regional Plan adoption date)	2407	5263	7670
Total Requirement 2001-2021	3440	7520	10960
Completions 2001-2005	554	2078	2632
Expected completions from Large Site Permissions & remaining allocations at March 2005	1762	1963	3725
Small Site Allowance	320	720	1040
Windfall Allowance	320	960	1280
Balance to be found	485	1800	2285
Employment	South Charnwood	North Charnwood	Total
Annual Requirement from Structure Plan	3.6ha	4.2ha	7.8 ha
Projected Requirement 2001-2021	72 ha	84 ha	156 ha
Starts 2001-2005	18.6 ha	9.6 ha	28.2 ha
With Permission or Allocated at 2005	16.55 ha	32.22 ha	49 ha
Balance to be found	37 ha	42 ha	79 ha
Requirement for Second Science Park in Loughborough Close to University		Up to 50 ha	Up to 50 ha

- 4.34 In addition to the general employment requirements for North Charnwood there is a strategic requirement to provide a second Science Park of up to 50 hectares close to Loughborough University.

The Other Options

- 4.35 The Options for Change consultation paper for the Regional Plan outlines a range of options for the scale and broad distribution of future growth. Alternative approaches would be to plan for a scale of growth below or above the Government's projections, and to either distribute development more widely or to concentrate it more in the largest urban centres.
- 4.36 The Sustainability Appraisal accompanying the Regional Plan Options for Change Paper sets out an assessment of the regional implications of these options. Many of these issues would be relevant for Charnwood.
- 4.37 A strategy seeking to limit growth below trend would not meet forecast needs for new homes. The above trend or "going for growth" option would result in significant levels of development, particularly with a strategy of strong urban concentration.
- 4.38 A locational strategy spreading development widely would not be consistent with strategic policies for urban concentration and could result in less sustainable forms of development.
- 4.39 Seeking to focus more development in and around Leicester as one of the Three Cities would mean significant additional growth in South Charnwood. This approach would mean more of Charnwood's housing and employment requirements being directed to South Charnwood and the edge of Leicester. This was broadly the approach recommended by the independent panel when they considered the Structure Plan in 2003. They recommended more of Leicestershire's growth should be directed to Leicester as the main urban area in the County.
- 4.40 This approach was rejected by the Structure Plan Authorities as it would mean the release of substantial amounts of greenfield land which could undermine attempts to maximise urban capacity in Leicester and frustrate regeneration initiatives. At this scale there would be significant loss of greenfield land in South Charnwood and pressure on the existing transport infrastructure and local services and facilities. This approach would involve limited development in North Charnwood and would not reflect the important role played by Loughborough as the main sub-regional centre within the Three Cities sub-area.
- 4.41 Another option would be for the Core Strategy to only make provision for the housing and employment requirements to 2016 as set out in the Structure Plan. Over this timeframe it is calculated that the strategic housing requirement could be met through the expected release of previously developed land within the main urban areas. There would not be the need to release additional Greenfield land for housing until after 2016. However, there would still be a need to make significant employment land allocations and it is likely that this will need to involve the release of Greenfield land.
- 4.42 It is considered that this approach is unlikely to provide the most sustainable solution for longer term growth. Planning just for employment land requirements may mean that more sustainable opportunities for mixed use development are missed. Recent government

guidance indicates that local planning authorities should plan for housing provision over a 15 year timescale. Planning to a 2016 time horizon would only provide for some 8 years of housing land. This shorter term approach would also mean that the Core Strategy would need to be reviewed sooner once the Regional Plan review is completed. Establishing the future long term directions for growth now will provide the flexibility within *Charnwood 2021* to provide any future needs arising from the Regional Plan review without the need for an early review of the Core Strategy.

Directions for Growth- The Preferred Approach

- 4.43 The Regional Plan and Structure Plan strategies of urban concentration establish the broad focus for future growth within Charnwood. The role of the Core Strategy is to apply these strategies locally to identify the most sustainable option for growth that meets our vision for the Borough. The Regional Plan and Structure Plan strategies direct development to the main urban centres, in Charnwood's case Loughborough/ Shepshed and the edge of Leicester, including the settlements of Birstall and Thurmaston. The Structure Plan aims to provide for a balance of new homes and jobs within and outside the Central Leicestershire Policy Area. The Core Strategy needs to identify the most sustainable growth option within these broad locations.
- 4.44 The Issues and Options paper outlined possible directions for growth in north and south Charnwood. The feedback from the consultation has been considered and the options have been subject to a sustainability appraisal which has compared the relative merits of the options in terms of their likely social, economic and environmental impacts. Full details are set out in the Sustainability Appraisal report which can be viewed on our web site (www.charnwood.gov.uk/charnwood2021). The following summarises the conclusions of this assessment.

North Charnwood:

- 4.45 In the light of these assessments we consider it appropriate to concentrate most of the new development required in North Charnwood within or adjoining Loughborough / Shepshed. This approach will help strengthen Loughborough's role as the primary Sub-Regional Centre outside the Three Cities. Whilst the strategy seeks to maximise the potential for development on previously developed land, to meet the predicted long term growth requirements provision will need to be made for greenfield urban extensions. It has been concluded that the most sustainable option involves comprehensively planned sustainable urban extensions to the west of Loughborough towards Shepshed and south towards Quorn.
- 4.46 The fundamental principle is to move away from the rather piecemeal approach to growth in the past, which often involved the incremental addition of estates of housing on the edge of towns with few additional services and facilities. Instead, the preferred approach is to set the context for longer term growth through substantial, carefully planned urban extensions providing an appropriate mix of uses including work, homes, shopping, leisure and community facilities, in tandem with the necessary green infrastructure essential for quality of life. "Green infrastructure" describes the network of multi-functional greenspace which contributes to a high quality natural and built environment and is required to deliver "liveability" for new communities. It can include parks and recreation areas, more informal areas including wildlife habitats, green corridors, natural and semi-natural habitats, cemeteries, country parks, and historic parks and gardens.

- 4.47 A westward expansion between Loughborough and Shepshed will allow provision for the new Science Park along with general employment and longer term housing requirements to meet the needs of Loughborough and Shepshed. A key element of this preferred option involves securing a new Country Park to meet identified green space needs for the town. Based on the historic Garendon Park this could secure the retention and restoration of the historic park and garden and provide for public access to a Country Park of the highest quality for the benefit of Loughborough and Shepshed residents. Through a remodelled Green Wedge there is a real opportunity to establish a sustainable long term strategy for further growth of the town which safeguards the separate identities of Loughborough and Shepshed, provides for future development needs, and secures a significant recreational asset for the benefit of the town.
- 4.48 It is likely that a westward growth option will require the provision of a new road linking the A512 to the A6 north of the town. This will be needed to serve future development in the area. It could also provide improved links between industrial areas north of the town and the motorway.
- 4.49 Coupled with a westward expansion, any further development requirements should be accommodated to the south between Loughborough and Quorn. In particular a southern expansion incorporating employment uses provides the opportunity to rebalance the distribution of homes and jobs within the town to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement. At present the majority of employment opportunities are focussed to the north and west of the town, with major areas of new housing development to the south.
- 4.50 The Sustainability Appraisal has assessed the social, economic and environmental implications of these preferred growth options. As greenfield developments there will inevitably be effects on environmental interests. Land west of Loughborough towards Shepshed, south of the A512 forms the northernmost edge of the Charnwood Forest and also falls within the National Forest. It is an undulating landscape with views southwards towards the rising landscape of the Outwoods. Land to the north of the A512 is an attractive area with distinctive landscape features focussed on the historic park and garden. However, these areas are set within and influenced by a number of urban influences including the motorway and the urban areas of Shepshed and Loughborough.
- 4.51 Similarly land south of Loughborough is influenced by the Epinal Way extension, the southern edge of Loughborough and Quorn to the south. It is important that, through sensitive master planning, the environmental impacts are mitigated wherever possible. West and south Loughborough are well served by public transport, cycling and walking. With these available facilities and the proximity to Loughborough and Shepshed with their wide range of shops, local services, community facilities and services, there is real scope to reduce car use and encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking. The preferred growth options are also well located in relation to employment opportunities available in Loughborough at the Derby Road Industrial Estate, the University and in the Town Centre.

South Charnwood

- 4.52 In South Charnwood the opportunities for sustainable longer term growth are constrained, in particular by existing highway capacity in and around Leicester. The Structure Plan strategy is to direct development within Central Leicestershire towards the Leicester urban

area and adjoining settlements in surrounding districts. For Charnwood this means the priority locations for development involve:

- Land within and adjoining Birstall and Thurmaston as settlements adjoining Leicester; and
- Land within Charnwood adjoining the Leicester urban area. This includes land north of Hamilton and Glenfield;

- 4.53 Possible directions for growth were identified in the Issues and Options Paper and have been assessed as part of the sustainability appraisal. For South Charnwood the Structure Plan requires a significant allocation of land for employment purposes with a smaller amount of residential development. As a possible future direction for future housing growth, land within Charnwood north of Hamilton and east of Thurmaston represents the most sustainable option.
- 4.54 Within south Charnwood locations for further employment development attractive to the market will be well related to the trunk road network, along the A46 and A6 corridors.
- 4.55 In view of the above the preferred strategy for future growth within South Charnwood is to meet the future need for housing and employment primarily through a northern expansion of Hamilton and an eastern expansion of Thurmaston. Further employment development should be directed to the A6 corridor north of Birstall.
- 4.56 Again as greenfield sites there will inevitably be environmental implications associated with development. Land east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton is not subject to any special landscape designation. Further growth could be contained within the landform defined by the ridgeline north east of Thurmaston. At Birstall the Hallamfields development and associated park and ride facility will change the character of the landscape south of the A46 Leicester Western bypass. Land to the north is more sensitive, being more elevated and prominent to views in the wider landscape. Archaeological interests may be a constraint, particularly north of Hamilton where the presence of the abandoned medieval village of Hamilton would need careful treatment.
- 4.57 Growth east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton would be well related to existing education, health, shopping and other facilities in Leicester and more locally at Hamilton and Thurmaston District Centres. A comprehensively planned urban extension would need to provide necessary additional educational, health, shopping and community facilities. There are highway constraints in the area that would need to be addressed in order to mitigate the impact on rural settlements to the north and in Leicester. Expansion of existing public transport, cycling and walking facilities would offer the potential to reduce car use and encourage the use of other modes.
- 4.58 Growth north of Birstall would provide the opportunity to balance new housing development with further provision for jobs necessary to meet strategic requirements. The area enjoys good access to the A46 and M1 and is located on a high frequency bus route. It provides the opportunity to secure the provision of a high quality employment development in an accessible location. The provision of good quality employment land in locations attractive to the market is important for the local economy.

- 4.59 As with North Charnwood these preferred growth options would involve comprehensively planned sustainable urban extensions providing an appropriate mix of uses either through new provision or by building on and complementing existing uses and facilities in the area.
- 4.60 Initial discussions have been held with key service providers to identify the necessary community, recreational and other infrastructure that would be required to support the proposed urban extensions in the most sustainable way. Provision will need to be made for additional school facilities and health facilities to serve these areas along with local shopping facilities. Comprehensive green infrastructure will need to be provided incorporating children's play space and more formal recreation facilities in line with the Council's adopted open space standards. These detailed requirements will be set out in the Allocations DPD.

The Other Options

- 4.61 The alternative directions for growth outlined in the Issues and Options Paper or presented in response to consultation have been assessed as part of the sustainability appraisal. The Sustainability Appraisal report presents the findings of this assessment and demonstrates that the preferred directions for future growth represent the most sustainable options.
- 4.62 For the other options, the reasons why they have not been selected as our preferred approach can be summarised as follows:

North of Loughborough: Could potentially exacerbate flood risk in the Soar Valley and threaten the separate identity of Hathern. There is less scope here to accommodate development and retain an effective Green Wedge. Additional employment development would not address the locational imbalance between homes and jobs in the town. Compared with the preferred western and southern growth options, this option is less well served by public transport and access to shops, local services, leisure and community facilities are more limited.

East of Loughborough: This option could have implications in terms of flooding and could mean the loss of higher quality agricultural land. An urban extension of sufficient size to meet the strategic requirements would be difficult to accommodate without jumping the floodplain. This approach would result in significant urban intrusion into an open rural landscape. Again public transport and access to shops, local services and facilities are more limited than the preferred options.

Shepshed: As part of the preferred growth option west of Loughborough there may be some potential to accommodate development, particularly for employment purposes east of Shepshed. Expansion elsewhere around Shepshed is not preferred due to the potential impact on the Charnwood Forest, and more limited access to shops, local services and other facilities available in Loughborough.

