

## Core Strategy Issues and Options

June 2005

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## Foreword

Planning helps shape the places where we live and work. In 2004 a new planning system was introduced that has changed the way Charnwood and other local councils plan their areas. The old system of Structure Plans prepared by county councils and Local Plans prepared by district councils has been replaced by a new document- the Local Development Framework. This will be a folder of documents that will set out how an area will change looking ahead 10 years or so.

We have started work on the Charnwood Local Development Framework- the Charnwood LDF. One of the first documents we need to produce is a **Core Strategy**. This will set out our spatial strategy to help us guide and manage future development in the Borough in the most sustainable way.

This **Issues and Options paper** is the first stage in preparing the Core Strategy. It outlines our vision for the Borough and sets out some initial ideas about possible options that could form part of the Core Strategy. It also looks at possible options for providing a new Science Park in Loughborough. This is a key proposal which we are keen to progress.

But we want to know what you think. Please take some time to look at the paper and answer the questions at the end. Your comments will help us to decide on the best way forward for Charnwood. We will consult again on our preferred approach later in the year before we finalise the Core Strategy early in 2006.

Nothing has been decided so now is the time to get involved.



Councillor Cameron MacLeod,  
Lead Member for Planning.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it by the **29<sup>th</sup> July 2005** to:

Planning Policy Services, Borough of Charnwood,  
Southfields, Southfield Road, Loughborough,  
Leicestershire, LE11 2TN or by email to  
[localplans@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:localplans@charnwood.gov.uk)

If you would like to obtain copies in Braille, on audio tape or large print, please contact us by telephoning 01509 634769 or email [localplans@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:localplans@charnwood.gov.uk)

If you would like to have the content of any part of this document explained to you in your own language, please ring 01509 634769

### Gujarati

આ દસ્તાવેજના સમાવેશમાથી જો તમને કોઈ પણ ભાગની તમારી ભાષામા સમજણ જોઈતી હોયતો, મહેરબાની કરી અને 01509 634769 પર ફોન કરશો.

### Hindi

यदि आप चाहते हैं कि आपको इस दस्तावेज के किसी भी भाग का विवरण आपकी अपनी भाषा में बताया जाए, तो कृपया 01509 634769 पर फ़ोन कीजिए।

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের (document) যেকোন বিষয়ের ব্যাখ্যা আপনার নিজস্ব ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01509 634769 নাম্বারে টেলিফোন করুন।

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***What has Happened So Far?***

Since adopting the current Local Plan in January 2004 the Council has started work on the Charnwood LDF. We have prepared a **Local Development Scheme**- this is a work programme giving details of the documents that will go in to the LDF folder. We have also been gathering background information to help us make some of the key decisions we now need to make.

In May 2004 we published an Issues Paper and asked local community groups, businesses and other bodies what they thought were the main issues in Charnwood. A wide range of comments were received and they can be viewed on the Council's web site ([www.charnwood.gov.uk](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk)). These comments have informed the preparation of this Issues and Options paper.

## ***What Must We Take into Account?***

We are not preparing the Charnwood LDF in a vacuum. We must take account of national planning policy and planning guidance for the East Midlands prepared by the East Midlands Regional Assembly. For the time being the Structure Plan also provides guidance on the numbers of new homes and jobs we need to plan for. This guidance sets some "ground rules" that the Charnwood LDF must follow. But we have some important decisions to make about how we want to see Charnwood 10 years on.

Many of the issues facing the Borough are to do with its geography. The Borough extends southwards to the northern edge of Leicester and the proximity of Nottingham and Derby also exert strong influences. In developing our strategy we need to think about the impact of the Borough's location between the Three Cities at the heart of the East Midlands.

## ***What is a Spatial Strategy?***

The LDF will be the spatial strategy for the Borough. This means it will take a wide view of the issues affecting Charnwood. It will:

- consider the economic, social and environmental issues facing Charnwood – transport, education, employment, health and how these affect different parts of the Borough in different ways;
- take account of other strategies prepared by other bodies and how these affect different parts of the Borough;
- encourage partnership and engagement with public and private bodies that influence the development of the area;
- look at how the Council can help to deliver good quality development on the ground.

## ***Sustainable Development- What is it?***

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.*

Delivering sustainable development is at the heart of the new planning system. "Securing the future-Delivering UK Development Strategy" is the national strategy for sustainable development. It sets out a new 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-** achieving more with less;
- **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.

This national strategy sets the context for the Charnwood LDF. The LDF must set the local strategy to secure sustainable development.

## ***The Community Strategy***

The Charnwood Strategic Partnership, a 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. This aims to improve public services and promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough. The Charnwood LDF must take account of the Community Strategy and set out land-use proposals to help deliver its aims.

## ***The Council's Corporate Plan***

The Issues Paper 2004 looked at the Community Strategy themes and how the Charnwood LDF could help to deliver them. Since the Community Strategy was produced the Borough Council has published its Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan takes forward many of the Community Strategy themes and outlines the Council's vision for the Borough up to 2015:

### **Our Main Priority:**

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

### **Our Six Aims:**

**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 sport programmes which will provide a healthy living environment for all.

**Decent Homes and Neighbourhoods:** Raising the standards of homes, and the surrounding

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

environment. Fostering sustainable communities and providing quality advice to those in housing need.

**An Economically Prosperous Borough:** 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. Operating to an excellent standard that is endorsed by improving customer satisfaction across all our activities to become "Leading in Leicestershire".

**The Charnwood LDF will be a key tool in helping to deliver these objectives.**

As well as the Corporate Plan, the Council has produced a number of other strategies which will help to inform the Charnwood LDF. These include:

- The Charnwood Economic Development Strategy 2004- outlines a 10-year vision for Charnwood's economy. The principle of "growth through quality" underpins the strategy;
- The Green Space Strategy 2004- assesses current green space provision, identifies areas deficient in green space and establishes a strategy for future management and improvement of green space in the Borough;
- The Housing Strategy 2003- outlines the Council's strategy for dealing with a range of housing issues. Consultation on an updated strategy is about to take place;
- The Climate Change Strategy 2005- sets out the Council's commitment to working towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough;
- The Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2005- outlines a range of options to improve air quality in parts of the Borough;
- The Biodiversity Action Plan 1998- identifies the contribution Charnwood can

make to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan- the national strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

These strategies have helped to inform this issues and options paper and will be taken into account as we put together our preferred options.

## *Issues and Options*

To help us decide on our preferred option for the future planning strategy for Charnwood, we have a number of questions we want to discuss with key stakeholders, local community groups and residents:

- *What are the key issues facing Charnwood?*
- *What should be the main objectives of the Charnwood Local Development Framework?*
- *How far ahead should we plan- 10 years, 15 years or more?*
- *What scale of new development for homes and jobs should we plan for?*
- *How can we direct development to the most sustainable locations in the Borough?*
- *How can we protect the Boroughs valued natural heritage?*
- *Should we continue to safeguard areas of open land between our settlements? If we do what is the best way to do this?*
- *How can the strategy help to regenerate the more deprived parts of the Borough?*
- *What can we do to make sure that Loughborough Town Centre and other District and Local Centres remain successful and attractive destinations for shopping, culture and recreation?*
- *How can we tackle the impact of traffic and provide for a sustainable transport system that encourages the use of public transport, cycling and walking?*
- *The Council sees the provision of a new Science Park in Loughborough as a priority. What would be the best location for a Science Park?*

This paper looks at some of the options that may be available. Nothing has been decided. The

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

comments received will help us identify our preferred option.

We would welcome your comments on the options. Which do you think is best? Is there one that we have not thought of?

So the first question:

## ***What Are The Issues We Need To Address?***

In May 2004 we invited local residents, businesses and other stakeholders to tell us the issues we needed to address in putting together the new planning strategy for the Borough. We have also engaged consultants to undertake a “baseline assessment” of the Borough to identify key sustainability issues. The consultant’s findings are set out in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This can be viewed on the Council’s web site. In putting together the Corporate Plan the Council has worked with a panel of local residents to identify the issues of greatest local concern.

Looking at the response to the Issues consultation and the baseline study, a number of key issues for the Borough can be identified.

### ***Decent Homes and Neighbourhoods:***

1. the lack of affordable housing. With increasing house prices this is an issue which increasingly affects communities throughout Charnwood;
2. 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 houses in Charnwood between 1996 and 2016;
3. providing “balanced communities” through a better mix of types and tenures of housing and help meet the future needs of an ageing population. Particular issues associated with the concentrations of student accommodation in parts of Loughborough also need to be addressed;
4. areas of poorer quality housing. There are areas of poorer quality housing in the

Borough where improvements are needed to not just the houses but the wider neighbourhood.

### ***A Sustainable Environment***

5. ensuring that green wedges of open land are incorporated within any new development around Loughborough and Leicester;
6. safeguarding the separate identities of settlements in the Soar and Wreake Valleys;
7. ensuring the particular character of the varied Charnwood landscapes are retained. Charnwood covers a diverse range of landscapes from the rolling landscapes of the Charnwood Forest and the Wolds to the more populated river valleys of the Rivers Soar and Wreake;
8. the impacts of climate change, particularly in relation to flooding along the Rivers Soar and Wreake;
9. parts of the Borough suffering from poor air quality;
10. protecting and enhancing important wildlife habitats and areas of biodiversity interest;
11. congestion, pollution and traffic impact, particularly in Loughborough;
12. harmful impacts of heavy goods vehicle movements, particularly on the rural Wolds communities;
13. limited real travel choices by public transport, cycling and walking;
14. problems of access in the rural communities in the Borough.

