



Towards a Charnwood Local Development Framework

Issues & Questions

May 2004

YOUR VIEWS

This paper is the first stage in the production of revised planning policy for Charnwood. We want your views on what you think are the key issues and choices facing the Borough over the next 10-15 years. Over the next few pages we have highlighted some of the issues we think need to be addressed. At the end of the paper a series of questions are posed on the issues that are outlined. Your response to these questions or any comments you have would be welcomed.

A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR CHARNWOOD

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the new name for the Local Plan and will replace the current Borough of Charnwood Local Plan. The LDF will look forward to 2016. The aim is to provide a clear deliverable framework to guide future development and to set out a clear vision for Charnwood that recognises and builds on the unique qualities of the Borough.

“An Improved Quality of Life for Everyone Living and Working in Charnwood”

This is the vision of the Charnwood Community Strategy, produced by the Local Strategic Partnership. It aims to address the needs and aspirations of the people and communities of Charnwood for the next 10 years or so. The strategy encourages the public, private and voluntary sectors to work together to deliver this shared vision.

The LDF will play a critical role in helping to deliver those elements of the Community Strategy that have land-use implications. The Community Strategy identifies the main issues as:



- a sustainable environment;
- economic growth;
- community safety;
- healthy living;
- decent homes;
- tackling social exclusion;
- lifelong learning;
- access to transport;
- improved leisure and culture.



The following sections look at these themes in more detail and how the LDF can take forward some of the key aims and priorities of the Community Strategy.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Achieving sustainable development is at the heart of the Community Strategy and the LDF. It is not just about protecting the Borough’s natural and man-made environment but also building communities which provide for the needs of all of their members for jobs, homes, leisure and cultural facilities in the most sustainable way. There will be requirements for extra homes, employment, shopping, leisure and cultural facilities. The LDF can set the framework to deliver the change that is necessary in the most sustainable way.



A CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY:

In preparing the LDF we are not starting from scratch. We will need to reflect planning guidance laid down at national, regional and County level. This establishes a broad context to guide the approach the Council can take locally. It also establishes the overall scale of additional development for housing and employment that the Borough will need to accommodate. We cannot depart from this broad framework.

National planning policy: The Government produces Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) providing guidance on a range of topics. The main thrust of this guidance is to direct new development to existing urban areas where public transport and other services are more easily accessible.

Regional Planning Policy: Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands (RPG8) sets out proposals for the sustainable development of the region's economy, infrastructure, housing and other land uses. Its guiding principle is a sequential approach to allocating land for most kinds of development. This means that major urban areas and brownfield sites should be the first locations to be considered for development.

Leicestershire Structure Plan: The guidance in RPG8 has been applied to Leicestershire in the emerging Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan. Again the plan promotes a sequential approach to development focusing on the main urban areas. For Charnwood the main urban areas are Loughborough, Shepshed, Birstall and Thurmaston. The plan also defines a 'Central Leicestershire Policy Area' (CLPA) as a way of directing new housing and employment development towards Leicester. The southern half of Charnwood falls within the CLPA.

THE LOCAL VIEW

Whilst the LDF has to take on board national, regional and county guidance, the Council as local planning authority has a choice in how it applies these broad policies locally. It is important that the vision and strategy of the LDF reflects local concerns and aspirations. It is vital that the Council has a full understanding of the aspirations of all sections of the local community so that it can make these decisions in the best interests of all those living and working in Charnwood. We aim to work with key stakeholders and the community to produce an LDF that has the widest possible support.

As a Council, across a range of initiatives, we consult with local residents, businesses and interest groups. Work on the Community Strategy, the Citizens Panel, the Charnwood Community Survey, work by parishes on Village Design Statements and Parish Plans has provided the Council with a wealth of information about local concerns. This issues paper provides an opportunity for all parties to make sure the Council is aware of these local issues and aspirations.

Throughout the preparation of the LDF we will involve and consult with local residents, interest groups, local business and organisations. We will work closely with all parties so that the LDF can present a shared vision of how national, regional and county planning objectives can be delivered locally in the best interests of Charnwood.

A Sustainable Environment

The Community Strategy aim: to sustain our environment by working to minimise waste and pollution and to protect Charnwood's much valued natural and built environment so that there is an attractive, sustainable and clean environment for all to enjoy.

Sustainability is a central theme cutting across all of the Community Strategy aims. The LDF will play a key role in helping to build sustainable communities by considering the long term environmental, economic and social impacts of development in a co-ordinated way.