Adjoining Glenfield/ Leicester: In south Charnwood the options for the expansion of the main urban areas are more limited. This is the main alternative to the preferred option of urban expansions at Birstall, Thurmaston and Hamilton. Land between Anstey and Glenfield/ Leicester is an elevated landscape and a critical part of the Green Wedge between Anstey and Glenfield. Again available land is limited and the scale of additional development required would make it difficult to accommodate development and maintain an effective green wedge.

Service Centres: In North and South Charnwood an alternative option would be to direct development to the identified Service Centres. This approach would not be consistent with the Regional Plan strategy of concentrating development in the larger urban areas such as Leicester and its adjoining settlements and Loughborough and Shepshed. The preferred strategy does not rule out limited further development in Service Centres to meet identified local needs for affordable housing or to support local services and facilities.

The Preferred Policy Option

4.63 Draft Core Policy 2: Development Strategy for North Charnwood

The spatial strategy for North Charnwood is to:

- i) Allocate sufficient land for the homes and jobs required to meet strategic requirements and enable Loughborough /Shepshed to fulfil its role as the primary Sub-Regional Centre in the Three Cities Sub-area;**
- ii) Prioritise the re-use of previously developed land and buildings;**
- iii) Provide for the development of around 5,440 homes and associated infrastructure over the period 2005-2021 at an annual rate of 340 dwellings per annum. This includes:**
 - 1,963 homes already permitted or identified for release;**
 - a target of at least a further 1,680 homes on small sites and previously developed land and buildings within Loughborough / Shepshed and the designated Service Centres;**
 - around 1,800 homes as the first phase of comprehensively planned urban extension west of Loughborough;**
- iv) Maintain the existing supply of employment land by safeguarding key employment sites and provide for the development of around 124 ha of additional employment land over the period 2005-2026. This includes:**
 - 32 ha already permitted or allocated;**
 - up to 50 ha for a Second Science Park as part of the proposed urban extension west of Loughborough;**
 - around 42 ha of general employment land as part of the comprehensively planned urban extensions west and south of Loughborough;**
- v) provide for the growth needs of Loughborough University for academic space, student accommodation and recreational facilities primarily through an expansion of the existing Campus;**
- vi) work with Loughborough University and other partners to make provision for additional recreational and support facilities necessary for**

Loughborough to play a key role in the build up to the London Olympics 2012;

- vii) as part of the proposed urban extension west of Loughborough secure the provision of comprehensively planned green infrastructure including a new County Park based on the historic Garendon Park, and a redefined Green Wedge to safeguard the separate identities of Loughborough and Shepshed;
- viii) Support the vitality and viability of Loughborough town centre and support its development and enhancement for retail, office, commercial, entertainment and leisure facilities in keeping with its role as a primary sub-regional centre;
- ix) Regenerate those areas of relatively higher need, particularly in Loughborough and Shepshed through the safeguarding of existing and provision of new employment opportunities, improved community and recreational facilities and improved access to jobs and services;
- x) Support the further improvement of transport infrastructure, public transport and other alternatives to car use as part of an integrated sustainable land-use and transport strategy;
- xi) Ensure the provision of facilities, services and infrastructure required for the creation of sustainable communities, including the provision of a new link road between the A512 and the A6 north of Loughborough as part of the proposed urban extension west of Loughborough;
- xii) Introduce a flood management strategy for the River Soar and its tributaries;
- xiii) Provide for limited small scale development within or adjoining Service Centres and Other Settlements to meet identified local needs, particularly for affordable housing or to support local services and facilities;

4.64 Draft Core Policy 3: Development Strategy for South Charnwood

The spatial strategy for South Charnwood is to:

- i) Allocate sufficient land for housing and employment to meet strategic requirements to assist Leicester fulfil its role as one of the Principal Urban Areas within the Three Cities sub area;
- ii) Prioritise the re-use of previously developed land and buildings;
- iii) Provide for the development of around 2,880 homes and associated infrastructure over the period 2005-2021 at an annual rate of 180 dwellings per annum. This includes:
 - 1,762 homes already permitted or identified for release;

- a target of at least a further 640 homes on small sites and previously developed land and buildings within Birstall and Thurmaston and the designated Service Centres;
 - around 485 homes as the first phase of a comprehensively planned urban extension north of Hamilton and east of Thurmaston;
- iv) Maintain the existing supply of employment land and provide for the development of around 53 ha of additional employment land over the period 2005-2026. This includes:
- 16.55 ha already permitted or allocated;
 - around 20 ha of general employment land north of Birstall and 17 ha east of Thurmaston;
- v) as part of the proposed urban extensions north of Hamilton and east of Thurmaston, and north of Birstall, secure the provision comprehensively planned green infrastructure to provide a network of multi-functional greenspace including parks and recreation areas, informal areas, natural and semi-natural habitats and green corridors;
- vi) Support the vitality and viability of the existing District Centres at Anstey, Birstall, Syston, and Thurmaston and support their development and enhancement for retail, office, commercial, entertainment and leisure facilities in keeping with their role as District Centres;
- xiv) Regenerate those areas of relatively higher need, particularly in Syston and Anstey through the safeguarding of existing and provision of new employment opportunities, improved community and recreational facilities and improved access to jobs and services;
- xv) Support the further improvement of transport infrastructure, public transport and other alternatives to car use as part of an integrated sustainable land-use and transport strategy;
- xvi) Ensure the provision of essential facilities, services and infrastructure;
- xvii) Introduce a flood management strategy for the River Soar and its tributaries;
- xviii) Provide for limited small scale development in the Service Centres and Other Settlements to meet identified local needs, particularly for affordable housing or to support local services and facilities;

Development within the proposed urban extensions west and south of Loughborough and north of Hamilton and east of Thurmaston will be based upon the principles of development set out the Allocations Development Plan Document;

The strategy provides firm guidance of the directions for growth in north and south Charnwood up to 2021 with flexibility to take account of the outcome of the review of the Regional Plan on housing and employment land requirements.

Reason for Preferred Option:

To reflect government objectives for the development of sustainable communities and reflect the strategy of urban concentration set out in the Regional Plan and Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan and help deliver the vision of the Core Strategy

Housing and Employment Land Supply and Phasing

Background

- 4.65 Government guidance set out in PPG3 indicates that local planning authorities should manage the release of land for housing. The Government has consulted on recent guidance on the provision of land for housing recommending that local planning authorities should provide for 15 years supply of land for housing. The Regional Plan requires the release of housing land to be monitored and managed. The Structure Plan includes policies to phase the release of additional housing and employment land on Greenfield sites. Housing Policy 2 of the Structure Plan phases the release of further greenfield sites in the Borough until after 2011.
- 4.66 The adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan did not include a policy to phase the release of land for housing. The issue of phasing was debated at length during the preparation of the plan. We had sought to introduce a phasing policy through modifications to the Plan. However, the modifications Inspector reporting in August 2002 concluded that in order to meet the strategic housing requirements to 2006 it was necessary to release additional land for housing and, given the limited period of the plan then remaining, it was not possible for the Council to manage the release of housing land.

A Strategy of Managed Release- The Preferred Approach

- 4.67 Our predictions of future housing supply for the Borough as at March 2005 indicates that the strategic housing requirement to 2016 set out in the Structure Plan is likely to be met through the existing supply made up of existing planning permissions, remaining local plan allocations and allowances for small and windfall sites.
- 4.68 The draft revisions to the Regional Plan outline a range of options for future housing growth. These options indicate a possible additional housing requirement for Charnwood of between 370 and 740 dwellings per year. To meet this additional requirement it would be necessary to make provision for the further release of greenfield land towards the end of the period covered by the Core Strategy.
- 4.69 Whilst the future housing requirement for Charnwood likely to emerge from the Regional Plan review is uncertain at the moment, it would be appropriate for the Core Strategy to include a phased approach to the release of further housing land. This reflects the fact that through strategic allocations in the adopted Local Plan the Borough has a generous supply of housing land to meet known requirements at least till 2011. Beyond 2011 it is likely that further greenfield release will be required. This release should be on a phased basis to

provide the necessary control and flexibility and to enable us to manage the release of housing land and to respond to changes in the rate of supply from permitted, allocated and windfall/ urban capacity sites.

The Other Options

4.70 PPG3 requires Councils to apply a plan, monitor and manage approach to housing provision. It is important that policies are in place to manage the release of housing to ensure the best use is made of previously developed land. The larger allocations in the adopted Local Plan will continue to make a significant contribution to housing supply over the next five years or so.

4.71 Without a policy on phasing we would have no control of the release of housing or employment land and would not be able to respond to changes in supply, for example the release of previously developed land being higher or lower than expected.

The Preferred Policy Option

4.72 Draft Core Policy 4: Housing and Employment Land Supply and Phasing

The Borough Council will monitor and manage the release of land for new housing and employment development in three phases, 2005-2011, 2011-2016, 2016-2021 in order to prioritise the re-use of previously developed land.

The release of further greenfield land within the identified strategic directions for growth will be phased as follows:

	2005-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021
North Charnwood	0	900 dwellings	900 dwellings
	50 ha of employment (including up to 30 ha on the Science Park)	32 ha employment (including up to 20 ha on the Science Park)	10 ha employment
South Charnwood	0	200 dwellings	285 dwellings
	20 ha employment	10 ha employment	7 ha employment

The Borough Council will monitor the supply of housing and employment land on an annual basis and adjust the phasing of site release in order to maintain a 5 year supply of housing.

Reason for Preferred Approach

To reflect Government guidance regarding plan monitor and manage and ensure appropriate control over the rate of development and release of greenfield land.

Affordable Housing Provision

Background

- 4.73 It is important that future developments proposed as part of the Core Strategy provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the varied needs of the local communities. National guidance on the provision for affordable housing through the planning system is set out in PPG3 Housing and Circular 6/98. This indicates that affordable housing can be sought on sites of 25 dwellings or more or sites of 1 hectare or more. The Government has consulted on revisions to this guidance which, amongst other changes, would lower the site threshold to 15 dwellings or 0.5 hectares.
- 4.74 The Regional Plan indicates that LDFs should include policies seeking the provision of a mix of dwellings in terms of size, type, affordability and location. The aim is to create inclusive communities providing wider housing opportunity and choice. The Regional Plan sets an indicator of 3,950 affordable units per annum for the East Midlands. The Structure Plan indicates that the level of provision should reflect the results of local needs surveys and assessments. It suggests that the appropriate indicator for Leicestershire is 30% of housing provision being affordable.
- 4.75 The Charnwood Housing Needs Study 2005 identified real problems of affordability within both urban and rural locations in Charnwood. Work at the regional level highlighted Charnwood as one of the areas within the region where, as at 2004, average house prices were more than 4 times average incomes. The study confirmed that affordability was an issue throughout the Borough.

A Policy for Affordable Housing Provision- The Preferred Approach

- 4.76 The updated Housing Needs Survey 2005 establishes the overall scale of affordable housing need across the Borough. It identifies an annual affordable housing shortfall of 279 dwellings. On the basis of this need assessment the study concludes that a target of at least 30% of affordable housing on qualifying sites is justified. This approach has regard to issues relating to the economics of provision.
- 4.77 Our Housing Strategy 2005-2010 aims to increase the availability of good quality affordable homes for people in housing need as part of a co-ordinated approach to regeneration. A priority action is to increase affordable housing targets on new developments to 30%. In rural settlements of less than 3,000 population the strategy recognises that the supply of affordable housing is limited. Amongst other measures it supports the release of "exception sites" and the preparation of Village Housing Need Surveys.
- 4.78 For the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, affordable housing provision was sought on sites of 25 dwellings or more or over 1 hectare in accordance with government guidance at the time. The Government has consulted on changes that would reduce this threshold to 15 dwellings or 0.5 hectares. We will seek to secure affordable housing

provision on sites in accordance with the relevant thresholds set out in national planning policy statements.

- 4.79 This approach has meant that the opportunities to secure affordable provision in rural settlements have been limited. Analysis of permissions for housing in the smaller settlements has shown that the majority of new housing that has come forward has been on smaller sites of less than 10 dwellings. For the rural settlements a lower site threshold for the provision of affordable housing should therefore apply. The strategy will seek the provision of elements of affordable housing on sites on 5 dwellings or more or 0.15 hectares in those rural communities with a population of 3,000 or less.