### ***An Economically Prosperous Environment***

15. need for additional employment land to meet strategic requirements, including a new Science Park at Loughborough;
16. loss of existing employment areas to housing. The decline of traditional employment, such as textiles and manufacturing, has resulted in the

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

loss of significant employment opportunities in some villages;

17. making best use of areas of unused redundant land where there is scope for new development;
18. pockets of deprivation within the Borough, particularly in Loughborough;
19. strengthening Loughborough's role as an important shopping and cultural destination and safeguarding and improving existing local shopping centres in the main villages;
20. how to make use of the advantages brought by Loughborough University, with its reputation as a centre of research and sporting excellence, for the wider benefit of the Borough.
21. rural employment needs.

## ***Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for All***

22. lack of sport, leisure and cultural opportunities accessible to all;
23. tackling the identified deficiencies in green space provision in the Borough. The Council's 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.

## ***A Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment***

24. poor air quality in parts of the Borough;
25. flood risk within the River Valleys;
26. the need to minimise waste and increasing recycling;
27. crime and the fear of crime in local communities.

***SEE QUESTION 1***

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***Our Vision For Charnwood***

Our vision for Charnwood over the next 10 years or so is set out in our Corporate Plan. The Charnwood LDF will be a key tool in helping to deliver this vision on the ground. Fast forward to 2015- this is our vision for Charnwood:

### ***LEADING IN LEICESTERSHIRE***

Charnwood's positive reputation in the East Midlands Region and further afield is firmly established as "Leading in Leicestershire". The Borough is 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.

### ***KEY BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL CENTRE***

Loughborough is an important sub-regional centre for shopping, leisure and entertainment. It is also a key business and commercial centre, offering a clear alternative to the cities of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. This is complimented by the local facilities and employment opportunities available in many of our other towns and villages.

### ***MEETING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS***

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.

### ***QUALITY, INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT***

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

### ***A GREEN AND WALKABLE TOWN***

In Loughborough 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. 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.

### ***DECENT HOMES***

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 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.

### ***A SAFE ENVIRONMENT***

Across the Borough anti-social behaviour is dealt with firmly and levels of crime and the fear of crime continue to decrease. Through effective policing, effective regulation of public spaces, public involvement in neighbourhood watch and strong partnerships between key agencies, people feel safer in their neighbourhood and further afield. The effect of designing out crime principles as a matter of routine has also reduced the opportunities for criminals. Partnerships with the other Councils have played a big part in improving the quality and regulation of public spaces.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***A VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY***

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. Strong regional initiatives have placed us in the prosperous heart of the East Midlands with our airport providing an important passenger and freight facility as well as employment and business opportunities.

## ***A CENTRE FOR HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGED BASED INDUSTRY***

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. The presence of Loughborough University plays a pivotal role in the local economy through education, research, and dynamic business initiatives. 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.

## ***A SHOPPING AND LEISURE DESTINATION***

Our strategic approach has boosted the Borough's shopping and leisure facilities enhancing its attractiveness to residents and visitors alike. Improved conference and hotel facilities draw people to the Borough. High-speed Internet access throughout the Borough has boosted flexible working and the attractiveness of more rural locations for small-scale business.

## ***LEARNING AND HEALTH***

Children of Charnwood attend schools that are highly rated and integrated with lifelong learning opportunities for all our citizens. Everyone in the Borough, young and old, has some 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. Our parks and public spaces are beautifully maintained, safe, highly regarded, and well used by everyone. The achievement of Green Flag status for our parks confirms our top quality provision.

## ***COMMUNITY BASED CARE***

Community based care and support for our elderly people encourages active independence, enabling them to stay longer in their own homes. Older people are also key participants in many community and voluntary sector organisations providing vital support, information and services to other parts of the community as well as active participation in leisure and cultural activities. Children and young people are engaged in decision-making to ensure their needs and expectations are reflected in decisions about facilities and services which affect them.

## ***WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP***

Community Partnerships demonstrate that success can be achieved by working together and thereby improve the well-being of everyone. People relate to Charnwood as "Leading in Leicestershire" and embrace that aspiration. Public services are excellent and high levels of satisfaction support this. They are accessible, reliable, show value for money and use innovative methods of delivery where appropriate. The Council has maintained a sound financial position, balancing its ambitions with affordability. Goals for improved services by telephone, Internet and face to face have been exceeded. The diversity of the Borough is celebrated in responding to community needs and priorities. The specific needs of individuals and groups are included in all mainstream services. Charnwood still remains a Borough with great ambitions.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***Spatial Objectives***

To help deliver this vision possible objectives for the Charnwood LDF could be:

- to create safe, healthy, accessible and distinctive places for local people by encouraging quality and sustainable design and construction;
- to address social exclusion and reduce deprivation in those parts of the Borough identified as areas of relatively higher need including Loughborough, Shepshed, Soar Valley villages and south Charnwood;
- to reduce the need to, and distance of, travel by car and increase use of walking, cycling and public transport. In particular to improve access by bus to key services and facilities, including Loughborough hospital and peripheral employment areas;
- 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;
- to promote prudent use of resources through patterns of development, transport measures, reducing the use of minerals, energy and water and minimising waste;
- to concentrate most new development in the main urban areas of Loughborough, Shepshed and the settlements of Birstall and Thurmaston on the edge of Leicester giving priority to previously developed land;
- to meet needs for homes, including affordable housing, and jobs, including a new science park, in line with strategic requirements;
- to promote mixed balanced communities, in particular to address the extent and distribution of student accommodation within Loughborough;
- 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;

- to ensure that there is a network of vibrant 'local' centres so residents have access to a range of shops, services and facilities;
- to ensure residents have access to an interlinked system of parks and greenspaces, the countryside and built facilities for sport, recreation and community activities;
- to protect the built heritage and identity of the Borough's locally distinctive towns and villages;
- to reduce the risk to life and properties through flooding in vulnerable locations such as Loughborough and the Soar and Wreake valley villages;
- to protect distinctive landscapes, in particular the Charnwood Forest;
- to maintain and enhance a diverse range of habitats and the biodiversity of wildlife in line with the Charnwood Biodiversity Action Plan;
- to raise the profile of Charnwood to attract local and inward business investors;
- to provide local job opportunities by safeguarding key employment sites;
- to support thriving and diverse sustainable rural enterprise and farming.

***SEE QUESTIONS 2 AND 3***

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***How Far Ahead Should We Plan?***

Guidance suggests that the timeframe for a Core Strategy should be at least 10 years and that it should aim to look ahead to the timeframe set by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS provides a broad development strategy up to 2021. A review of the RSS has just started which will see it rolled forward to 2026. The Structure Plan sets out planning policy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland up to 2016.

Ten years from the proposed adoption date would take the Charnwood LDF Core Strategy to 2017, which is similar to the Structure Plan timeframe. To be consistent with the RSS, we would need to look beyond this to 2021. Both have advantages and disadvantages.

<b>A Plan to 2016</b>	<b>2021 and beyond</b>
<b>The Pros:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing and employment land figures up to 2016 are set out in the Structure Plan.</li> </ul>	<b>The Pros:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matches RSS timeframe;</li> <li>Would allow for longer term planning for growth needs and give certainty about future plans for Charnwood.</li> </ul>
<b>The Cons:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not cover RSS timeframe;</li> <li>Piecemeal approach to planning for the short term;</li> <li>May require the Core Strategy to be reviewed once housing and employment figures emerge from the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy.</li> </ul>	<b>The Cons:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimation of development needs by rolling forward the Structure Plan requirement;</li> <li>Uncertainty about the retention of the "Central Leicestershire" Policy Area and possible split of housing and employment requirements;</li> <li>Uncertainty about the growth and location strategies at the regional level to 2026.</li> </ul>

## ***What Scale Of Development Should We Plan For?***

There is no national guidance on the quantity of development for homes, jobs or other development types. The scale of development is set at regional and county level.

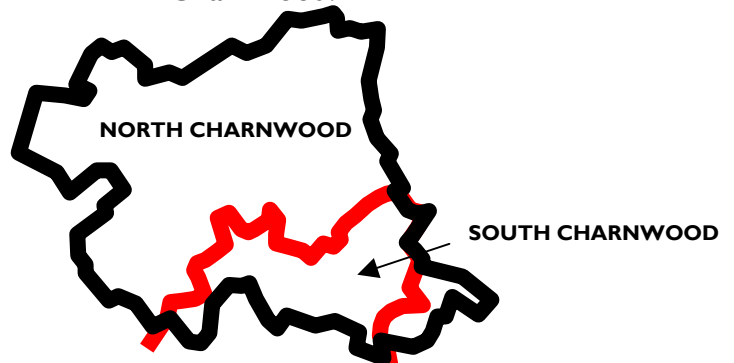
The RSS indicates the scale of new housing development for Leicestershire up to 2021 but it does not provide a figure for new employment growth. It does not include any figures on district level housing and employment growth. This level of detail will emerge through the review of the RSS.

New figures are likely to be based on the most recent national Household Projections produced by the Government. The 2002 Interim Projections show a rate of growth similar to the current rate for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland included in the current RSS. This rate is also reflected in the Structure Plan. However, in recent years actual build rates in the County have been higher.

So what do we know at the moment about future requirements in Charnwood?

The Structure Plan includes requirements for new homes and jobs in Charnwood up to 2016. The figures are split between:

- the Central Leicestershire Policy Area:***  
 the southern part of the Borough close to Leicester including Anstey, Rothley, Syston, Birstall and Thurmaston - we will call this area **South Charnwood**; and
- the rest of Charnwood:***  
 where Loughborough is the main urban area - we will call this area **North Charnwood**.



# ISSUES & OPTIONS

We can expect new housing and employment land figures to come out of the RSS review over the next three years. This is the same timescale for preparing the Core Strategy. It may therefore make sense if the general principles set by the Core Strategy to guide the location of development are sufficiently flexible to allow for the possibility of a higher rate of growth than set out in the Structure Plan.

