

Charnwood 2021: Planning for Our Next Generation

The information in this document will help you to answer Question I of the Response Form.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whilst full use has been made of available previously developed land and buildings, it has been necessary to identify areas for growth to meet the future

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

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

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

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

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

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

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