The Other Options

- 4.80 The identified level of affordable housing need in the Borough provides clear justification for a policy to seek to secure affordable housing provision on sites in accordance with national and strategic planning policies. Options relate to the target for provision and the site thresholds to be applied.
- 4.81 A lower target would not reflect the scale of identified need in the Borough or make most use of the scope to secure affordable provision as part of new housing developments. A target in excess of 30% is likely to threaten the viability of sites, particularly previously developed sites in urban areas.
- 4.82 In terms of the site threshold, lower or higher thresholds could be applied if supported by evidence from the Housing Needs Assessment. For the rural villages a higher threshold would mean many of the opportunities to secure affordable provision on sites would be lost. A lower threshold below the suggested 5 dwellings is not considered realistic.

The Preferred Policy Option

4.83 Draft Core Policy 5: Affordable Housing Provision

The Borough Council will seek to negotiate the provision of an appropriate mix of new housing in terms of dwelling size, type, tenure and affordability to meet identified local needs.

The Council will seek to negotiate a minimum of 30% affordable housing units on all sites meeting the thresholds set out in national policy.

In settlements with a population of 3,000 or less the threshold will be sites of 5 dwellings or more or sites of 0.15 hectares or more.

Reason for Preferred Approach

To secure the delivery of affordable housing on new housing sites and help sustain rural communities.

The Development Strategy is illustrated on the Key Diagram.

Chapter 5: Delivering Sustainable Development

Introduction

- 5.1 In the last three chapters we have identified the key issues facing the Borough, our vision for Charnwood to 2021 and our preferred strategy for accommodating new development including the new homes and jobs we need to plan for over the next 15 years and beyond.
- 5.2 This chapter sets out the key strategic policies or “building blocks” that need to be in place to ensure that this new development is provided in the most sustainable way and helps to make Charnwood’s communities more sustainable tomorrow than they are today. These policies, amongst other things, are about securing quality, sustainable design, safeguarding our natural and built heritage, ensuring everybody has equal opportunity and making sure that the necessary educational, community, shopping, recreational, transport and other facilities are planned and provided alongside new development.

Quality in New Development

Background

- 5.3 PPS1 emphasises the importance of ensuring good quality development through good and inclusive design and ensuring that development contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable mixed communities. It sees good design as a key element to achieving sustainable development, and notes that good design is not just about aesthetics. Good design is about addressing the connections between people and places, integrating new development into the existing urban form and natural and built environments, securing successful, safe and inclusive communities where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities. It stresses that local planning authorities should not accept design proposals which fail to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.
- 5.4 The joint ODPM/ CABE publication “By Design- Design in the Planning System, Towards Better Practice” outlines 7 key design objectives:
- **Character-** a place with its own identity- reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture;
 - **Continuity and enclosure-** public and private spaces clearly distinguished;
 - **Quality of the public realm-** attractive and successful outdoor areas that are safe, and work effectively for all in society;
 - **Ease of movement-** a place that is easy to get to and move through;
 - **Legibility-** a place with a clear image;
 - **Adaptability-** development that can easily respond to change;
 - **Diversity-** variety and choice through a mix of uses that respond to local needs.

- 5.5 Both the Regional Plan and Structure Plan recognise the importance of good design and include policies seeking to encourage and promote good design within the region and County. The adopted Local Plan included a general policy on design. We have produced a Supplementary Planning Document- *Leading in Design*, to provide further guidance on the implementation of this policy and encourage good design in all new developments in the Borough. The biennial Design Awards Scheme recognises examples of good design as a way of encouraging the application of good design principles.
- 5.6 A number of Parishes have or are intending to produce Village Design Statements to identify those locally distinctive aspects of local building styles and materials that should be reflected in new development. Village design statements have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents for four villages to date. We will actively engage with other community groups in the preparation of additional village design statements which will be adopted as SPD to help inform the consideration of planning applications.
- 5.7 Much of the new development that has taken place in the Borough has been of a high quality, but it is recognised that there is room for improvement. The implementation of the Local Plan allocation at Hallam Fields north of Birstall, shows how, through partnership working between the local planning authority, developer and local community, high quality design can be achieved in large new developments.

Good Design- The Preferred Approach

- 5.8 Charnwood is an attractive and vibrant Borough with an impressive and diverse legacy of architecture, settlements and landscapes. Good design can make a real difference in shaping our built environment, the sustainability of development and quality of life. The *Charnwood 2021* Core Strategy needs to set out the key strategic principles in order to ensure that development protects and enhances the local distinctiveness of settlements in Charnwood and the quality of life. More detailed guidance will be provided in the General Development Control Policies DPD and through the supplementary guidance in *Leading in Design*.
- 5.9 Good design is central to delivering the vision of *Charnwood 2021* and delivering more sustainable communities in Charnwood. The principles of good design will run through the various *Charnwood 2021* documents from the Core Strategy to more detailed DPDs and SPDs guiding the detail of new development and the approach to conservation. The suggested policy sets out our approach to securing design quality in new development. For major and more sensitive proposals, design statements and the use of the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) to demonstrate sustainable environmental performance will be important. Developers will be encouraged to seek to achieve a "very good" rating against the BREEAM standard.

The Other Options

- 5.10 Good design is a key Government objective and central to the delivery of sustainable communities. It is important that the Core Strategy includes a statement relating to this key principle. Therefore no other options have been identified.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.11 Draft Core Policy 6: Design Quality

The Borough Council will encourage good quality design which provides usable, durable and adaptable places, secures the efficient use of land by building to higher densities and protects and enhances the form, local character and distinctiveness of Charnwood's built and natural environment.

New development will be required to:

- i) reflect a clear understanding of the local physical, social, economic and environmental context for the proposed development;
- ii) provide for a compatible mix of uses where appropriate, particularly in town and village centres and main movement routes;
- iii) help secure a hierarchy of usable spaces providing for all ages and accessible to all, including people with disabilities;
- iv) provide walkable developments offering real transport choice, favouring walking, cycling and public transport;
- v) provide streets that are safe and comfortable spaces for all users;
- vi) integrate with existing routes to provide linked up places connecting with the wider area, in particular public facilities;
- vii) provide for the needs of all including the young, elderly and people with disabilities;
- viii) create safe places through the adoption of designing-out-crime principles to provide natural surveillance, visibility, and well lit environments;
- ix) provide clearly defined public and private realms with active frontages which reinforce and define streets and public spaces;
- x) incorporate comprehensive landscaping within and around the development appropriate to the scale and impact of the development;
- xi) secure the retention of features of biodiversity interest including habitats, buffer areas and wildlife corridors;
- xii) maximise energy efficiency through siting and design, and the use of sustainable materials;
- xiii) incorporate renewable energy facilities and energy saving technologies;
- xiv) provide sustainable urban drainage systems where appropriate to limit waste water and water pollution and reduce flood risk;
- xv) incorporate appropriate waste management and recycling facilities;

- xvi) **foster a sense of place and reinforce local character and distinctiveness through appropriate design detailing, use of materials and provision for public art.**

In developing their proposals the Borough Council will expect applicants to take account of Village Design Statements, Landscape Character Statements, Conservation Character Statements and other design statements illustrating important features of local distinctiveness.

For major and sensitive developments applications should be supported by a Design Statement and BREEAM assessment to demonstrate environmental performance.

Reason for Preferred Option

To ensure high quality developments that reflect the principles of good quality design.

Landscape Character

Background

- 5.12 Charnwood contains a mix of quite distinct landscapes, the most well recognised being the Charnwood Forest, from which the Borough gets its name. This largely unspoilt rolling upland now defines the eastern extent of the National Forest. Other areas include the river valleys of the Soar and Wreake, the Wolds and the western edge of High Leicestershire which extends into the Borough around South Croxton and Queniborough.
- 5.13 The Regional Plan notes that the East Midlands has the lowest area of nationally designated landscapes of all the English Regions and also has a relatively poor level of tree cover when compared to the UK as a whole. It seeks to secure the protection, appropriate management and enhancement of the region's natural assets, and an increase in woodland cover. Outside the nationally designated landscapes of the Peak District National Park and the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, it seeks to promote initiatives to protect and enhance the region's natural and heritage landscape assets, in particular the Sherwood, Charnwood and Needwood Forests.
- 5.14 The importance of the National Forest project is recognised in the Structure Plan, which includes a policy supporting further woodland planting with public access within the National Forest. The policy indicates that proposals for leisure and tourism should be provided in the National Forest area beyond the boundary of the Charnwood Forest. The Charnwood Forest is the only landscape area in Leicestershire specifically recognised in the Structure Plan. The plan aims to strictly control development within the Forest area.
- 5.15 The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy assessed the nature of Leicestershire's landscapes applying Countryside Commission Landscape Assessment guidance. It identifies 18 character areas within Leicestershire, 7 falling within Charnwood. These landscape character areas are:
- Charnwood Forest;
 - The Wolds;

- Langley Lowlands (area north west of Shepshed);
- Soar Valley;
- High Leicestershire;
- The Wolds;
- Wreake Valley.

5.16 National policy guidance in PPS7 discourages the designation of different areas of landscape character, indicating that local planning authorities should adopt a character area approach instead.

Safeguarding Charnwood's Landscapes- The Preferred Approach

5.17 The special character and variety of Charnwood's landscapes are much valued. They help to define much of the special character and identity of the Borough. The adopted Local Plan identified a number of landscape character areas to which different policies applied. These included three Areas of Particularly Attractive Landscape- the Charnwood Forest, Wreake Valley and High Leicestershire, and one Area of Local Landscape Value- the Soar Valley. This plethora of designations is potentially confusing and undermines the importance of other areas of countryside not subject to special designation. The Wolds was not subject to special designation in the Plan but is still an area of countryside with its own special character worthy of protection.

5.18 Government guidance in PPS7 emphasises the importance of protecting the character of the countryside for its own sake and notes that too many special designations can undermine policies to protect other non-designated areas of countryside. It recommends a criteria based policy approach based on an understanding of the particular character of the landscape through landscape character appraisals.

5.19 The Charnwood Forest area has a particularly special character which justifies a special designation in the Core Strategy. This approach would reflect the approach set out in the Structure Plan. The Core Strategy will establish the broad principles for safeguarding the character of Charnwood's landscapes. More detailed policies will be developed through the General Development Control Policies DPD. The National Forest is an initiative of national significance and needs to be reflected in the Core Strategy policies.

The Other Options

5.20 The alternative approach would be to continue with the adopted Local Plan strategy and identify a number of "special" landscape areas. PPS7 suggests that this approach may be acceptable where there is sufficient justification. It is considered that the criteria based approach, supported by landscape character assessments would offer clearer policy guidance and would ensure that all of the countryside in the Borough is recognised as important for its own sake. The exception to this is the Charnwood Forest where the long established strategic approach recognising its intrinsic qualities and the need to manage the pressures for change in the area justifies a special policy designation.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.21 Draft Core Policy 7: Countryside and Landscape Character

Land lying outside the defined limits to development, proposed areas for growth and areas of Green Wedge will be defined as countryside and will be

protected for its own sake. Planning permission for development will be not be granted unless:

- i) the appearance and character of the landscape, including features such as biodiversity, views, settlement pattern and local character is safeguarded and enhanced; and
- ii) built development is well integrated with existing development and existing buildings are re-used where appropriate; and
- iii) the development is limited to:
 - a. small scale development for employment, tourism, recreation or leisure that will help to support a sustainable rural economy;
 - b. agricultural or forestry buildings including dwellings for workers with an essential requirement to locate in the countryside;
 - c. affordable housing in accordance with the rural exceptions policy;
 - d. land extensive outdoor recreational uses that do not involve substantial built development;
 - e. telecommunications and energy installations, transport infrastructure and minerals extraction and waste management development where an overriding need for the development to be located in the countryside can be demonstrated, and appropriate mitigation works are proposed.

Proposals will be judged against more detailed policies and landscape character assessments included in the General Development Control Policy DPD and the Landscape Character Areas SPD.

5.22 Draft Core Policy 8: The National Forest

Within that part of the National Forest within Charnwood, development involving new buildings, significant structures or other operations will not be permitted unless appropriate provision is made for the creation of a woodland setting reflecting the National Forest context.

Proposals for the creation of new forest related leisure and tourism facilities within the National Forest in Charnwood will be resisted.

5.23 Draft Core Policy 9: The Charnwood Forest

Within the Charnwood Forest Policy Area defined on the Proposals Map, development will only be acceptable where it is appropriate to a countryside location and the special character of the area in terms of its landscape, ecology, cultural and built heritage and recreational value is conserved or enhanced.

Development which could adversely affect these special qualities will not be permitted unless a clear overriding need can be demonstrated and appropriate compensation works are proposed.