To give an indication of the level of growth, housing and employment figures up to 2021 have been worked out by projecting the rate of growth set by the Structure Plan.

## **Housing:**

	South Charnwood	North Charnwood	Total (dwellings)
Structure Plan Requirement 1996-2016	2,950	6,450	9,400
Projected Growth 1996-2021	3,700	8,050	11,750

## **Employment:**

	South Charnwood	North Charnwood	Total (ha)
Structure Plan Requirement 1996-2016	72	134	206
Projected Growth 1996-2021*	78/90	150/155	228/245

The Structure Plan indicates that in meeting our employment land requirement up to 2016, land should be found in Charnwood for a:

- 30 hectare Strategic Employment Site in South Charnwood, close to Leicester;
- 20 hectare Strategic Employment Site in North Charnwood, close to Loughborough;
- substantial science park, up to a size of 50 hectares, in Loughborough, close to the university.

## **How Much Extra Land Do We Need To Find?**

Some of our requirements for new homes and jobs to 2016 have already been met either through development that has already taken place since 1996 or planning permissions already granted. Taking this into account means we do not have to find as much land for development as it first appears.

In terms of housing, the table below gives an indication of how many new homes are needed to fulfil requirements:

Dwellings	South Charnwood	North Charnwood	TOTAL
Required up to 2016	2,950	6,450	9,400
Required up to 2021	3,700	8,050	11,750
Built 1996-2005	1110	4011	5,121
With permission or allocated	1779	2195	3974
What is left to find up to 2016?	61	244	305
What is left to find up to 2021?	811	1844	2655

Some of this housing will be found on small sites coming forward in existing settlements. In the past, about 65 dwellings a year have been assumed but the actual rate has been higher. An urban capacity study to identify potential sites for housing on brownfield land within settlements was undertaken in 2004. This showed extra potential for about 900 dwellings, 200 in South Charnwood and 700 in North Charnwood, (taking account of those sites that have gained planning permission since the study) within a number of defined settlements.

Taking account of these opportunities, it would appear that there is a sufficient stock of land for housing to meet the Structure Plan requirement up to 2016 in North and South Charnwood.

If we look towards 2021, allowing for some development on small sites, about 1,000 dwellings, and around 1,300 dwellings on potential urban capacity sites, there is likely to be a need for Greenfield sites to accommodate around 350 dwellings (equivalent to about 10 hectares.)

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

In terms of employment land, the table below gives an indication of how much land is needed to meet strategic requirements:

Hectares	South Charnwood	North Charnwood	TOTAL
Required up to 2016	72	134	206
Required up to 2021	78/90	150/155	228/245
Built 96-04 (Starts)	11	29	40
With permission or allocated	29	37	66
What is left to find up to 2016?	32	68	100
What is left to find up to 2021?	38-50	85-90	122 - 139

The loss of existing employment sites and premises is a continuing concern in both Loughborough and other settlements in Charnwood. Between 1991 and 2001, at least 27 hectares of land were lost to employment use in the Borough. The Structure Plan states that key employment sites should be identified and protected from development to other uses. The RSS indicates that gains and losses of employment land and floorspace should be monitored. This raises the issue of whether additional employment land/floorspace should be allocated to compensate for these losses.

**So:**

**up to 2016-** there appears to be little need for additional land to be found for housing but there is a need to find about 100 hectares of employment land that is likely to have to be located on greenfield sites.

**2021 and beyond-** there will be extra housing and employment land requirements and it is likely that some of this will have to be on greenfield sites. At the moment this longer term requirement is difficult to predict. The review of the RSS could result in a larger or smaller requirement.

The Structure Plan indicates that where greenfield sites are necessary to accommodate growth these should be strategic in nature. This is because larger land allocations offer the best prospects to incorporate good quality mixed use development. They also offer the best prospects for securing significant planning contributions for transport, open space, and other local and community services.

If we plan up to 2016 we may not need to make difficult decisions now about the release of greenfield sites for housing but we will need to identify sites to meet our employment needs. But the strategy would need to be reviewed in a couple of years when the new Regional Spatial Strategy is published. Planning just for our employment needs may mean that we miss the opportunity to identify more sustainable options for mixed use development to meet the Borough's longer term needs.

Planning for the longer term, to 2021 and beyond, could allow comprehensive development to take place on a phased basis on larger sites to provide for the homes, jobs, transport, and the social and community needs of the population. But it would mean making difficult decisions now about the best option for sustainable long term growth. At the moment there is no clear guidance about what scale of development we should be planning for in Charnwood beyond 2016.

**SEE QUESTION 4**

## ***Where Should New Development Go?***

We want to direct the new homes and jobs we have to provide to the most sustainable locations in the Borough. In deciding where development should go we have to take into account national and regional policy and guidance provided by the Structure Plan.

National planning policy promotes sustainable patterns of development and a “sequential approach” to choosing locations for new development. This means that development is concentrated on sites within existing urban areas. Previously developed or “brownfield” land should be used first before urban extensions on greenfields or at nodes in good public transport corridors. New settlements may be an option where there are no more sustainable alternatives.

The RSS vision for the East Midlands is to secure sustainable patterns of development making efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure, reducing the need to travel, incorporating sustainable design and construction and enhancing local distinctiveness.

Urban renaissance is the key to achieving sustainable development in the region. The RSS sets out a sequential approach to make the best use of land and to make the best use of previously developed sites in urban areas. The RSS splits the region into five sub areas. Charnwood lies at the centre of the Three Cities Sub Area. The aim of the strategy is to direct most development to the largest urban centres- The Principal Urban Areas, with a smaller amount of development directed to smaller Sub Regional Centres.

**The Principal Urban Areas:** Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham;

**The Sub-Regional Centres:** Loughborough, Coalville, Hinckley.

In rural areas the aim is to sustain villages and reverse the decline in services. Rural settlements can be identified for local needs housing including affordable housing and to provide most other services.

The Structure Plan also aims to secure sustainable development by concentrating new development

in existing urban areas. To do this the Plan defines a “Central Leicestershire Policy Area” to help direct development towards Leicester as the main urban centre in the County. The Plan identifies Leicester as an “urban conurbation” made up of the City and settlements on its boundaries including Birstall, Thurmaston, and Glenfield. This is called the ***Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area***.

Outside this area development is directed to ***Main Towns*** to safeguard their future economic and social wellbeing. In Charnwood the main towns are Loughborough and Shepshed.

The sequence outlined in the Structure Plan means that in Charnwood we should look to locate new development in:

- Loughborough and Shepshed Town Centres, particularly on brownfield land; and then
- locations within Loughborough and Shepshed and the Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area (including Birstall and Thurmaston), particularly on brownfield land; and then
- land adjoining Loughborough and Shepshed and the Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area (including Birstall and Thurmaston), particularly on brownfield land; and then
- locations within and adjoining Rural Centres or other settlements well served by public transport, particularly on brownfield land; and lastly;
- in other locations subject to the consideration of green wedge and countryside policies.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***A Locational Strategy For Charnwood: What Are The Options?***

The RSS and Structure Plan both adopt locational strategies which promote urban concentration.

In developing our strategy for Charnwood we need to reflect this strategic guidance. Other possible locational strategies, for example spreading development more widely between existing settlements, or developing a wholly new settlement, would not be consistent with this strategic guidance.

We therefore need to consider the options available for pursuing a strategy of urban concentration in Charnwood in accordance with the RSS and Structure Plan.

To do this we need to:

- define a settlement hierarchy for Charnwood;
- identify possible broad directions for growth.

## ***A Charnwood Settlement Hierarchy***

To develop the Core Strategy we need to establish a settlement hierarchy using the national, regional and county policy context and key characteristics of Charnwood settlements in terms of availability and accessibility of services and facilities, size and function, geography and interactions between settlements. In defining the hierarchy regional policy has been given most weight. The key local influences are:

- the main urban centres of Leicester in the south and the Loughborough urban system in the north as well as other nearby towns and service centres such as Coalville, Melton Mowbray and East Leake in adjoining districts.
- the small town of Syston and other large villages concentrated alongside the Soar and Wreake Valleys, have well established service bases able to serve residents and surrounding

areas, including the more rural parts of Charnwood;

- the proximity of strong urban influences suggests no settlements in Charnwood function as Rural Centres for a wider rural catchment.

One possible hierarchy is set out below.

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

**SEE QUESTION 5**

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***SOME KEY TERMS***

### **LEICESTER PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA (LPUA)**

The LPUA as identified in RSS8 is considered to be equivalent to the Structure Plan's Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area made up of Leicester and its adjoining settlements including Birstall and Thurmaston in Charnwood. Birstall and Thurmaston offer residents a reasonable range of jobs, services and facilities. Bus links to main urban centres are frequent, especially to Leicester, and there are hourly services to some nearby villages during weekdays.

### **SUB REGIONAL CENTRE (SRC)**

The SRC identified in RSS8 is considered to cover the urban system of Loughborough / Shepshed, the two settlements in Charnwood identified as Main Towns in the Structure Plan. Loughborough/ Shepshed are centrally located between the Three Cities and the two towns are close together either side of the M1 corridor. The SRC offers a good range of jobs, services and facilities to a wide catchment. Loughborough and Shepshed are well linked by bus and have public transport links mainly via Loughborough to cities and other main towns at half hourly or better frequency. Most of the SRC's catchment has reasonable bus links of hourly or better frequency during weekday daytime.

### **SERVICE CENTRES**

In general terms Charnwood's small towns and large villages offer a good range of jobs, services and facilities for residents and a local catchment. They are usually well served by bus and / or rail with half hourly or better links to main urban areas. Catchments are served by more limited bus services.

### **OTHER COMMUNITIES**

The majority of the remaining small villages, hamlets and dispersed communities are located in the more rural parts of the Borough but a few are very close to Leicester and Loughborough. These are mainly residential communities offering a restricted range of services and facilities for residents, and, in most cases, at best hourly weekday daytime bus links to nearby urban centres.