Reason for Preferred Option

To reflect national and strategic policy guidance and ensure the special character of the Charnwood landscapes is safeguarded and enhanced.

Settlement Identity

Background

- 5.24 Charnwood is characterised by a relatively concentrated settlement pattern. Around Loughborough the settlements of Shepshed, Hathern and Quorn all lie within 5 kilometres of the town centre. In the south of the Borough Anstey, Thurcaston, Cropston, Birstall and Thurmaston are all close to the edge of Leicester. Within the Soar and Wreake valleys the larger settlements are all close to one another. It is only in the more rural parts of the Borough, in the Charnwood Forest, the Wolds and High Leicestershire where we find a more dispersed settlement pattern.
- 5.25 This has meant that issues of settlement identity have long been important for local residents and have been reflected in planning policy. Previous local plans have sought to protect the separate identity of existing settlements through the application of policies to protect “green wedges” of open land around the main urban areas of Leicester and Loughborough and “areas of local separation” between other villages.
- 5.26 Green wedges are an important planning tool in Leicestershire helping to ensure that, as the main urban areas (in our case Loughborough and Leicester) have expanded to meet development needs, important areas of open land have been incorporated in any new development. Green wedges are not Green Belt by another name. They are not intended to provide a blanket restriction on development. Rather they help to guide and direct urban development and provide “green lungs” penetrating the urban area, preserving and enhancing links between urban areas and the countryside. In this way they are an important tool in shaping urban growth so that as urban areas expand open land is incorporated. The main function of green wedges are to:
- protect structurally important areas of open land which influence the form and direction of urban development;
 - ensure that areas of open land extend outwards between the existing and planned development limits of the urban areas;
 - preserve landscape and wildlife links between the countryside and urban open spaces; and
 - prevent the coalescence and maintain the separate physical identity of settlements adjoining the main urban areas.
- 5.27 Areas of local separation have also been important in safeguarding the separate identities of other settlements. The adopted Local Plan identifies areas of local separation between the larger settlements in the Soar and Wreake Valleys.

5.28 The Structure Plan emphasises the importance of Green Wedges as a tool to guide and direct urban development in accordance with the strategy of urban concentration. It indicates that in allocating land for new homes and jobs in accordance with the strategy of urban concentration and the sequential approach to development, the defined boundaries of existing green wedges will need to be reviewed. Where urban extensions are planned, new or extended green wedges may need to be defined. The Plan recognises the potential for properly managed green wedges to improve the quality of life for residents of adjoining urban areas by providing opportunities for public access to open space, countryside and the National Forest. In tandem with the Green Wedge policy, the Structure Plan supports the identification of areas of local separation to maintain the separate character and identity of other settlements not covered by Green Wedge policy.

Safeguarding Settlement Identity- The Preferred Approach

5.29 Both the Regional Plan and Structure Plan establish a strategy of urban concentration as the most sustainable solution to accommodate future development needs. This recognises that the expansion of existing main urban areas are likely to represent the most sustainable development option by reducing the need to travel longer distances from home to work, shops and services, securing the most efficient use of existing infrastructure, conserving the countryside, and ensuring the socially excluded benefit from development activity.

5.30 Green wedge and local separation policies are a valuable tool to help mould and direct future urban growth. It is not the purpose of these policies to frustrate urban growth or to redirect growth to less sustainable locations. Through the careful planning of green wedges in conjunction with proposals for development, more sustainable urban extensions can be provided which incorporate areas of open land which provide for public access and recreation and maintain links between the urban areas and countryside and thus contribute to the quality of life for all people living in the urban areas.

5.31 The adopted Local Plan established quite extensive areas of Green Wedge around Loughborough and in the south of the Borough around Leicester. In order to accommodate the preferred directions for growth, the existing areas of Green Wedge to the west and south of Loughborough will need to be reviewed. An expanded green wedge will need to be defined in association with the planned urban extension east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton. This review will be informed by a detailed landscape assessment to identify those structurally important areas of open land extending between the existing and planned areas of development that will preserve strategic landscape and wildlife links to the countryside and prevent coalescence and maintain the physical identity of settlements. The opportunities to secure appropriate public access and recreational facilities for the benefit of urban residents will also be a key consideration.

5.32 Our strategy to accommodate most of our future development requirements through comprehensively planned sustainable extensions to the main urban areas means that areas of local separation between the villages can be safeguarded.

The Other Options

5.33 The alternative options considered would be to dispense with the green wedge and separation policies or alternatively to maintain the existing designations without any amendment.

5.34 Without policies for the safeguarding of green wedges and areas of local separation, the separate identities of settlements could be threatened and urban growth that did take place would be likely to be less sustainable by not incorporating appropriate green infrastructure. The retention of existing areas without review would lead to less sustainable patterns of development contrary to the locational strategy of the Regional Plan and Structure Plan. The existing areas of Green Wedge provide limited opportunities for public access and recreation and therefore, other than their visual qualities, make a limited contribution towards the quality of life of urban residents. Using the Green Wedge policy as it was intended, as a tool to influence the form and direction of urban growth in association with a long term direction of growth option, has the scope to secure real and lasting benefits in terms quality of life by securing public access and recreational facilities.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.35 Draft Core Policy 10: Settlement Identity

In association with the planned directions for growth detailed in Draft Core Policies 2 and 3, areas of Green Wedge will be defined between:

- i) Loughborough and the adjoining settlements of Shepshed, Hathern and Quorn;**
- ii) Thurmaston/ Syston/ Hamilton/ Barkby Thorpe;**
- iii) Birstall/ Thurmaston/ Leicester**

Existing areas of Green Wedge in the following locations will be safeguarded unless an identified local need for development justifies a review of boundaries:

- iv) Beaumont Leys/ Birstall/ Thurcaston/ Anstey/ Cropston;**
- v) Beaumont Leys/ Glenfield/ Anstey/ Groby.**

The defined areas of Green Wedges should:

- a) Protect structurally important areas of open land influencing the form and direction of urban development;**
- b) Ensure open land extends outwards between existing and planned development;**
- c) Preserve strategic landscape and wildlife links between the countryside and urban open spaces; and**
- d) Prevent coalescence and maintain the physical identity of settlements adjoining Leicester and Loughborough.**

The provision of appropriate recreational facilities in Green Wedges will be supported to ensure the positive management of these areas and their

enhancement as key components of green infrastructure contributing to the quality of life of urban residents.

Elsewhere, existing areas of local separation will continue to be safeguarded unless an identified local need for development justifies a review of boundaries. Any review will need to ensure that those predominantly open areas of land essential to maintain the separate identity of settlements are retained.

The detailed boundaries of Green Wedges and Areas of Local Separation and policies guiding the uses appropriate in these areas will be set out in the Allocations DPD.

Reason for Preferred Option

To ensure that important areas of open land between urban areas are safeguarded without prejudicing the Regional Plan strategy of urban concentration or leading to less sustainable patterns of development.

Infrastructure Provision

Background

- 5.36 Ensuring adequate infrastructure provision is an important feature of a sustainable development strategy. This includes necessary physical infrastructure such as roads, cycleways, water supply and reclamation, flood prevention and drainage, waste disposal, electricity, gas, telecommunications and ICT, and community infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, public transport, community buildings, sport and recreation facilities and open space.
- 5.37 PPS12 highlights the important role of the planning system to coordinate new development with the infrastructure it demands. The Core Strategy should look to establish a clear picture of the future shape of communities over a reasonable period of time to enable the bodies responsible for infrastructure provision to plan with some certainty. They also have an important role in influencing the Core Strategy so that it takes account of infrastructure constraints and needs. The current approach to securing contributions to necessary infrastructure through the planning system is set out in Circular 05/05. Where appropriate contributions to necessary facilities can be sought either by agreement or conditions attached to planning permissions. The approach to securing contributions is currently being reviewed and new guidance is awaited.
- 5.38 The Structure Plan indicates that developers should meet the requirements for and costs of relevant infrastructure and facilities required to support development. Where further Greenfield land is required for development the Structure Plan promotes developments of sufficient size to be able to support significant developer contributions towards transport and other infrastructure. The adopted Local Plan included a policy indicating that appropriate contributions would be sought in association with new development. Through the application of this policy significant contributions to physical and community infrastructure have been secured in association with new development. This has included contributions to new transport infrastructure including roads, park and ride facilities, bus

and cycle facilities, schools and other community facilities, recreational and leisure facilities and affordable housing.

A Planned Approach to Infrastructure Provision- The Preferred Approach

- 5.39 Representations on previous local plans and comments received on the Issues and Options paper have highlighted concerns that in some settlements in Charnwood improvements to the physical and community infrastructure have not kept up with the pace and scale of new development. Over the past 10 years or so a number of Charnwood's settlements have experienced quite significant expansion. In some locations this has added to pressure on existing services and facilities. Whilst contributions can be sought from developers to compensate for the additional pressures on local infrastructure and facilities arising from their developments, they cannot be expected to make good existing deficiencies.
- 5.40 Most of the physical and community infrastructure in Charnwood is focussed on the main urban areas. As the main County Town, Loughborough is home to a range of facilities and services meeting the needs of the Borough and beyond, including the Epinal Way Hospital, fire and ambulance services and a wide range of educational facilities.
- 5.41 In taking a long term view to 2021 and beyond and establishing the broad directions for future growth, the Core Strategy should help the various service providers to plan future provision with some certainty. Concentrating most of the development required in strategic urban extensions will make best use of existing infrastructure and enable significant contributions to any necessary improvements to the existing physical and community infrastructure to be secured.
- 5.42 Discussions with key stakeholders have identified a range of requirements for additional infrastructure. The Strategic Health Authority have identified a need for a mental health unit. There is also a need to identify additional cemetery land in a number of communities. Sites for additional community facilities will be identified in the Allocations DPD.

The Other Options

- 5.43 No other options have been identified as *Charnwood 2021* needs to include policies to maintain and improve the Borough's physical and community infrastructure and ensure the necessary contributions associated with proposed new development are secured.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.44 Draft Core Policy 11: Infrastructure Provision

Planning permission will be granted for proposals which meet the identified requirements for the improvement or provision of new physical and community infrastructure necessary to support the development.

When granting planning permission for new development which would not be acceptable without reasonably related infrastructure or community facilities, the Borough Council will seek to secure their provision by entering into a legal agreement with the owners, applicants or developers involved and will negotiate accordingly. Developers may be invited to provide and contribute towards:

- i) the provision of off-site sustainable transport and drainage infrastructure; and/or
- ii) the provision of on or off-site facilities to secure necessary provision for the social, educational, recreational, sporting and community needs of the development; and/or
- iii) the provision of affordable or special needs housing; and/or
- iv) the provision of facilities or amenities to offset or mitigate the impact of the development on existing green infrastructure including recreation resources, protected habitats and species or recognised heritage sites.

Reasons for the Preferred Option

To secure the provision of necessary infrastructure and contribute to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities.

A Strategy for Social Inclusion

Background

- 5.45 A key objective of national planning policy is the development of strong, vibrant and sustainable communities and promoting community cohesion in both urban and rural areas. This means meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunity for all citizens.
- 5.46 Regeneration of the built environment alone cannot deal with poverty, inequality and social exclusion. These issues can only be addressed through the better integration of all strategies and programmes, partnership working and effective community involvement.
- 5.47 The Regional Plan highlights the regional priorities for regeneration including the Principal Urban Areas and Sub-Regional Centres that exhibit very high and concentrated levels of deprivation. The Structure Plan indicates that measures will be taken to improve the quality of life within those areas suffering relative deprivation. Pockets of deprivation particularly in Loughborough are identified as priority areas.
- 5.48 Recent work undertaken as part of the government sponsored Community Cohesion Pathfinder initiative has confirmed that there are areas of relatively higher need within the Borough. A key output from the Pathfinder Initiative in Charnwood was a Renewal Framework. Through an analysis of statistical data, local consultations, key national, regional and local policy and strategy the framework identifies primary and secondary priority areas in Charnwood for developing programmes to tackle pockets of deprivation:
- Primary areas: Loughborough and Shepshed;
 - Secondary areas: South Charnwood villages and Soar valley villages.
- 5.49 Recent information provided by the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 confirms many of the Renewal Framework's findings, but highlights the particular problems in Loughborough.

It shows that the areas of greatest need are in located in Loughborough and are ranked within the 30 most deprived areas in the County (outside Leicester).