## ***What Should Be The Directions For Growth?***

Having looked at how long we should plan for and how much development we have to find, we need to consider possible broad directions for growth to accommodate new development needs.

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. Given this policy background and the strong urban influences locally, the emphasis for the foreseeable future is likely to be on a strategy of urban concentration.

At this stage we are only considering possible directions for growth and assessing them in general terms against known environmental, technical, infrastructure and service constraints.

The identification of possible directions of growth is based on:

- the application of the sequential approach set out at regional and county level to Charnwood;
- considering the suitability of these locations against a range of criteria relating to:
  - transport and accessibility,
  - physical constraints,
  - the impact of development on resources and environmental assets,
  - development viability and costs,
  - the need for balanced developments and
  - the contribution development could make to strengthening and supporting a local community.
- making the best use of previously developed land within urban areas;
- small towns and larger villages are not appropriate locations for large scale growth but may be suitable for modest provision to support service provision in line with sustainability objectives.

- larger land allocations are considered to offer the best prospects for securing significant planning contributions towards services, infrastructure, open space and high quality design.

New freestanding developments located away from main urban centres, even those able to make use of previously developed land, do not perform well against the sequential test and sustainability criteria, and would not be consistent with established strategic policy for the region or county. They also need substantial investment that might be better used in existing urban areas.

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.

A new settlement option would not be in keeping with the strategy of urban concentration established in regional and strategic guidance. There appears to be sufficient land available in higher priority locations to meet our development needs. For these reasons this options paper does not consider new settlement options as possible broad directions for growth.

We have identified two possible timescales for the Core Strategy:

- plan for growth up to 2016;
- plan for growth up to 2021 and beyond.

Taking these two options, a number of broad directions for growth can be identified.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## *The Options*

The options below are possible broad directions for growth in Charnwood. Between them they contain significantly more land than would be needed to meet requirements up to 2016 or even 2021. We are gathering data on which broad locations would be the most sustainable options for development and would like your views.

### *South Charnwood*

#### **URBAN CAPACITY IN THE MAIN URBAN CENTRES:**

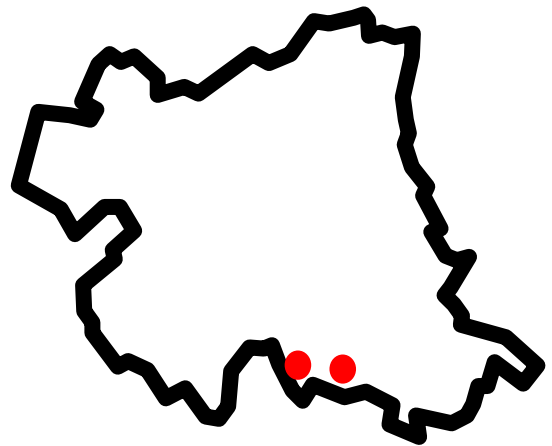
**Option S1- Maximise use of urban capacity potential within the Leicester Principal Urban Area, including Birstall and Thurmaston.**

##### **The Pros**

- supports social inclusion and regeneration initiatives;
- highest priority locations in search sequence and more likely to meet sustainability objectives;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan.

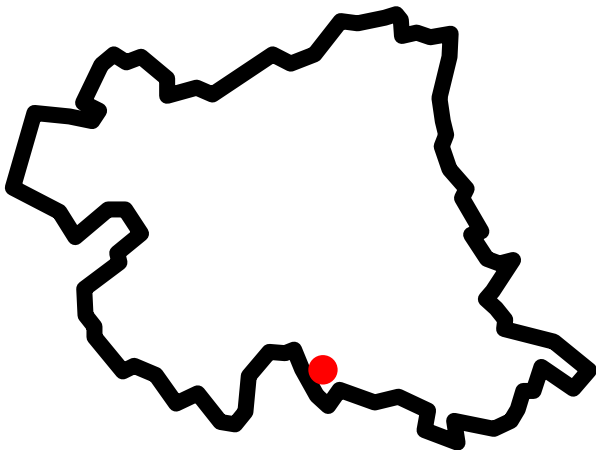
##### **The Cons**

- potential adverse traffic impact if good public transport access is not available;
- potential loss of employment land to housing;
- available brownfield sites likely to be insufficient to meet future needs for homes and jobs;



#### **URBAN EXTENSIONS AROUND LEICESTER**

**Option S2 - Adjoining Birstall**



##### **The Pros:**

- potential for good access to principal road network and scope for good bus access building on existing high frequency daytime bus service between Leicester and Loughborough/ Coalville and proximity to park and ride facility to be provided north of Birstall;
- close to major housing areas;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan;
- could help deliver a new District Park in accordance with the Council's Green Space Strategy.

##### **The Cons:**

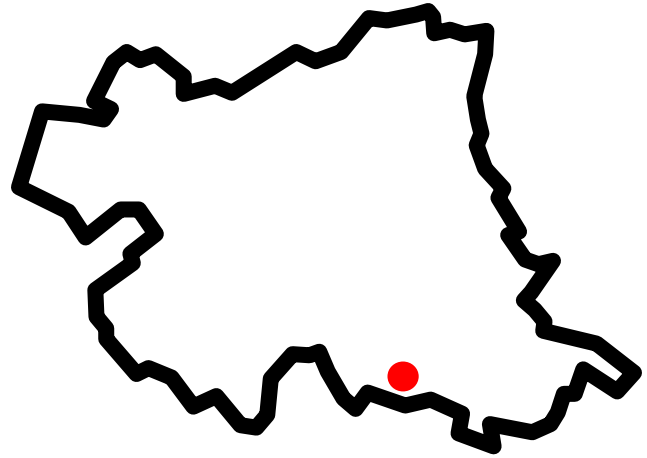
- scope to accommodate employment land only;
- possible significant impact of additional traffic on road network around A46/A6 junction;
- encroachment into countryside north of A46;
- development located to the south east of A46/A6 junction could harm setting and identity of Wanlip village.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## **Option S3 - Adjoining Thurmaston/ Leicester**

### ***The Pros:***

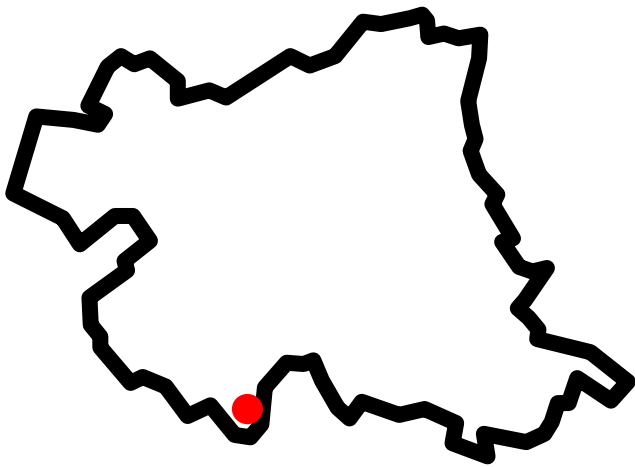
- scope to accommodate employment land and/or housing;
- scope for sustainable extension of Leicester urban area;
- good potential for access by bus and or other public transport links;
- potential to improve balance between housing and employment in locality;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan.



### ***The Cons:***

- the extent and location of green wedge between Thurmaston, Syston and Hamilton would need to be reviewed;
- encroachment into countryside east of Thurmaston;
- traffic generated would add to highway problems caused by congestion on major routes and use of unsuitable minor roads through Barkby and Barkby Thorpe at peak times;
- may be implications of proximity to Melton Brook, Barkby Brook and local watercourses.

## **Option S4 - Adjoining Glenfield/ Leicester**



### ***The Pros***

- scope to accommodate employment land and/or housing;
- potential for good access to principal road network and scope for good bus access building on existing high frequency daytime services;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan.

### ***The Cons***

- amount of land potentially available for development is small;
- possible significant traffic impact on congested road network;
- the extent and location of green wedge between Anstey, Glenfield and Leicester would need to be reviewed;
- may be implications of proximity to floodplain of Rothley Brook and local watercourses.

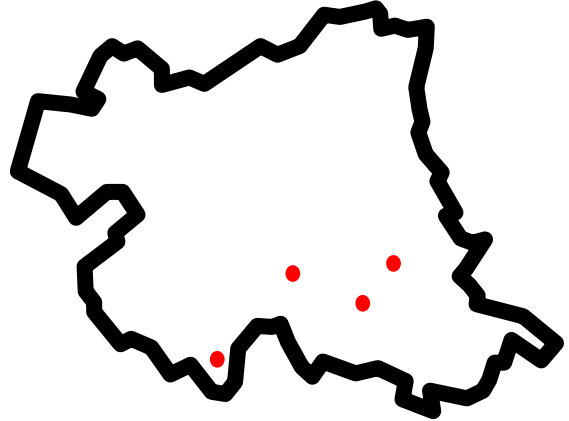
# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***DEVELOPMENT IN SERVICE CENTRES***

### **Option S5 - Within and adjoining the Service Centres of Anstey, East Goscote, Rothley and Syston**

#### ***The Pros:***

- scope to accommodate employment land and /or housing;
- additional employment land could improve local balance between jobs and homes in settlements where numerous employment sites have been lost;
- additional employment land could help meet social inclusion and regeneration objectives;
- part of any additional housing could meet any identified affordability issues;
- could help deliver a new District Park to serve the Syston area in accordance with the Council's Green Space Strategy.



#### ***The Cons:***

- not identified in RSS or Structure Plan as priority locations for development;
- potential adverse impact on the form, character and setting of villages and surrounding open land;
- potential adverse traffic impact;
- planning contributions from smaller scale developments likely to be more limited.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***North Charnwood***

### ***URBAN CAPACITY IN LOUGHBOROUGH / SHEPSHED SUB REGIONAL CENTRE***

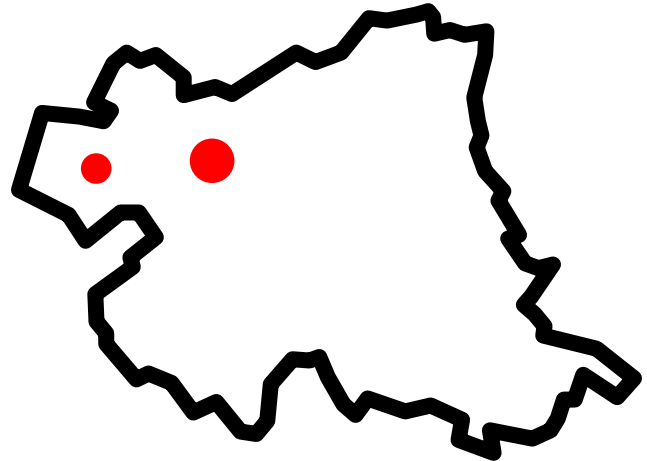
#### **Option N1 - Maximise use of urban capacity potential for mixed use developments in Loughborough / Shepshed**

##### ***The Pros:***

- would support social inclusion and regeneration initiatives especially in eastern Loughborough and Shepshed;
- highest priority location in search sequence and more likely to meet sustainability objectives;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan.

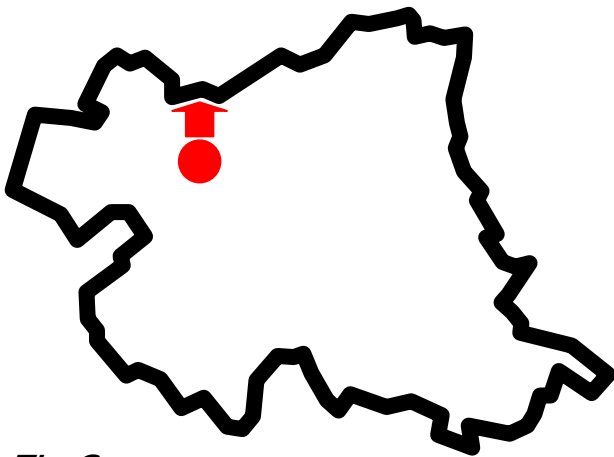
##### ***The Cons:***

- available brownfield sites likely to be insufficient to meet future needs for homes and jobs;
- potential adverse traffic impact if good public transport access is not available;
- potential loss of employment land to housing.



### ***URBAN EXTENSIONS AROUND LOUGHBOROUGH AND SHEPSHED***

#### **Option N2 - North of Loughborough**



##### ***The Pros:***

- scope to accommodate employment land and /or housing;
- good access to highway network and existing public transport routes and cycling and walking;
- would allow for expansion of existing major employment areas;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan;
- could help deliver a new District Park in accordance with the Council's Green Space Strategy.

##### ***The Cons:***

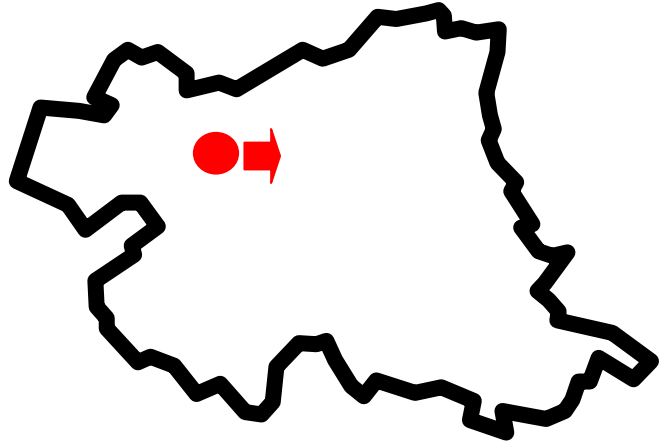
- the extent and location of green wedge between Loughborough and Hathern would need to be reviewed;
- potential traffic impact on J24 of M1;
- increased imbalance between employment areas located north and east of Loughborough and housing to the south and west;
- may be implications of proximity to Blackbrook and floodplain of the River Soar;
- encroachment into countryside north of Loughborough.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## **Option N3 - East of Loughborough**

### ***The Pros:***

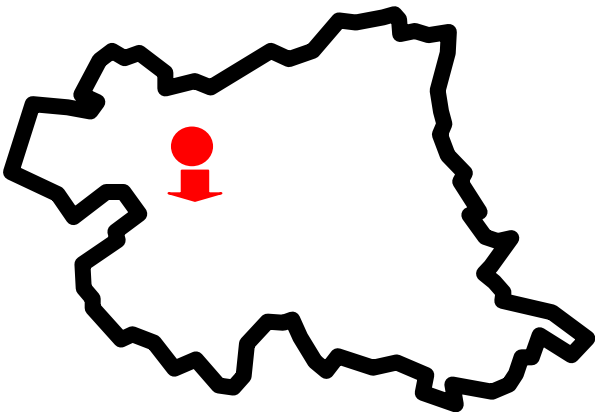
- good access to highway network and existing public transport routes and cycling and walking. Close to Loughborough rail station;
- scope for improved highway links to improve accessibility to trunk road network;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan;
- could help deliver a new District Park in accordance with the Council's Green Space Strategy.



### ***The Cons:***

- majority of land adjoining eastern side of town is in River Soar floodplain and contains significant areas of ecological importance;
- employment land on its own east of river valley would not be well related to main housing areas;
- increased traffic congestion on Meadow Lane/ A60;
- encroachment into countryside east of the river valley;
- impact on the identity and setting of Cotes.

## **Option N4 - South Loughborough**



### ***The Pros:***

- Scope to accommodate employment land and /or housing;
- good access to highway network and existing public transport routes and cycling and walking;
- a significant employment land allocation would redress imbalance between housing and employment in south Loughborough, Quorn and Barrow;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan;
- could help deliver a new District Park in accordance with the Council's Green Space Strategy.

### ***The Cons:***

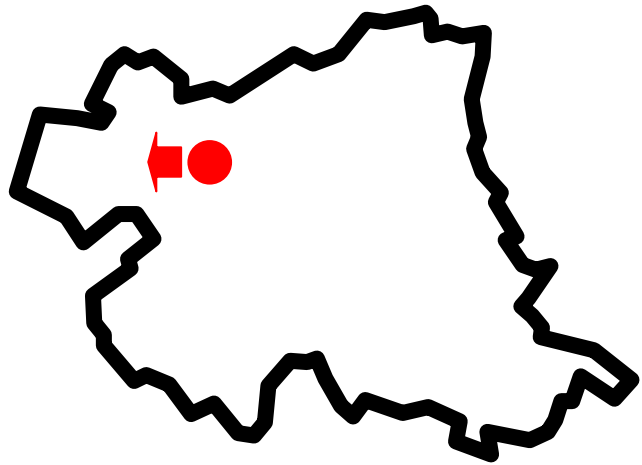
- the extent and location of green wedge between Loughborough and Quorn would need to be reviewed;
- encroachment into countryside and Charnwood Forest south west of Loughborough;
- may be implications of proximity to River Soar, Woodthorpe Drain and Poulteney Brook. Also in relation to watercourse draining into Wood Brook. Investigation under way of potential to use part of this area for balance and storage to reduce flooding problems in Loughborough alongside the Wood Brook.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## **Option N5 - West of Loughborough**

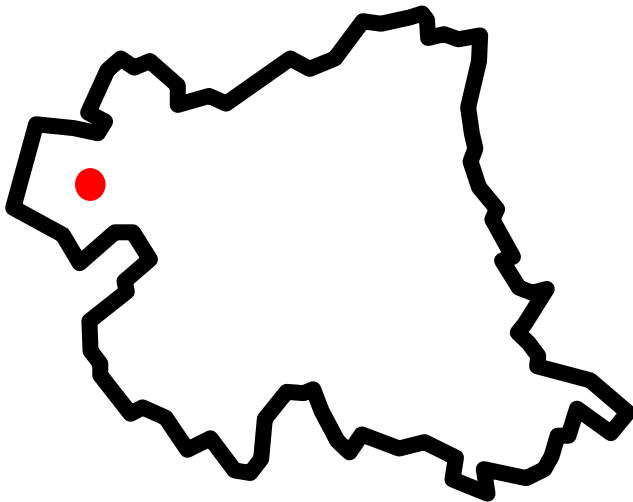
### ***The Pros:***

- Scope to accommodate employment land and /or housing;
- good access to highway network and existing public transport routes and cycling and walking;
- good access to M1 and scope for improved highway links;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan;
- could help deliver a new Country Park and/or District Park in accordance with the Council's Green Space Strategy;
- could provide for a link between the A512 and A6 north of the town to access the main industrial areas.



### ***The Cons:***

- the extent and location of green wedge between Loughborough and Shepshed would need to be reviewed ;
- encroachment into countryside and Charnwood Forest south of the A512;
- challenge to accommodate development within the Garendon Estate with minimal impact on the historic Garendon Park;
- possible traffic impact on M1 J23;
- may be implications of proximity to Burleigh Brook and Shortcliffe Brook.



## **Option N6 - Adjoining Shepshed**

### ***The Pros:***

- Scope to accommodate employment land to the east and housing to the west;
- population growth could support regeneration of Shepshed's service base;
- supports regeneration of Shepshed and redresses loss of employment sites and;
- in general transportation terms appears acceptable and there is good bus access via A512, particularly on the eastern side of Shepshed;
- would be consistent with RSS and Structure Plan.