A Focus for Regeneration- The Preferred Approach

5.50 The Charnwood Renewal Framework has confirmed that the communities in Loughborough and Shepshed continue to suffer high and concentrated levels of deprivation. These problems have been recognised for some time. Previous planning strategies for Loughborough going back to the early 1970's put forward policies to tackle these problems. Although some progress has been made, the problems remain. Recent closures in the local textile industry have added to the problems. The loss of local employment opportunities has made it harder for residents in these communities to access job opportunities. These problems are exacerbated by language barriers within the ethnic minority communities.

5.51 A spatial strategy to tackle these problems will depend on coordinated action by a range of public and private partners and the targeting of resources to the areas of greatest need. The Core Strategy can establish the framework for this coordinated action. It can also identify the scope to address some of the identified problems through policies for the development and use of land.

5.52 The main issues in the area that need to be addressed include:

- Lack of community facilities particularly for young people;
- Lack of open space and recreational facilities;
- Limited access to local job opportunities;
- Areas of vacancy and dereliction;
- Low skill levels and educational attainment;
- Poor quality housing.

The Other Options

5.53 A do nothing strategy with *Charnwood 2021* not seeking to regenerate areas of relatively higher need is not an option. Promoting social inclusion is a key objective of sustainable development and an important element in helping to deliver urban renaissance in line with government objectives.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.54 Draft Core Policy 12: A Strategy for Regeneration

Working in partnership with other agencies and local communities the Borough Council will take action to improve the quality of life for residents living in areas of relative deprivation by:

- i) securing local opportunities for employment through the safeguarding of existing employment areas and the allocation of land for new employment development where appropriate;**

- ii) supporting the provision of improved open space and recreational opportunities;
- iii) supporting improved access to education, learning and skills training;
- iv) in conjunction with the relevant agencies securing the provision of improved community facilities;
- v) improving public and community transport, cycling and walking links to local facilities and services;
- vi) supporting a programme of environmental improvements targeting the areas of relative deprivation as a priority;
- vii) prioritising the areas of relative deprivation for grants under the Council's private sector Housing Improvement programme.

The primary focus of measures to achieve sustainable regeneration will be those areas in Loughborough and Shepshed suffering high and concentrated levels of deprivation. Priority will also be given to areas in Anstey, Syston, Thurmaston and Mountsorrel.

Reasons for Preferred Option

Securing the regeneration of areas of identified need will support government objectives for social inclusion.

Loughborough University and College

Background

- 5.55 Loughborough University and Loughborough College are important contributors to the local economy, both in terms of the number of people whom they employ and the investment that they attract into the town. Their reputation for excellence in research and education ensures for Loughborough particular recognition in the national and international arena. However, that success has imposed additional demands and pressures upon the 'host' community.
- 5.56 Over recent years those demands and pressures have been manifest in the degree to which increasing numbers of students have fuelled the buy for rent housing market, primarily in locations conveniently located in relation to the two main institutions. Local communities increasingly have become frustrated by the impact of those trends upon the quality of life enjoyed by the residual resident population. Frequently cited concerns include:
- The erosion of the sense of community and social interaction normally engendered in a stable, balanced community;
 - Exclusion of first time and young family buyers to the detriment of the social balance and community facilities, especially schools;

- Congestion and disturbance during term time, sharply contrasted with an air of abandonment during vacations;
- Higher incidence of anti-social behaviour, particularly at unsociable hours;
- Increased levels of crime and the fear of crime;
- Poorer standards of property maintenance and repair;
- Accumulations of waste and rubbish, particularly towards the end of the academic year;
- Littering and fly-posting;
- The proliferation of letting signs, adding to the impression of transience and detracting from the character of the street scene.

Loughborough as a University Town- The Preferred Approach

- 5.57 While acknowledging that there are a great many responsible and considerate students and landlords within the community, the problems impinging upon the 'host community' are indicative of the social stress and imbalance occasioned by the concentration of a substantial number of essentially transient residents within relatively small neighbourhoods.
- 5.58 The relatively small scale of Loughborough in relation to the size of the University suggests strongly that existing solutions designed to encourage balanced communities in large cities simply could not successfully be transplanted here. Loughborough needs its own local solution tailored to local circumstances and flexible enough to keep up with the pace of change.
- 5.59 "Leading in Leicestershire" – the Council's Corporate Plan to 2011/12, under the strategic aim of a "Sustainable Environment" sets out as a priority the need to work through the Loughborough University / Loughborough College Community Joint Liaison Committee in developing a multi agency approach to manage the environmental and social impact of the student population with the intention of achieving a more balanced residential mix and consequent environmental improvements. That commitment is reflected also within the aims set out under "A Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment," where actions linked to "Improved Community Cohesion" include working with Loughborough University and other partners to actively address the effects of a large body of students on the Borough.
- 5.60 In recent years the University has grown both in terms of student numbers and floorspace. It is important for the economy of Loughborough and Charnwood that the University retains its vitality and reputation for excellence in research and education. This may mean some growth over the period to 2021. However, it is essential that any growth in the size of the University:
- Does not have further impact on housing areas in Loughborough;
 - Can be accommodated without making it difficult to meet Charnwood's other land use needs; and

- Can be achieved without putting additional adverse strain on the transport network in Loughborough.

5.61 The Core Strategy will introduce a mechanism to manage the growth of the University and the provision of student housing. To manage the impact on the 'host community' where the University or College expands their academic or administrative space, there should be a matching increase in student bedspaces on campus.

5.62 The Council wishes to restrict the level of unmanaged student accommodation in the private rented sector to current levels, around 6,400 bedspaces, in the short term and to seek a reduction of some 1,000 bedspaces in the longer term.

5.63 In order to reduce the impact of students living in Loughborough, the University Campus will be the focus for additional purpose built student accommodation.

The Other Options

5.64 Possible alternative options would be either to do nothing or seek to limit the growth of the University. The real concerns of local residents about the impact of the University on the town make it clear that a "do nothing" option is not appropriate.

5.65 The Council acknowledges the significant economic benefits the presence of the University brings to the town and Borough. A strategy to limit further growth would have significant implications for future economic prospects. The preferred approach is to work in partnership with the University and College through a strategy to manage future growth and their impacts on the town.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.66 Draft Core Policy 13: Loughborough University

Further development for academic and ancillary uses (Class D1) and for student accommodation (classes C1, C2 and C3), including redevelopment of existing buildings, will be permitted on Loughborough University Campus/ Science Park where this will allow additional improved facilities to be provided and make more efficient use of land will be supported.

Proposals for additional academic and ancillary accommodation will be matched by an increase in purpose built student accommodation in line with the increase in student numbers. Planning permission will only be granted for additional academic and ancillary accommodation where the number of full-time Loughborough University students living in unmanaged accommodation does not exceed 6,400 students up to 2011 and 5,400 from 2016.

Where appropriate the Council will seek to negotiate:

- i) to ensure that student numbers only increase commensurate with additional purpose built student accommodation; and**
- ii) for the resolution of traffic and car parking problems including the improvement of pedestrian, cycling and walking facilities; and**

- iii) measures to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

Draft Core Policy 14: Student Housing Provision in Loughborough

Loughborough University Campus/ Science Park will be the primary location for additional purpose built managed student accommodation. Supplementary accommodation may be provided in the town centre and other locations where the proportion of student households is low.

Development involving purpose built managed student accommodation will:

- i) be subject to occupancy restrictions or other arrangements to ensure the accommodation is only available to those in full-time education;
- ii) secure appropriate management controls, including no car agreements where off street parking is not available;
- iii) not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents.

Reason for Preferred Option

To reflect government objectives for the development of sustainable communities by reducing the impact of large numbers of students living in unmanaged accommodation in parts of Loughborough.

Leisure and Recreation

Background

- 5.67 Good access to leisure facilities and open space is a key contributor to well-being and health, enabling people to have a place to exercise and play. It is a key feature of sustainable communities. Charnwood has a wide range of leisure and recreation facilities. Loughborough University is world renowned as a centre of sporting excellence and is likely to play an important role in the lead up to the 2012 Olympics. The Regional Plan recognises the regional importance of the clustering of sporting excellence in Loughborough, in particular as a catalyst for economic development associated with sport.
- 5.68 Loughborough, Mountsorrel and South Charnwood Leisure Centres are well used facilities much valued by the local communities. We are investigating options to transform South Charnwood Swimming Pool in Syston into a new leisure facility. This would complement the existing centres at Loughborough and Mountsorrel to provide 3 quality leisure hubs easily accessible to all Charnwood residents. The Charnwood Forest provides for informal recreational opportunities and most settlements in the Borough have reasonable recreational and open space provision.
- 5.69 PPS17 requires local planning authorities to undertake regular assessments of the available recreational facilities and open spaces to understand the needs of local communities. The Structure Plan includes a range of policies dealing with different aspects of leisure provision.

- 5.70 Our Green Spaces Strategy assessed the level of recreational space provision within the Borough. It identified particular deficiencies in District Park provision north and south of Loughborough, and in Shepshed, Birstall and Syston. It suggests that further country park facilities should be sought where opportunities and funding permit. The strategy also suggests that greater green space provision should be considered in the Soar valley area to provide easy access to facilities for residents in the adjoining villages.
- 5.71 More detailed assessment of space provision has identified particular deficiencies of local open space facilities in eastern Loughborough. The lack of easy access to local open space in this part of town is an issue that has been raised by local residents. It is one aspect of the problems of deprivation experienced in this area.
- 5.72 We support a programme of physical improvements to parks and open spaces and also run a series of successful activities and events to promote sport and recreation within the local community. Recreational Support officers have been appointed to work with the more disadvantaged communities to promote greater participation in sport.

A Strategy for Leisure and Recreation- The Preferred Approach

- 5.73 There are significant opportunities to improve leisure and recreational provision in the Borough and take full advantage of the economic benefits associated with the clustering of sporting excellence around Loughborough University. The London Olympics will take place in the middle of the *Charnwood 2021* plan period. There are likely to be significant spin-off benefits for the local economy arising from the role the University will play in the build up to the Olympics in 2012, as a centre of excellence and training centre for Olympic teams. *Charnwood 2021* can help to maximise these benefits through a planning strategy which makes appropriate land-use provision to support Loughborough's role as an important Olympic centre.
- 5.74 Whilst overall recreational facilities are good and Charnwood residents enjoy access to areas such as Bradgate Park, the Outwoods, Beacon Country Park and Swithland Wood in the Charnwood Forest, and Watermead Country Park providing for more informal recreational opportunities, the Green Spaces Strategy has identified gaps in provision. For a town of its size, Loughborough lacks a larger District Park facility. The Green Spaces strategy also noted the opportunity to provide a Country Park facility to serve North Charnwood. The preferred long term growth option west of Loughborough provides the opportunity to secure the provision of a new Country Park facility within a restored Garendon Park that would not only serve Loughborough and Shepshed residents but also provide a recreational facility of District wide importance. This option could incorporate the need for a District Park facility identified in the Green Spaces Strategy. The western growth option could also allow for any expansion of the University recreational facilities necessary in the build up to the Olympics and to take advantage of the economic opportunities associated with sport.
- 5.75 As part of a strategy for regenerating eastern Loughborough opportunities for improved recreational provision need to be identified. The adopted Local Plan included a proposal for the restoration of the derelict Allsopps Lane site. In association with supporting development this may provide the basis for an expanded recreational facility to serve eastern Loughborough.

5.76 In South Charnwood the identified long term option for growth should incorporate appropriate recreational facilities to meet the needs of future residents. Our Green Spaces Strategy identifies the need for additional District Park facilities in the Syston area. Elsewhere in the Borough it is important that existing Leisure and recreational facilities are safeguarded, and where possible improved.

The Other Options

5.77 A strategy to secure improved recreational provision is fully consistent with government policy and the objective of developing sustainable communities. The alternative do nothing option would involve no provision for improved facilities. This approach would mean Garendon Park would remain as it is, private land with very limited public access with the important historic features deteriorating further. It could also mean the spin-off benefits associated with the role Loughborough University will play in the build up to the Olympics would be lost.

5.78 Further development for housing and employment will take place in the period to 2021. Loughborough University will play an exciting role in the build up to 2012. Through an agreed long term spatial strategy *Charnwood 2021* needs to use these opportunities to secure real and lasting benefits for the town and Borough. This involves directing growth to locations that can deliver more sustainable communities and local urban renaissance, and supporting the University and the regionally significant role it plays as a centre of excellence for education, sport, sports science, research and management.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.79 Draft Core Policy 15: Leisure and Recreation

In association with the identified preferred directions for growth and regeneration initiatives, improved formal and informal recreation facilities will be secured to meet the needs identified in the Green Space Strategy and provide for the recreational needs of future residents. In particular the Council will seek to negotiate the provision of:

- i) a new Country Park west of Loughborough based on Garendon Historic Park and Garden;**
- ii) expansion of recreational facilities at Loughborough University associated with its role as a centre of sporting excellence;**
- iii) new recreational facilities to serve the communities of east Loughborough;**
- iv) a new District Park at east Thurmaston/ north Hamilton.**

Existing leisure facilities and open spaces will be safeguarded and where appropriate improved.