### ***The Cons:***

- western Shepshed is a rather remote location with adjoining narrow and substandard road network. Difficult to serve by public transport;
- possible traffic impact on M1 J23;
- land to east may be affected by motorway widening;
- encroachment into countryside and Charnwood Forest;
- may be implications of proximity to Black Brook and upper reaches of Shortcliffe Brook.

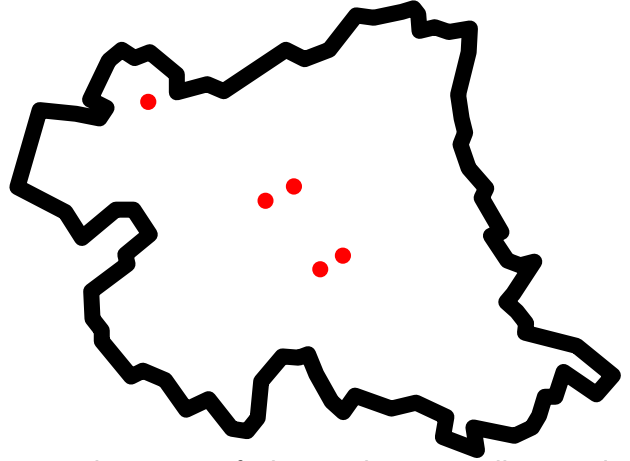
# ISSUES & OPTIONS

## ***DEVELOPMENT IN SERVICE CENTRES***

### **Option N7 - Within and adjoining the Service Centres of Barrow upon Soar, Hathern, Mountsorrel, Quorn and Sileby**

#### *The Pros:*

- scope to accommodate employment land and /or housing;
- additional employment land could improve local balance between jobs and homes in settlements where numerous employment sites lost;
- additional employment land could help meet social inclusion and regeneration objectives;
- part of any additional housing could meet any identified affordability issues.



#### *The Cons:*

- not identified in RSS or Structure Plan as priority locations for development;
- potential adverse impact on the form, character and setting of the settlements village and surrounding open land;
- potential adverse traffic impact;
- planning contributions from smaller scale developments likely to be more limited.

***SEE QUESTION 6***

## ***How Should We Safeguard Important Areas Of Open Land?***

Under current planning policies, open land outside the existing built up areas is defined either as countryside, Green Wedge or Areas of Local Separation. Whilst they may all look the same on the ground, different planning policies apply to these different areas.

### ***Green Wedges***

For the last 20 years green wedges have been 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. The Regional Spatial Strategy recognises the value of this long established Green Wedge policy.

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.

Nevertheless there are tensions between a strategy of urban concentration, which directs development to the main urban areas, and green wedge policies designed to safeguard open areas of land on the edge of these areas. As locations green wedge land may often be the most sustainable location for new development. The Core Strategy will need to resolve these tensions.

### ***The Local Picture***

The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan identifies Green Wedges as structurally important areas of land which help to maintain the physical separation between communities, protect their individual identities and contribute towards the quality of life of all people living in the urban areas.

Green Wedges help 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 physical identity of settlements adjoining the main urban areas.

Some development is considered acceptable in a Green Wedge such as forestry, agriculture, outdoor recreation, mineral uses etc provided development does not permanently damage the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge. However, any land use or associated development in the Green Wedge is required to:

- retain the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge;
- retain and create green networks or “green lungs” linking the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas; and
- retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation.

In planning to meet future development requirements existing green wedges will need to be reviewed. New areas of green wedge may also be needed alongside proposals to extend urban areas.

There are currently 7 Green Wedges identified in the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan. They are between:

- Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/ Birstall/ Thurmaston /Anstey / Cropston
- Birstall/Leicester/ Thurmaston (Soar Valley North)
- Beaumont Leys/Glenfrith/Anstey/Groby
- Syston/Turmaston (East of Melton Road)

- Loughborough/Shepshed
- Loughborough/Quorn
- Loughborough/Hathern

Green Wedges remain a key planning tool that will help to ensure that as urban areas expand, settlements do not merge and open areas or “green lungs” are retained. The policy enjoys strong public support.

Around Loughborough the existing Green Wedges are quite extensive. Together the Green Wedges between the town and Shepshed, Hathern and Quorn throw a “green curtain” around the town. In contrast Green Wedges around Leicester provide for “green fingers” of open land penetrating the urban area between the “brown spokes” of expanding development.

## ***Urban Concentration and Green Wedges: Resolving The Tensions***

In pursuing a strategy of urban concentration some development options will require a review of the extent of existing Green Wedges. Some of the directions for growth options detailed earlier will impact on existing Green Wedge areas.

We need to identify the scope to review the precise boundaries of Green Wedges to allow for sustainable extensions to the main urban areas where necessary.

**SEE QUESTION 7**

## ***Areas of Local Separation***

In tandem with Green Wedges, planning policies have also been applied in Leicestershire to protect the separate character and identities of other settlements outside the larger urban areas. These policies, designed to safeguard smaller more local areas of separation between communities, have strong public support. This is the case in Charnwood where the concentrated settlement pattern, particularly along the Soar and Wreake valleys, means towns and villages are close together with little open land between them.

## ***The Local Picture***

Under the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan we can identify “Areas of Local Separation” between smaller communities where other policies in the plan would not provide enough protection on their own to prevent settlements joining up. The intention is to avoid the unacceptable reduction in the separation between settlements that could contribute to a loss of character and identity.

The Structure Plan sees these areas of separation as land which is not green wedge but nevertheless performs an important role in maintaining separation between settlements.

In Charnwood quite extensive areas of land have been identified as Areas of Local Separation in various planning documents since the early 1980’s. This is in part a reflection of the strong local concern over this issue. The current local plan defines nine areas of separation, mostly between villages in the Soar and Wreake Valleys.

This approach has worked well and has helped to protect important open areas of land between settlements.

**SEE QUESTION 8**

## ***Countryside Character***

A feature of Charnwood is the diversity and contrast in its landscapes, from the rolling higher land of the Charnwood Forest to the river Valleys of the Soar and Wreake. There are no National Parks or AONBs in Charnwood or Leicestershire. Charnwood does form part of The National Forest, a national initiative to create a new forest for the nation linking the ancient forests of Needwood and Charnwood. The National Forest covers 200 square miles of countryside across Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. The Charnwood Forest forms its eastern edge.

National planning guidance requires us to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and where possible enhanced. Whilst the government accepts that there are locally valued landscapes outside the nationally designated areas, it considers that sufficient protection can be provided without the need for rigid local landscape designations. It sees criteria based policies using tools such as landscape character assessments as the best approach.

Existing local designations should only be maintained where it can be shown that criteria based policies would not provided the necessary protection. We need to review our local landscape designations and consider whether there is any justification for retaining them.

## ***The Regional Picture***

There are two nationally designated landscapes in the East Midlands- The Peak District National Park and the Lincolnshire Wolds AONB. The RSS also recognises that there are a number of areas, including the Charnwood Forest, where the distinctive landscape character and the scale of ecological, historic and woodland interest combine to create areas that are special in the regional context. The RSS encourages coordinated action in these areas to ensure that the distinctive character of these areas is retained. Outside these areas guidance suggests that understanding the importance of all landscapes and reducing the emphasis on local landscape designations will ensure that the character of one area is not protected at the expense of another.

## ***The Local Picture***

The Structure Plan identifies one specific countryside character area- the Charnwood Forest. It states that Charnwood Forest is Leicestershire's most distinctive landscape and is highly valued. The plan indicates that development within the Charnwood Forest Policy Area will be acceptable where it can be demonstrated to conserve or enhance the character of Charnwood Forest including its landscape, ecology, cultural heritage, built heritage and recreational value.

Charnwood has a number of substantial areas of attractive countryside, which in previous local plans have been considered worthy of specific protection. The adopted Local Plan identifies these areas as the Charnwood Forest, including Bradgate Park, Beacon Hill and The Outwoods, the Wreake Valley, Soar Valley and part of High Leicestershire in the south eastern part of the Borough. Within these areas there are likely to be continuing pressures for change. We need to review these designations in the light of national and regional guidance and decide whether any should be retained.

Too many local countryside designations could be seen to undermine general countryside policy and implies that some areas of countryside are more important than others. Having a single countryside policy outside the Charnwood Forest would mean that all Charnwood's countryside would enjoy equal protection.

***SEE QUESTION 9***

## ***A Strategy For Regeneration***

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.

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.

The Charnwood LDF should promote development that creates socially inclusive communities, including suitable mixes of housing. It should:

- ensure that the impact of development on the social fabric of communities is considered and taken into account;
- seek to reduce social inequalities;
- address accessibility (both in terms of location and physical access) for all members of the community to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities;
- take into account the needs of all the community, including particular requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability or income;
- deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live; and,
- support the promotion of health and well being by making provision for physical activity.

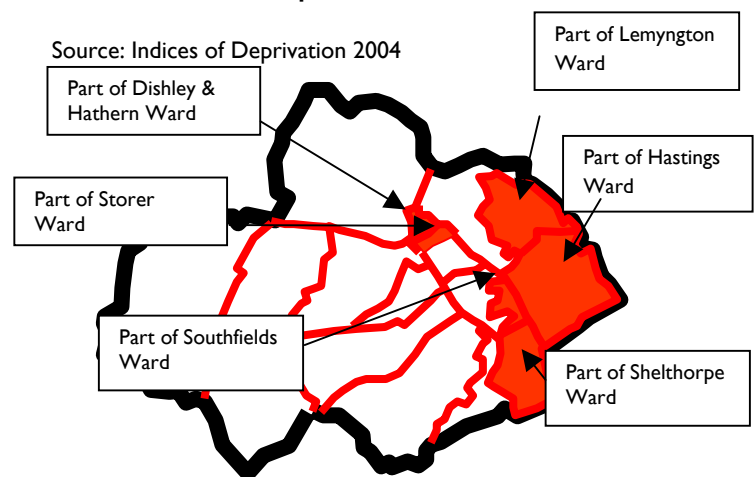
The RSS highlights the regional priorities for regeneration including the Principal Urban Areas and Sub-Regional Centres that exhibit very high concentrated levels of deprivation. The Structure Plan indicates that measures will be taken to improve the quality of life within those areas suffering relative deprivation. Pockets of deprivation particularly in Loughborough are identified as priority areas.