Reason for Preferred Option

To ensure sufficient accessible green space is provided to meet the needs of residents.

Managing Environmental Resources

Background

- 5.80 A fundamental principle of sustainability is seeking to manage environmental resources for the benefit of future generations. Vital environmental resources upon which the population depends for basic needs include air, water, soil, fossil fuels, and minerals. Development can have direct and indirect impacts on these critical environmental resources. Direct impacts can be the release of pollutants from industrial activity. Indirect impacts involve increased needs for power requiring the burning of fossil fuels.
- 5.81 Government guidance in PPS10 Planning for Sustainable Waste Management, PPS22 Renewable Energy, PPS23 Planning and Pollution Control, PPG24 Planning and Noise and PPG25 Development and Flood Risk seek to secure the effective protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources. The Energy White Paper (2003) sets out the Government's commitment to ensuring that renewable energy sources make an increasing contribution to UK energy supplies, with a target of seeing renewable energy resources supply 10% of UK electricity by 2010.
- 5.82 The Regional Plan sets out a policy framework for managing the water environment and flood risk, energy reduction and use of renewable energy and waste reduction management. It indicates that local planning authorities should take water related issues into account at the earliest stages in developing their planning strategies and should seek to protect and improve water quality, manage supply and demand and take account of flood risk and the implications of global warming.
- 5.83 The Regional policies for energy are informed by the Regional Energy Strategy which recommends that policies should seek to reduce the need for energy, significantly increase Combined Heat and Power (CHP) capacity in the region and set minimum regional targets for renewable energy. The regional strategy indicates that a package of policies should be promoted that result in zero growth in all forms of controlled waste by 2016.
- 5.84 The Structure Plan includes a number of policies addressing resource management issues. The objective is to manage and enhance the quality of the environment upon which the population depends for basic needs in order to maintain or improve quality of life. Policies address issues of pollution, energy efficiency, energy installations, the water environment and agricultural land.
- 5.85 We have adopted a Climate Change Strategy to guide our response to the issues of global warming. In March 2005 we signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change demonstrating our commitment to reduce our own impact on climate change and to help raise awareness of the issues locally. The strategy sets out a series of actions to seek to tackle the local implications of climate change.

A Strategy for Environmental Quality- The Preferred Approach

- 5.86 Because of its geography there are a number of environmental resource issues that the Core Strategy needs to address. The implications of climate change have global and local implications. We need to adapt some of our ways of life to respond to the changes already occurring and at the same time look to limit future greenhouse gas emissions. With the Soar and Wreake valleys running through the Borough a number of Charnwood communities are vulnerable to flooding. Policies are needed to effectively manage flood risk

and ensure that new development does not take place in areas at risk from flooding or lead to increased flood risks elsewhere.

- 5.87 The Borough's geology, with the rocky outcrops of the Charnwood Forest and the river valleys of the Soar and Wreake, means that mineral extraction –gravel and hard rock have long been a feature in the Borough. The County Council is the Minerals Planning Authority for Leicestershire and is preparing a Minerals Development Plan Document to set out the future planning policy for mineral extraction and after use.
- 5.88 There are opportunities to secure greater energy efficient features in new development locally, to promote renewable energy and the use of Combined Heat and Power (CHP). Specific examples are promoted through *Leading in Design*.
- 5.89 In many parts of the Borough agriculture remains the main activity. The Borough contains significant areas of best and most versatile agricultural land, particularly to the east around the Wolds villages. This agricultural resource needs to be safeguarded from irreversible loss through development.
- 5.90 Whilst air quality in the Borough is generally good, there are locations suffering from poor air quality, primarily as a result of vehicle emissions in the more congested areas. We have declared three Air Quality Management Areas in Charnwood, two in Loughborough and one in Syston. These areas are at risk of experiencing air pollution levels from nitrogen dioxide or sulphur dioxide above those set out in the UK Air Quality Regulations. We are working with partners including the County Highway Authority to develop action plans to tackle air quality in these areas.
- 5.91 With the presence of the M1, the A6 and A46 and Nottingham East Midlands Airport some parts of the Borough suffer some noise pollution. There have been concerns locally about the possible impacts of revised flight paths to and from Nottingham East Midlands Airport which are now routed over the Wolds and south Charnwood villages. More locally concerns have been expressed from time to time over disturbance occasioned by neighbouring noisy activities.
- 5.92 The Core Strategy needs to set out the Council's commitment to manage and enhance the quality of the Borough's environmental resources. The aim is to ensure that air and light pollution, noise and contamination are contained and minimised, energy use is reduced and renewable energy production is increased and waste is reduced and recycled. In particular it is recognised that we need to do more to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy locally including but not exclusively biomass heating, combined heat and power, photovoltaic cells, solar water heating and wind power. One of the main ways we can encourage greater energy efficiency is through the location of new development in locations that reduce the use of the car and the distances travelled. The preferred growth options are considered to represent the most sustainable option by directing new development to the main urban centres close to existing services and facilities and locations where public transport, cycling and walking offer real alternatives to the car.
- 5.93 The proposed long term growth options provide the opportunity to develop innovative approaches to energy efficient design and use of renewable energy production for electricity, water and space heating. We will look to tap in to the expertise available locally in planning these new areas for growth.

The Other Options

5.94 No alternative options have been identified. It is important that the Core Strategy sets out our commitment to managing and enhancing local environmental resources.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.95 Draft Core Policy 16: Managing Environmental Resources

Planning permission will be granted for development which manages the use and maintains or enhances the quality of environmental resources. Development proposals will:

- i) minimise the emission of pollutants including air, lighting and noise;**
- ii) limit any adverse effects on water quality and minimise flooding;**
- iii) minimise the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and incorporate re-use of soil resources;**
- iv) avoid the sterilisation of minerals and aggregate resources;**
- v) use sustainable design and construction technologies to:**
 - a) reduce water use and incorporate facilities for the re-use and recycling of water and waste;**
 - b) minimise the use of energy and incorporate energy efficient design solutions;**
 - c) incorporate on-site renewable energy equipment to reduce predicted CO2 emissions by at least 10%.**

The Borough Council will promote the development of a Combined Heat and Power Scheme (CHP) as part of the proposed western expansion of Loughborough.

Reason for Preferred Option

To reflect key sustainable principles and ensure that the use of local environmental resources is managed and their quality is maintained and enhanced.

Managing Travel Demand and Widening Transport Choice

Background

5.96 Good transport and communication links are essential to Charnwood's continuing prosperity. There is scope for further improvements but they need to be done in ways that minimise adverse environmental and social impacts. Up until the early 1990's new development tended to be planned with the car in mind. Over the last 20 to 30 years car

use has grown significantly. Many people have become car dependent and the numbers of people walking, cycling and using buses and trains has declined.

- 5.97 Today the adverse impacts of high levels of car use are readily apparent. Traffic levels on most main roads are high at peak times with more routes congested for longer periods. The Leicester and Loughborough areas have the worst levels of congestion in the County.
- 5.98 Around 19% of households in Charnwood do not have access to a private car. This impacts more heavily in areas less well served by public transport where people without access to a car may be isolated from family and friends, jobs, services and facilities.
- 5.99 PPG13 sets out the Government's commitment to integrating transport and land use policies to reduce the need to travel and the distances travelled, promote public transport use and other alternatives to the car including cycling and walking and only increase highway capacity as a last resort.
- 5.100 The Regional Plan incorporates the Regional Transport Strategy for the East Midlands. For the Three Cities Sub-Area the priorities are to:
- Reduce the use of the car in and around the Three Cities;
 - Improve public transport linkages between the Three Cities and London, the rest of the East Midlands and other national cities;
 - Develop the transport infrastructure and services needed to improve access to jobs and services from deprived inner urban areas;
 - Improve public transport access to Nottingham East Midlands Airport;
 - Encourage modal switch away from road based transport in the manufacturing, retail and distribution;
 - Reduce congestion and improve safety along the M1 corridor and wider highway network.
- 5.101 The Structure Plan reflects these national and regional priorities and through its locational strategy seeks to reduce the need to travel, the distances driven and increase the use of public transport cycling and walking.
- 5.102 The County Council's Leicestershire Local Transport Plan for 2006 to 2011 sets out a range of delivery measures to meet stated objectives:
- to reduce congestion by improving alternatives to the car, maximising use of existing roads, and applying soft demand management measures;
 - to improve access to essential facilities by developing an hourly bus route network and community transport solutions;
 - to reduce road casualties by road safety schemes and improved speed management;
 - to improve air quality using anti congestion measures in problem areas;

- to reduce the impact of traffic by traffic calming and speed management schemes.
- to manage transport assets effectively

5.103 Proposals under consideration in Charnwood include:

- A major Loughborough Integrated Transport scheme to re-route traffic around the town centre and implement improvements for bus users and pedestrians in a safer, less polluted and generally traffic free central area;
- Improved bus corridors serving Leicester notably the A607 from East Goscote;
- Investigation of longer term bypasses for Wymeswold, one of a number of villages where significant levels of through HGV traffic cannot be rerouted, and Syston with continued through traffic nuisance. Already planned are M1 widening, improvements to the A46 Hobby Horse junction at Syston and a number of developer funded schemes.

Managing Travel Demand and Widening Transport Choice- The Preferred Approach

5.104 Consultation on the Issues and Options Paper and work on the Sustainability Appraisal identified a number of transport issues that need to be addressed. Because of its location the Borough enjoys good transport links to the adjoining main urban centres by road and rail. Residents enjoy easy access to the national motorway network and Nottingham East Midlands Airport lies just over the border in North West Leicestershire. Regular bus services operate along the A6 between Loughborough and Leicester and the main settlements are reasonably well served by local bus facilities.

5.105 As a relatively affluent Borough most residents have access to a car. The generally good road access makes car use attractive for many trips. There are regular and increasing problems of traffic congestion in particular in and around Loughborough and on main approaches to Leicester.

5.106 The main ways in which this planning strategy can tackle traffic related problems is by influencing the location of development, improving transport choices and widening accessibility. We will continue working with highway authorities, transport operators and developers to develop integrated and sustainable transport solutions using public and private funding.

5.107 Contributions may be sought to improve public transport or community based initiatives to enhance accessibility and widen travel choices. Residents of areas of relative deprivation in the Borough with low car ownership can find it difficult to access job opportunities and services.

5.108 Real transport choice by bus is only available along bus corridors with high frequency commercial services (every 20 minutes or better), in parts of Loughborough, the old A6 south of the town, the A512 towards Shepshed, plus the corridors from Anstey, East Goscote, Syston and Thurmaston in and out of Leicester. The County Council's hourly daytime bus network along inter urban routes has improved access for most rural areas, and non car users but is not a competitive alternative to the car.

- 5.109 An area of Charnwood's size and settlement pattern could support high levels of bus use. However parts of Loughborough and Birstall have no better than hourly services. In addition services are lacking, for example, between well populated settlements in the Wreake valley, the Soar valley (including the Soar Valley Leisure Centre) and Loughborough (including Epinal Way Hospital); and between settlements on the northern edge of Leicester and the new retail park at Thurmaston. The necessary step change in the quality of bus travel will require substantial public and private investment. In circumstances where bus provision is not viable access needs will be need to met using flexible, community based transport.
- 5.110 Whilst some larger Soar and Wreake Valley communities enjoy access to local rail services between Nottingham, Loughborough and Leicester, the potential is restricted by the infrequent hourly service.
- 5.111 Cycling and walking are realistic transport choices for shorter trips or as part of trips combined with other modes. Development of the local cycling network will continue through private and public funding to help reduce car use and congestion. Because of its size and topography, in Loughborough cycling and walking represent real transport alternatives that need to be promoted. There are also opportunities in areas near Leicester to expand the already well developed urban network.
- 5.112 In order to achieve significant changes in travel habits, effective demand management measures will be needed as part of development proposals likely to generate significant travel. Measures will include travel plans and maximum parking standards. Innovative pricing mechanisms may also be required if other measures fail to stem traffic growth.
- 5.113 Road improvements will be needed in some cases where specific and overriding safety or other reasons are demonstrated. Road-based solutions likely to encourage further car use contrary to the strategy's objectives will not be supported.
- 5.114 Heavy HGV movements through communities present significant environmental problems, notably along the A6006 and B676 between the A46 and A6/ M1 through parts of Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. Speed reduction and traffic calming measures in Wymeswold and Burton on the Wolds help to reduce the impact but are not a long term solution. Further work needs to be undertaken with the highway authorities to identify a suitable alternative route or if none is available, to develop a sustainable package of measures to the benefit of all communities along affected routes for further consideration through Local Transport Plans.

The Other Options

- 5.115 Transport issues, in particular major transport schemes or changes that seek to constrain car use inevitably generate lively debates. Proposals perceived as likely to constrain car use are usually unpopular. However responses to the Issues and Options paper show some recognition of the need to do more to reduce current high levels of car use. The option of using stronger measures than at present attracted more support than applying few constraints to car use. There was no support for an option of trying to meet the ever increasing demands for car use.
- 5.116 Consideration of established policy guidance from national to the local level and the trends of ever increasing traffic growth and modest growth in use of non car modes leads us to

believe that efforts must focus on achieving more sustainable solutions to traffic related problems in coming years.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.117 Draft Core Policy 17: Managing Travel Demand and Widening Transport Choice

The Borough Council will work in partnership with Transport authorities and other interests to seek to ensure that future travel demand is managed as part of integrated and sustainable land use and transport solutions that:

- i) provide a real alternative to the car, particularly in areas facing the most serious traffic related problems, by significant improvement of the coverage, frequency and quality of non-car modes, in particular bus travel;
- ii) ensure effective demand management using comprehensive coverage of travel plans, parking policies, and the managed use of road space with consideration of stronger measures to constrain car use if these are not successful;
- iii) restrict road improvements to those needed to resolve particular traffic issues without inducing further traffic growth and pushing problems elsewhere on the network;
- iv) provide well managed on and off street vehicle parking with the scale of provision based on maximum standards for cars and minimum standards for cycle parking;
- v) develop innovative and flexible community transport for unmet needs in urban and rural areas;
- vi) encourage incentives to reduce vehicle emissions by encouraging fleet and private vehicle owners to choose and maintain more efficient vehicles.

Planning permission will be granted for proposals which:

- i) are located to reduce the need to travel and minimise the distances people have to travel to jobs, services and facilities, in particular by car;
- ii) include improved transport provision and demand management measures in line with the overall approach set out in this policy.

Reason for Preferred Option

To conform with established policy guidance at national and regional level to promote a sustainable pattern of development that can help reduce traffic growth and congestion. The proposed approach is more likely than other options to provide good accessibility for people and develop real transport choices that are well used.

Town Centres

Background

- 5.118 Guidance on planning for town centres and town centre uses is set out in PPS6. The guidance sets out the Government's objectives to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by planning for the growth and development of existing centres, and promoting and enhancing them through strategies to focus development and encourage a wide range of uses in an attractive, safe and accessible environment.
- 5.119 Work to support the Regional Plan suggested that there was no clear hierarchy of town centres within the East Midlands on which to base regional policy. For the Three Cities Sub Area the strategy is to encourage the development of the Three Cities as the pre-eminent retail destinations in the region. Loughborough and Hinckley are identified as centres where public sector support is necessary to encourage further private sector investment.
- 5.120 The Structure Plan recognises the importance of existing centres and aims to sustain and enhance the role of Leicester City, and existing town and district centres. Loughborough is one of the existing centres identified as offering a wide range of highly accessible facilities and services.
- 5.121 The adopted Local Plan reflects this national, regional and strategic guidance. It identifies a hierarchy of centres within the Borough from the main town centre in Loughborough to District Centres in the larger villages and smaller local centres.

Town & District Centres- Ensuring Vitality and Viability- The Preferred Approach

- 5.122 The existing town and district centres in Charnwood provide a variety of retail and associated facilities serving local and wider needs. In the sub-area, Loughborough is the principal centre outside the Three Cities providing a mix of retail, leisure and cultural facilities. Elsewhere in the Borough, District Centres in the larger villages provide a range of facilities to meet more local needs.
- 5.123 The proximity of the Three Cities effectively determines the role Loughborough plays in the sub-regional retail hierarchy. The town's role as the primary centre outside the Three Cities brings important economic benefits. With further retail floorspace growth taking place in Derby, Nottingham and Leicester, there is a danger that the town could lose trade to these larger centres. This could have significant implications for the character and vitality of the town centre.
- 5.124 Two retail studies, for Loughborough and Shepshed and the Central Leicestershire area, have helped to inform this preferred options paper. The Loughborough and Shepshed study indicated that there was limited need for additional retail floorspace over the period to 2016. The recent Rushes development has met much of the demand for additional floorspace. We have commissioned consultants to prepare a Master Plan for Loughborough Town Centre. The spatial implications of this study will be reflected in an Action Area Plan for the Town Centre if appropriate. In the Central Leicestershire Area, floorspace needs have been catered for by the redevelopment of the former Co-op store at Thurmaston District Centre. This redevelopment, along with the ASDA superstore will make the District Centre an attractive retail destination within south-east Charnwood and further afield.

5.125 The other District Centres in the Borough provide important local retail and supporting facilities. Some centres have suffered decline in recent years, partly affected by the closure of local factories. Strategies for revitalising some of these centres, particularly Shepshed and Sileby, need to be developed.

The Other Options

5.126 A strategy to focus retail, leisure and other uses within the established town and district centres is consistent with national and regional policy. The Regional Plan does not identify a need for further regionally important out of town retail development.

5.127 Some respondents to the Issues and Options consultation express the view that Loughborough should stay a market town and should not grow. Because of its role as a sub-regional centre in the Regional Plan, further housing and employment growth will take place in the town. Improvements to the town's services and facilities will be necessary to accommodate this growth effectively. Decline in the town centre through competition from neighbouring larger centres would be damaging to the local economy. The purpose of the Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan is to identify a strategy to safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre in a way that reflects the town's special character and heritage.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.128 Draft Core Policy 18, Town Centres

Loughborough Town Centre will continue to be the main focus for retailing, leisure, cultural and business activities in the Borough. The existing District Centres in Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Birstall, Shepshed, Syston and Thurmaston, Gorse Covert and Shelthorpe, Loughborough will provide retail, leisure and cultural opportunities to serve their immediate communities.

The vitality and viability of Loughborough Town Centre, District and Local Centres will be maintained and enhanced by:

- i) permitting new retail proposals of a scale appropriate to the centre;**
- ii) restricting the development of town centre uses outside the defined centres through the application of a sequential approach to site selection;**
- iii) defining key retail frontages within Loughborough Town Centre to safeguard its core retail function;**
- iv) controlling change of use from A1 (retail) to other uses in Loughborough Town Centre and the District Centres;**
- v) using the Council's powers of compulsory purchase where appropriate to bring forward sites for further growth in town centre uses where a need has been identified;**
- vi) through effective Town Centre Management ensuring Loughborough remains an attractive retail and cultural destination;**

- vii) **integrating planning and licensing controls in the management of licensed premises;**
- viii) **working with the Police and local Chambers of Trade to ensure Loughborough Town Centre and the District Centres provide a safe environment for all;**
- ix) **improving access by public transport, cycling, and walking**
- x) **supporting the provision of additional off-street public short-stay car parking facilities for shoppers and visitors serving Loughborough Town Centre, District and Local Centres necessary to safeguard the vitality and viability of the centre.**

Reason for Preferred Option

To safeguard the vitality and viability of the main centres in the Borough in accordance with government policy.

Built Heritage

Background

5.129 National guidance in PPG15 and PPG16 stresses the importance of identifying and protecting historic buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and other features. The Regional Plan recognises that the East Midlands has a rich historic environment which is often undervalued and under threat. It notes that the historic environment can make an important contribution to strategies for economic development, regeneration and tourism. The Plan recommends an approach involving the identification and assessment of assets, consideration of their contribution to local character and diversity and their capacity to absorb change. In identified areas for growth and regeneration the strategy promotes sensitive change retaining local distinctiveness.

5.130 The Structure Plan policies aim to conserve natural and built assets, emphasising that listed buildings and other historic features are priceless cultural assets.

5.131 In Charnwood there are a wide range of historic features including 20 ancient monuments, 3 historic parks and gardens, and 900 listed buildings. There are 36 designated conservation areas covering the historic cores of the larger settlements. We are preparing Conservation Area Character statements for all designated conservation areas. We have also adopted a local list of buildings of historic or architectural merit. A successful grant scheme has also helped the refurbishment and improvement of a number of listed buildings. The Great Central Railway is a local example of the successful use of the areas built heritage for tourism.

Safeguarding the Borough's Built Heritage- The Preferred Approach

5.132 Charnwood is an area of development pressure and this has meant that some historic features could be threatened by insensitive development. Some historic features are in decline. English Heritage has identified 50 listed buildings and structures at risk in the Borough. The Core Strategy needs to safeguard and enhance the Borough's built heritage.

Detailed policies to deal with proposals affecting listed buildings or in conservation areas or affecting other aspects of the Borough's built heritage will be included in the Development Control Policies DPD.

The Other Options

5.133 No other options have been identified. National, regional and strategic policy emphasises the importance of safeguarding and enhancing the historic built environment.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.134 Draft Core Policy 19, Built Heritage

The built heritage of the Borough will be conserved and enhanced, with particular regard to statutory and locally listed buildings of historic or architectural importance, conservation areas, ancient monuments and archaeological sites and historic parks and gardens.

Reason for Preferred Option

To ensure the local character and distinctiveness of the Borough as reflected in its rich built heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.

Biodiversity

Background

5.135 Biodiversity is the variety of life among plants and animals and is a key feature of sustainability. It is important that development does not cause irreversible damage to biodiversity interests.

5.136 The Regional Plan seeks to secure a major step change increase in the level of the region's biodiversity. This challenging strategy is a recognition of the fact that of all the regions the East Midlands has the lowest coverage of nature conservation sites. The Plan sets out four key objectives:

- No net loss of habitats;
- Delivering large scale habitat creation;
- Addressing isolation and fragmentation;
- Providing semi-natural green spaces in urban areas.

5.137 The Structure Plan establishes a series of policies to protect the hierarchy of sites from international and national to local sites designated Local Wildlife Sites (also known as Sites Important for Nature Conservation (SINCs)).

5.138 Both the Regional Plan and Structure Plan highlight the key role played by strategic river corridors, including the Soar and Wreake, as an important biodiversity resource providing

opportunities to restore and enhance lost habitats and wetland landscapes, improve access and provide recreation and tourism opportunities.

5.139 We have long recognised the importance of nature conservation and we have commissioned survey work to provide accurate information on the extent and quality of biodiversity resource in the Borough. With the Charnwood Forest and the River corridors, Charnwood has a rich variety of wildlife habitat. Again the pressures for development means that some of these areas are under threat. The Core Strategy needs to look at how necessary development can be harnessed to safeguard and enhance local biodiversity interests.

Safeguarding and Enhancing Local Biodiversity- The Preferred Approach

5.140 The Charnwood Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies key priorities in relation to both habitats and species. *Charnwood 2021* needs to reflect these priorities.

5.141 Although there are a fairly large number of identified Local Wildlife Sites in the Borough, there are problems of fragmentation and isolation. The Charnwood Forest has a wide variety of biodiversity interests, some of which are unique to Leicestershire. The river valleys are key wildlife corridors and also comprise important sites acting as “stepping stones”. The river valleys are a key component of the Borough’s biodiversity infrastructure, also providing opportunities for informal recreation for many of Charnwood’s communities. We have worked with Leicestershire County Council, and Leicester City Council in the development of Watermead Country Park as an important leisure and recreation facility and assisted the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust in the acquisition of Cossington Meadows nature reserve.

5.142 In urban areas more could be done to provide for semi-natural habitats in association with new development. As part of the proposed directions for growth the opportunity should be taken to secure the provision of significant areas of nature conservation interest and restore and enhance biodiversity networks.

The Other Options

5.143 None identified. National planning policy encourages the safeguarding and enhancement of biodiversity interests.

The Preferred Policy Option

5.144 Draft Core Policy 20, Biodiversity

The rich biodiversity of the Borough will be conserved and enhanced through the protection of habitats, species and sites of ecological value, with particular regard to designated wildlife sites of international, national and local significance, ancient woodland and species and habitats of principal importance identified in Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and in the Charnwood Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Borough Council will seek to maintain and strengthen networks of natural habitats. Working in partnership with other agencies, the Borough Council will seek to conserve and enhance the form, local character and distinctiveness of the river corridors of the Soar and Wreake as natural floodplains and important

strategic wildlife corridors. Proposals for improved access, recreation and tourism along the corridors will be encouraged where they are compatible with biodiversity aims.