## ***The Priorities***

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 (Primary)
  - Secondary areas: South Charnwood villages and Soar valley villages (Secondary)

### **Loughborough & Shepshed The 10% Most Deprived Areas in Charnwood**



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 some of the highest levels of deprivation in the County outside Leicester are found in parts of Charnwood and that the areas of greatest need are in located in Loughborough.

It is useful for the Council's priority areas for regeneration to be identified. However, there is a concern that too many priority areas can weaken this approach or that small pockets of deprivation are missed. The alternative is to have a more flexible approach based on up to date data that does not identify priority areas.

**SEE QUESTION 10**

## ***Creating Balanced Communities***

A key objective of planning is to promote sustainable development. Through the Sustainable Communities Plan the Government has defined what a sustainable community looks like.

Policies should promote mixed use developments in locations that allow links to be created between different uses and so creating more vibrant places.

The Government intends that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. PPG3 advocates creating balanced and mixed communities and emphasises the need to plan to meet the housing needs of the whole community, including those in need of affordable housing.

Affordable housing is a key issue in the Borough because recent increases in house prices have placed buying or renting a home on the open market out of reach of many new households. The building of new affordable homes is significantly below the rate identified by the latest housing need survey.

Student housing in Loughborough is of concern to local residents who live close to the University. The concerns relate to the impact of students whose behaviour is anti-social, the effect on the local housing market and the decreasing local community.

New development, particularly where new housing is proposed, raises the issue of linked social and community facilities to serve the new communities. Planning applications are often granted subject to the landowner/developer contributing to the provision of community facilities such as open space, schoolplaces or affordable housing that benefit the whole community.

Access to open space is a key contributor to well-being and health enabling people to have a place

to exercise and play. The Greenspaces Strategy identified a number of deficiencies in the green spaces network - 'district parks' are needed in Loughborough, Birstall, Shepshed and Syston as well as smaller local parks and recreation grounds elsewhere.

**SEE QUESTION 11**

### ***A Sustainable Community***

*'Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.'*

### ***Rural Areas***

The national planning objectives for rural areas are to raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas through the promotion of thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities where there is sustainable economic growth, good quality, sustainable development that respects and protects the countryside.

The spatial strategy set out in both the regional and county level promotes urban concentration with limited development in rural areas to meet local needs.

Much of Charnwood is close to the existing urban centres of Leicester, Loughborough or larger villages in the Soar and Wreake valleys. The Wolds and parts of Charnwood Forest are remoter areas where there is lack of a range of local facilities such as convenience shops and health facilities are of concern especially where public transport is limited.

There is a question, therefore, about whether the Core Strategy should promote improved facilities in rural areas or whether improved access to facilities in larger settlements is made by better public transport. The Structure Plan gives the opportunity to identify rural centres. Rural centres are discussed earlier in the section on 'what should be the directions for growth?'

**SEE QUESTION 5**

## ***Tackling Climate Change***

Climate change is one of the most serious environmental problems the world faces. With the Rivers Soar and Wreake running through the Borough, parts of Charnwood are particularly susceptible to one of the effects of climate change-increased flood risk. As with the rest of the UK, we are also likely to experience other effects of global warming- summer heatwaves and wetter winters.

Tackling climate change is one of the priority areas for action identified in the Government's sustainable development strategy. The strategy highlights the need to make a profound change in our use of energy and other activities that result in the emission of greenhouse gases, but also to prepare for the changes in climate that are already unavoidable.

Managing the development and use of land through the planning system can promote the use of renewable energy in new development and reduce the use of non-renewable resources by locating development where it can be accessed by means other than the private car. The RSS recognises the need to take action to reduce the scale and impact of future climate change, in particular flood risk, through the location and design of new development in the East Midlands.

## ***The Local Picture***

The Borough Council recognises the need to develop policies locally to tackle the issue of climate change. In March 2005 the Council signed up to the Nottingham declaration on Climate Change. The declaration demonstrates signatories' commitments to develop strategies to reduce their impact on climate change.

The Council has recently published a Climate Change Strategy for Charnwood, which is a statement of the Council's commitment to working towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough. The adopted Local Plan seeks to address the issue of climate change by directing development to the main urban centres with good access to public transport, cycling and walking, safeguarding areas of floodplain, and encouraging sustainable design and construction.

## ***The Options***

There are a number of things that the Charnwood LDF could do to address the issue of climate change. The locational strategy we choose to guide future development in Charnwood will have the biggest impact on climate change locally. A strategy which is successful in directing new development to the most sustainable locations will help to ensure that people don't need to travel too far and that walking, cycling public transport provide real practicable alternatives to the car.

We can safeguard existing floodplain areas so that development is not at risk from flooding. Where appropriate we can seek contributions from new developments towards flood mitigation measures. We can include policies to secure energy efficient design in new development and the use of sustainable urban drainage systems. We can also encourage the sustainable energy developments such as wind turbines.

***SEE QUESTION 12***

## ***A New Science Park***

One of the strengths of Charnwood's economy is the presence of a number of high technology employers, particularly in the Loughborough area, many taking advantage of links with Loughborough University for research and development. The University has the highest spin-out rate of companies relative to research funding and provides the best value for money research of any UK University. It currently provides space for some 45 start up businesses on the Campus.

It is important that the strategy for the Borough takes full advantage of these strengths. Building on the success of the existing Loughborough Science Park, the Structure Plan proposes that land for one substantial Science Park, up to a maximum of 50 hectares should be allocated in Loughborough close to the University.

The Council supports the principle of a new Science Park and sees it as a key proposal vital to sustain and enhance the local economy. It is intended that alongside the Core Strategy a Science Park allocation document will be produced to identify a specific site for this development.

This paper explores the locational options for the Science Park. These include suggested locations presented to us following consultation on the earlier Issues Paper in May 2004.

## ***The Regional Picture***

The Regional Economic Strategy for the East Midlands sets the ambition for the region to be one of the top 20 European regions by 2010. One of the key drivers for success is seen to be developing a strong culture of enterprise and innovation within the region. The strategy recognises that improving the levels of innovative business activity in the region depends upon the cultivation of good relationships between the universities and business and industrial users.

The Regional Spatial Strategy identified a particular shortage of sites suitable for science and technology users within the Three Cities sub area.

## ***The Local Picture***

The existing Loughborough Science Park covers about 34 hectares of land west of the University and was originally promoted in the early 1980's through the Loughborough Local Plan. The bulk of the site was occupied by the Advantica Gas Research and Training Centre, formally British Gas. This has now been acquired by the University and is called Holywell Park. There remains about 5 hectares of Science Park land on the A512 which is yet to be developed.

The Charnwood Economic Development Strategy 2004 establishes an economic vision for the Borough of "Growth through Quality". To achieve this vision the strategy gives priority to business innovation and advanced technology; business creation and survival; education, research and knowledge based industries; the creative/cultural industry; Loughborough as a retail/commercial centre.

Work undertaken by the County Council in preparing the Structure Plan identified a need for a hierarchy of sites for high technology firms in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland including:

- incubator facilities to encourage start up;
- ready-built small units for existing high technology small and medium size enterprises (SME);
- at least one substantial science park development.

The Structure Plan requires the Charnwood LDF to provide for a substantial Science Park of up to 50 hectares close to Loughborough University.

## ***What are the Locational Requirements?***

In identifying the most sustainable location for the Science Park we need to consider how the locational requirements of potential occupiers can best be met in the most sustainable way to ensure that the provision of the Science Park is a success.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

In developing its strategic proposals for the Science Park, Leicestershire County Council identified the need for a hierarchy of high technology sites from incubator facilities to one substantial science park. They considered the best site options would be those that could secure the involvement of a university and offer the best opportunities for clustering and improved linkages between firms and related universities. Incubator and SME units should be as close as practicable to the universities. For businesses looking for larger sites the County considered these could be accommodated on the proposed science and technology park. While these larger firms may have less need to be very close to a university, proximity would help to establish or reinforce links. Sites would need to be in accessible locations with nearby sources of technically qualified labour.

It is likely that the Science and Technology Park would include a mix of incubator, SME and larger business provision to allow firms to move within the site as they grow.

## ***What are the Options?***

The locational requirements for a Science Park would suggest that a location west of the existing Science Park is likely to be the best option. The Structure Plan's requirement that the site is located close to the University suggests an area of search west of the University.

What are the other options? Responses to the 2004 Issues Paper promoted some other options. Other suggested locations were:

- land north of the A512 between Loughborough and Shepshed;
- making use of brownfield opportunities in Loughborough;
- sites outside Loughborough- suggested sites were Wymeswold Airfield and land south of Sibleby.

### **Option 1: Land West of Loughborough, South of A512**

#### ***The Pros:***

- would be compatible with strategic guidance in RSS and Structure Plan;
- close proximity to University and existing science park would maximise benefits of clustering and linkages with the University;
- sufficient land available to provide for the long term development of a site of up to 50 hectares in accordance with the Structure Plan requirements;
- involvement of University as part landowner would help to secure success of project;
- well located close to Motorway with good access to existing public transport routes and cycle network;
- landscape would provide setting for a prestige development;
- could incorporate other development requirements including recreational provision, University expansion needs, park and ride.

#### ***The Cons***

- would involve development of Greenfield site rather than sequentially preferred brownfield land;
- impact on landscape which forms part of Charnwood Forest;
- the extent and location of Green Wedge between Loughborough and Shepshed would need to be reviewed;
- impact on existing ecological interests on site;
- possible traffic impact on A512 and J23 of M1.

### **Option 2: Land west of Loughborough, north of A512**

#### ***The Pros***

- would be compatible with strategic guidance in RSS and Structure Plan;
- proximity to University and existing science park would allow benefits of clustering and linkages with the University;
- sufficient land available to provide for the long term development of a site of up to 50 hectares in accordance with the Structure Plan requirements;
- well located close to Motorway with good access to existing public transport routes and cycle network;
- landscape would provide setting for a prestige development;
- could incorporate other development requirements including recreational provision, University expansion needs, park and ride;
- could provide the opportunity to secure a new Country Park and/ or District Park for Loughborough in accordance with the Council's Green Space Strategy.

#### ***The Cons:***

- would involve development of Greenfield site rather than sequentially preferred brownfield land;
- the extent and location of Green Wedge between Loughborough and Shepshed would need to be reviewed;
- challenge to accommodate development within the Garendon Estate with minimal impact on the historic Garendon Park
- impact on existing ecological interests on site;
- possible traffic impact on A512 and J23 of M1.

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

<b>Option 3: Brownfield Site in Loughborough</b>
<p><b>The Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would be compatible with strategic guidance in RSS and Structure Plan;</li><li>• Would involve development of sequentially preferred brownfield land;</li><li>• Likely to be some benefits due to proximity of University and existing high tech businesses in town;</li><li>• Depending on location could be well related to existing public transport facilities including Loughborough station.</li></ul> <p><b>The Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No brownfield site of sufficient size to meet requirements available;</li><li>• Clustering benefits may be more limited;</li><li>• Unlikely that other development needs could be incorporated;</li><li>• Depending on location could have significant traffic implications.</li></ul>

<b>Option 4: Locations Outside Loughborough (Wymeswold Airfield, South of Sileby)</b>
<p><b>The Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wymeswold airfield would involve brownfield land;</li><li>• Could be economic benefits in providing local employment opportunities.</li></ul> <p><b>The Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• would not be in accordance with search sequence of RSS and Structure Plan;</li><li>• clustering benefits likely to be limited;</li><li>• depending on location may not be well located to the major highway network;</li><li>• could have significant traffic implications;</li><li>• south of Sileby would involve development of Greenfield land.</li></ul>

**SEE QUESTION 13**

## ***Planning for Town Centres***

Loughborough is the main centre within Charnwood and an important sub-regional centre providing a wide ranging of shopping, cultural and leisure opportunities. The larger towns and villages in the Borough all have their own centres providing more local shopping, cultural and leisure facilities. Because of the Borough's location between the Three Cities, Loughborough has to compete with Derby, Nottingham and Leicester to attract shoppers to the town. In Loughborough there are also a number of retail warehouse parks outside the town centre and two District Centres serving the north and south of the town.

National planning policy aims to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by planning for the growth and development of existing centres, focusing development in these centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment. A key objective is to enhance consumer choice by providing for a range of shopping, leisure and local services which allow real choice to meet the needs of the whole community. In our planning policies we need to identify a local network or hierarchy of centres and ensure a more even distribution of town centre uses so that people's everyday needs can be met at the local level.

## ***The Regional Picture***

Lying at the heart of the East Midlands in the centre of the Three Cities triangle, the retail picture in Charnwood is strongly influenced by the presence of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. The RSS aims to encourage the Three Cities to develop their pre-eminent roles for the region. Loughborough is identified as a centre where public sector support is needed to encourage further private sector investment.

## ***The Local Picture***

The current Local Plan sets out the planning strategy for Loughborough Town Centre and other centres within the Borough. For Loughborough the strategy focuses on the provision of an Inner Relief Road to take traffic off the A6 to provide a more pedestrian friendly town centre and facilitate development on 3

“opportunity sites”. Parts of this strategy have already been delivered- the pedestrianisation of Market Place and Market Street, and the development of The Rushes shopping centre.

To take the strategy forward, the Council has engaged consultants to produce a masterplan for the town centre. A Town Team, involving key partners and interests, has been established to support the production of the masterplan.

Outside Loughborough a range of District Centres provide for the day to day needs of local communities. In recent years the loss of employment in villages associated with the decline of the local textile industries has also had an impact on District Centres. Some local centres have struggled as a result. At Thurmaston the development of ASDA along with the redevelopment of the former Co-op building is likely to mean that the District Centre attracts shoppers from a wide area. This could have implications for nearby centres such as System.

In the rural parts of the Borough it is important that local village services are maintained.

## ***The Issues and Options***

The Charnwood LDF will need to develop a strategy to ensure the continued vitality and viability of the range of retail centres from Loughborough to the more local centres. The current planning strategy for Loughborough Town Centre is being progressed. We need to consider whether further opportunities for expansion of the centre should be identified, and look at what else can be done to ensure its continued success.

The existing District Centres are important local facilities. We need to consider how we can sustain and enhance the role of these centres.

**SEE QUESTION 14**

## ***An Accessible Borough***

National planning policy aims to promote more sustainable travel choices and to reduce the need to travel and distances travelled by planning for the things people need to be close to them. The emphasis is on improving sustainability and accessibility.

The RSS aims to locate development in ways that reduce the need to travel, with emphasis on greater use of sustainable travel modes including public transport, cycling and walking, whilst recognising the need to meet the needs of rural areas.

## ***The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and Local Transport Plans (LTPs)***

A key objective of the RTS is to support sustainable development in the Principal Urban Areas and Sub Regional Centres. In the Three Cities sub area in which Charnwood is located the objectives include:

- reducing use of the car in and around the main urban centres and promoting a step change in public transport provision;
- improving bus links within and between the Three Cities and Sub Regional Centres such as Loughborough and meeting local needs in rural areas;
- improving the accessibility of people living in deprived areas to jobs and services;
- improving public transport access to Nottingham East Midlands Airport.

Our approach should also complement the emerging proposals in the reviews of the Leicestershire and Central Leicestershire LTPs by the County and City Councils. The main elements are to:

- reduce congestion by making alternatives to the car more attractive, reduce the need to travel and make best use of roadspace;
- improve access to essential facilities such as work, education, healthcare and shopping especially for those without a car available;
- reduce road accident casualties;

- Improve air quality and reduce the impact of traffic on communities.

Transport schemes under consideration of relevance in Charnwood are:

- improved bus provision in Loughborough and main corridors into Leicester;
- safe, cycle networks in Loughborough and Central Leicestershire;
- adequate parking which does not encourage car commuting;
- filling the gaps in access by bus, walking and cycling to key destinations;
- introducing measures to reduce the worst air quality problems related to traffic.

Potential major transport schemes to help meet the stated objectives include:

- an integrated transport scheme for Loughborough which could include a relief road of the town centre, pedestrianisation of the A6 through Market Place, improved bus facilities and improvements to bottlenecks on Epinal Way;
- quality bus corridors on main roads into Leicester;
- bypasses for communities where heavy lorry traffic is causing significant environmental problems if this can be achieved at modest cost.

These schemes would be in addition to existing commitments for M1 Widening between junctions 19 and 30 by the Highways Agency.

## ***The Local Picture***

Transport and communication links are essential to Charnwood's continuing prosperity. They need to be improved but 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.

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

# ISSUES & OPTIONS

Loughborough areas have the worst levels of congestion in the County.

Traffic growth is adding to noise and air quality problems. The Council recently consulted on its Draft Air Quality Action Plan. The Plan highlights options and measures that may be available to improve air quality in parts of the Borough where we are concerned about the levels of air pollution. We have declared three Air Quality Management Areas, two in Loughborough and one in Syston. The Draft Action Plan outlines possible measures for tackling the pollution problems in these areas.

In a number of Charnwood's communities good quality alternatives to the car are not available. People without access to a car may be isolated from family and friends, services and facilities.

Our current approach aims for a better balance of provision by, for example, making alternatives to the car more attractive and planning developments to be accessible by a choice of good quality travel modes. Despite efforts over the past ten years travel by non-car modes has not increased significantly.

Much remains to be done. The Charnwood LDF has a key role to play in developing a sustainable land use and transportation strategy for the Borough. This Issues and Options stage provides the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of our approach, to review it and develop an appropriate way forward.

## ***Transport Options***

### ***Option 1***

Continue to apply measures that will gradually increase the share of travel by walking, cycling and public transport, make more effective use of existing infrastructure but apply few constraints on car use.

The likelihood is that the pace of change will be slow and the quality of alternatives not good enough to counter the negative impacts of continuing traffic growth on the economy, the environment and quality of life.

### ***Option 2***

Develop and apply a more sustainable and inclusive approach using stronger measures to reduce the need to travel, reduce distances travelled, and significantly increase travel by walking cycling and public transport.

This could reduce traffic related problems and is more likely to bring overall environmental, economic and social benefits. It would require the rigorous application of measures to manage car use such as travel plans, restrictions on parking in new developments, and the development of park and ride as part of high quality provision for non-car modes. There would be selective highway improvements appropriate as part of the integrated strategy.

In both Options 1 and 2 the LDF could help by siting new developments in locations likely to reduce travel or be accessible by a choice of transport, by applying parking standards as maximum, by safeguarding routes / sites for new transport facilities, for example, roads, rail stations or park and ride sites.

The only other option seems to be to attempt to meet demands for increased car use.

### ***Option 3***

Try and build our way out of congestion and pollution problems by improving the road network and increasing parking provision significantly.

Previous experience suggests that this would make car use easier adding to rather than reducing congestion and pollution problems, especially in main urban centres.

This would be unsustainable with significant adverse environmental, economic and social impacts. If even more people travel by car then public transport could be expected to decline adding to exclusion problems.

This approach would conflict with established guidance and be unlikely to attract public funding.

**SEE QUESTION 15**