The Borough Council will seek to maximise biodiversity opportunities in and around new developments through the adoption of good development design.

Reason for Preferred Option

To safeguard and enhance biodiversity interests in accordance with national planning policy guidance.

Chapter 6 : Monitoring and Implementation

Background

- 6.1 A key element of the new planning policy system is a focus on delivery of objectives. A robust monitoring and implementation framework is required to ensure that *Charnwood 2021* delivers the outcomes envisaged. This will involve the identification of delivery mechanisms, milestones and the bodies involved and a framework to monitor progress.
- 6.2 A monitoring framework has been introduced for the Regional Plan and an annual report is prepared recording progress against milestones and core national indicators. We will be required to submit an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to assess the extent to which core policies are being achieved and identify changes necessary if targets are not met. This report will include a “housing trajectory” to monitor progress in meeting strategic housing targets.

A Monitoring and Implementation Framework

- 6.3 The monitoring framework has been derived from work on the sustainability appraisal which included a scoping report to establish the baseline position in the Borough against which the effect of policy implementation will be monitored. The aim will be to establish whether policies in the Charnwood LDF are helping to secure more sustainable development. The indicators have regard to the core set of indicators outlined in the ODPM “Local Development Framework Monitoring- A Good Practice Guide”.
- 6.4 The preferred indicators, targets and key delivery agencies for each Core Strategy Policy are set out below. The table also indicates the links between Core Strategy policies and the spatial objectives.

Core Policy	Spatial Objective	Indicator
CP1: Settlement Strategy	1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 13, 15, 17	% of new development directed to Principal Urban Areas, Sub Regional Centres and Service Centres % of residential development within 30 mins public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre.
CP2: Development Strategy for North Charnwood	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16	Development on previously developed land Develop sustainable urban extensions west and south of Loughborough. Housing Trajectory.

Core Policy	Spatial Objective	Indicator
		Loss of employment land
CP3: Development Strategy for South Charnwood	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16	Development on previously developed land Develop sustainable urban extensions at Thurmaston/ Hamilton and Birstall. Housing trajectory. Loss of employment land
CP4: Housing and Employment Land Supply and Phasing	3, 4, 5, 6, 13	Provision in accordance with phasing policy.
CP5: Affordable Housing Provision	3	Affordable housing completions.
CP6: Design Quality	9, 16	% of new dwellings built to BREEAM standard.
CP7: Countryside and Landscape Character	13, 17	
CP8: The National Forest	17	Amount of new planting secured in new developments within National Forest.
CP9: Charnwood Forest	17	
CP10: Settlement Identity	9, 13, 15	Amount of development in green wedges/ areas of local separation
CP11: Infrastructure Provision	3, 11, 14, 16	Schemes with S106 obligations and use of contributions for infrastructure, open space and community improvements.
CP12: A Strategy for Regeneration	3, 5, 7, 10, 11	Proportion of population living in wards ranking within 10% and 25% most deprived. Unemployment rates
CP13: Loughborough University	10	Additional managed bedspaces on campus.
CP14: Student Housing Provision in Loughborough	3, 10	Numbers of unmanaged student bedspaces

Core Policy	Spatial Objective	Indicator
CP15: Leisure and Recreation	1, 2, 4, 11	Access to green space in line with standards set out in Green space strategy.
CP16: Managing Environmental Resources	12, 14, 16	Number of developments incorporating renewable energy components. Permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice.
CP17: Managing Travel Demand and Widening Transport Choice	5, 7, 8, 13, 14	% of residential development within 30 mins public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre.
CP18: Town Centres	1, 2, 8, 10, 13	% of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres
CP19: Built Heritage	15	Numbers of buildings at risk.
CP20: Biodiversity	18	Change in priority habitats and species.

APPENDIX 1: IMPLICATIONS OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES FOR CHARNWOOD LDF

Charnwood Community Strategy 2003	Revised Charnwood Community Strategy Dec 2005	Leicestershire Community Strategy:	Spatial Implications for Charnwood LDF	Core Strategy Preferred Options Objective.
<p>To improve learning, skills and employability- by valuing lifelong learning in principle and following it in practice, so that excellence in education and learning underpins skills development and in particular helps into work the hardest to reach</p>	<p>Prosperity matters- maximising opportunities for a dynamic Charnwood economy.</p>	<p>The People of Leicestershire Want:</p> <p>A vibrant and thriving County in which to live, work and play. A County which looks to the future by maximising opportunities for its young people.</p> <p>The provision of lifelong learning opportunities to enhance skill levels.</p> <p>Young people to have access to co-ordinated information, advice and support to enable them to make informed decisions at key points in their life, for areas such as lifelong learning, employment and skills.</p> <p>Quality Education for young people, both in terms of academic results and practical skills, up to 16 years and beyond.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target training initiatives to areas of relative deprivation; • Plan for expansion needs of Loughborough University & College and other educational facilities. 	<p>SO4, SO5</p>
<p>To develop business competitiveness and growth- by supporting business development and providing the right conditions for growth, so that businesses can successfully compete in their target markets and support the local economy.</p>	<p>Prosperity matters- maximising opportunities for a dynamic Charnwood economy.</p>	<p>A vibrant and thriving County in which to live, work and play</p> <p>A strong diverse economy where a wide variety of thriving small, medium and large businesses can flourish in both urban and rural areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate land to meet strategic requirements for Loughborough Science Park and strategic employment sites in North and South Charnwood; • Safeguard key employment sites; • Support mixed use development; 	<p>SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4, SO5, SO6.</p>

Charnwood Community Strategy 2003	Revised Charnwood Community Strategy Dec 2005	Leicestershire Community Strategy: The People of Leicestershire Want:	Spatial Implications for Charnwood LDF	Core Strategy Preferred Options Objective.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow appropriate small scale employment provision in rural areas; • Support vitality and viability of town, district and local centres. 	
<p>To reduce crime and promote community safety- by reducing crime, disorder and the fear of crime, strengthening social cohesion and tackling drug abuse, so that there is a continuous improvement in community safety.</p>	<p>People matter- to nurture healthy and strong communities.</p>	<p>A County where all have access to quality services. A County which looks to the future by maximising opportunities for its young people.</p> <p>A reduction in crime and anti social behaviour in particular violent crime, burglary, vehicle crime and domestic violence.</p> <p>A reduction in the availability and misuse of drugs including alcohol.</p> <p>Improved support for victims of crime particularly racially motivated crime and domestic violence.</p> <p>All young people to be protected from being involved or affected by crime and bullying, either as victims or perpetrators.</p> <p>All children and young people to be protected from abuse and neglect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure quality design in new development incorporating measures to design out crime; • Promote greater mix of uses and activities, including residential uses, on town and district centres. • 	<p>SO9</p>

Charnwood Community Strategy 2003	Revised Charnwood Community Strategy Dec 2005	Leicestershire Community Strategy: The People of Leicestershire Want:	Spatial Implications for Charnwood LDF	Core Strategy Preferred Options Objective.
<p>To improve health and encourage healthy living- by tackling the causes of health inequalities between communities, defined groups and the public, so that groups and individuals are actively motivated and supported to achieve improved public and personal health.</p>	<p>People matter- to nurture healthy and strong communities.</p>	<p>A vibrant and thriving County in which to live, work and play A County where all have access to quality services. A County which looks to the future by maximising opportunities for its young people.</p> <p>Cleaner air, less pollution, a reduction in the impact of climate change and efficient use of natural resources.</p> <p>Healthy communities where people look after themselves and each other.</p> <p>Better health for all, better and equal access to health care, treatment and social care.</p> <p>Promotion of healthy active lifestyles that prevent illness and reduce accidents.</p> <p>Young people to be able to access healthcare services and advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support healthy lifestyles through locational strategy to encourage cycling and walking; • Secure provision of appropriate green infrastructure in new development including formal and informal areas for recreation; • Assess health implications of development strategy as part of sustainability appraisal; • Take account of air quality problems in developing locational strategy. 	<p>SO8, SO9.</p>
<p>To sustain our environment- by working to minimise waste and pollution and protect valued natural and built environments, so that there is an attractive, sustainable and clean environment for all to enjoy.</p>	<p>Places Matter- creating safe and liveable areas- greener, cleaner and safer living environments with a focus on deprived areas.</p>	<p>A vibrant and thriving County in which to live, work and play Access to the countryside, green spaces, biodiversity and built heritage to be conserved and enhanced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locational strategy to direct new development to the most sustainable locations; • Policies to safeguard built and natural heritage; 	<p>SO12, SO13, SO15, SO16, SO17, SO18</p>

Charnwood Community Strategy 2003	Revised Charnwood Community Strategy Dec 2005	Leicestershire Community Strategy: The People of Leicestershire Want:	Spatial Implications for Charnwood LDF	Core Strategy Preferred Options Objective.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies to safeguard environmental resources; • Design policies to support energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources. 	
To meet local transport needs more effectively.	<p>Prosperity matters- maximising opportunities for a dynamic Charnwood economy.</p> <p>Places Matter- creating safe and liveable areas- greener, cleaner and safer living environments with a focus on deprived areas.</p>	<p>A County where all have access to quality services. Reliable, safe and comfortable public transport and integration with walking and cycling facilities, so that people can more easily access essential services such as education, shopping, employment, health and leisure.</p> <p>Safer roads where there is less speeding, and reduced congestion.</p> <p>Clean roads and pavements in a good state of repair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locational strategy that encourages use of public transport and other non car modes and reduces the distances driven; • New development planned to encourage cycling and walking. 	SO8, SO12, SO13, SO14
<p>Promote social inclusion- by working to reduce the effects of poverty and physical and social isolation on people's wellbeing and promoting active citizenship and equality of opportunity, so that there is a more socially cohesive Borough.</p>	<p>People matter- to nurture healthy and strong communities.</p>	<p>A vibrant and thriving County in which to live, work and play. A County where all have access to quality services. Local people have a sense of "community spirit" and to be supported in community activities to bring people together.</p> <p>Local people feel part of the decision making process and to have a role in planning the future of their own</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies to support regeneration in identified areas of areas of relative deprivation in Loughborough, Shepshed, Soar Valley villages and South Charnwood; • Securing local employment opportunities and improved community 	SO5, SO7, SO10, SO11

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		<p>community.</p> <p>More opportunity for all sections of society, including disabled people, to participate in sports, leisure, arts and culture, heritage, the economy, learning and other aspects of life.</p> <p>Equality of access to services and facilities for everyone.</p> <p>Increased involvement of young people and those working with them in decisions about their future and community activities.</p>	<p>facilities including open space in areas of need;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle impacts of concentration of unmanaged student accommodation in parts of Loughborough. 	
<p>To develop Leisure and Cultural opportunities for all by encouraging a diverse range of cultural, sporting, tourism and leisure provision in the locality, so that there are opportunities for leisure and culture for all.</p>	<p>Places Matter- creating safe and liveable areas- greener, cleaner and safer living environments with a focus on deprived areas.</p> <p>People matter- to nurture healthy and strong communities.</p>	<p>A vibrant and thriving County in which to live, work and play. A County which looks to the future by maximising opportunities for its young people</p> <p>A positive image for the County with better community and visitor facilities to help generate a sense of pride in Leicestershire, attract visitors and encourage residents to spend leisure time locally.</p> <p>Vital and thriving market town centres and village centres which act as “hubs” for surrounding communities.</p> <p>Young people to be able to access a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial strategy to support provision of additional green infrastructure to address identified shortfalls; • Policies to secure appropriate provision in new development; • Policies to sustain the vitality and viability of Loughborough Town Centre and district centres. 	<p>SO1, SO2, SO11</p>

Charnwood Community Strategy 2003	Revised Charnwood Community Strategy Dec 2005	Leicestershire Community Strategy:	Spatial Implications for Charnwood LDF	Core Strategy Preferred Options Objective.
		The People of Leicestershire Want:		
<p>To secure decent homes for all by ensuring an adequate supply of affordable, good quality, energy efficient housing to meet identified needs, so that there is sufficient decent accommodation, be it publicly or privately owned.</p>	<p>Places Matter- creating safe and liveable areas- greener, cleaner and safer living environments with a focus on deprived areas. People matter- to nurture healthy and strong communities.</p>	<p>A County where all have access to quality services Access to good quality affordable and energy efficient homes and a reduction in homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate land to meet strategic requirements for new homes to 2021; • Secure provision of affordable housing in new development to meet identified needs; • Design policies to secure quality, energy efficient housing. 	<p>SO3, SO9, SO12</p>