Sustainable development is simply about ensuring a better quality of life now and in the future for our children and grandchildren.

The Government is committed to the principles of sustainable development. The national strategy is based on four key objectives:

- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- social progress recognising everyone's needs;
- protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources.

What can the LDF do?

- provide a co-ordinated approach to planning for the future of Charnwood by working with the Charnwood Strategic Partnership, the local community and other stakeholders;
- provide the right conditions for economic growth so local businesses can provide jobs for local people;
- plan for sufficient new homes to meet local needs;
- direct most new development to urban areas and locations which increase the opportunity to walk, cycle and use public transport;
- actively encourage the use of brownfield land and the efficient use of land to protect greenfield land from development;
- safeguard Charnwood's cultural heritage and natural resources;
- set standards for design to provide healthy and safe environments and to secure energy efficient development that promotes recycling;
- ensure shopping, leisure and local services are provided in a co-ordinated way as part of all new development or where there are gaps in provision;
- use local initiatives including Village Appraisals, Village Design Statements and Parish Plans to inform the LDF;
- support identified areas of deprivation.

WHAT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MEANS FOR CHARNWOOD

We can plan for a more sustainable Borough by:

Maximising Use of Urban Areas

The LDF will support and sustain Loughborough as Charnwood's main centre providing shopping, cultural, leisure and job opportunities for all residents.

The settlements of Shepshed, Birstall, Thurmaston, Anstey, Barrow Upon Soar, Quorn, Syston, Sileby, Rothley and Mountsorrel also provide a range of services for their local communities. We need to look at how we can ensure that they remain vibrant local centres. We need to work with the County Council, health and other agencies to ensure appropriate levels of local services in settlements where growth takes place.

Directing development to the main urban areas we will need strong policies to strictly control development in the Countryside, Green Wedges and Areas of Local Separation.

Identifying Sustainable Sites for New Development

The LDF will provide for homes that are affordable and of good quality so that all residents have the opportunity of a decent home. It will also need to make sure there are a range of employment sites available to enable businesses, both large and small, to thrive and grow.

Safeguarding Charnwood's Unique Assets

The Borough has a number of unique environmental and cultural assets, most notably Charnwood Forest, and a built heritage of historic buildings and attractive villages that need to be protected for future generations.

Setting Standards

The LDF will need to set design standards that bring innovation, attract civic pride and incorporate energy efficiency, recycling and crime safety. There is also a need to ensure that development does not cause harm or hazard to existing residents, businesses or wildlife through increased flooding, higher pollution levels or habitat destruction.

Improving Quality of Life

The LDF will contribute to tackling run down and deprived areas, for example by improving access for all to local services.



A Prosperous Borough

The Community Strategy Aim: to develop business competitiveness and growth by supporting business development and providing the right conditions for growth, so that businesses can successfully compete in their target markets and support the local economy.

What can the LDF do?

- work with the business community to identify suitable sites to meet the needs of local businesses and inward investors;
- identify land for the further development of the Science Park in Loughborough;
- establish a strategy to sustain and enhance the role of Loughborough town centre and more local centres so that residents have easy access to a range of shops and local services;
- support farm and rural diversification;
- support regeneration initiatives in Loughborough and other areas.

The Need for More Employment Land

Charnwood is a comparatively prosperous Borough. It is home to a wide range of businesses, large and small, multi-national and local. Pharmaceuticals, light engineering and new technologies are particularly well represented. Because of the presence of the University, Loughborough is world renowned as a centre of sporting, educational and research excellence. Attractive countryside and villages of character are also important features that contribute to the strength of the local economy. Proximity to Nottingham East Midlands Airport is also important. These features combine to make the Borough an attractive location for businesses. This brings with it pressure for development.

Whilst the overall picture is healthy there are pockets of above average unemployment, particularly in certain wards within Loughborough. The decline of the textile and manufacturing industries means many traditional industrial villages, such as Sileby and Mountsorrel, have lost their employment base. There is a need to support new businesses in urban and rural locations to maintain a sustainable local economy. This includes finding land to accommodate new employment development to ensure that local businesses and new companies have a choice of sites.

The amount of land needed in Charnwood is set out in the Structure Plan and reflects past levels of employment development. Site selection will take place in line with the sequential approach. It is expected that the demand for premises for traditional manufacturing will decline in favour of service based office development. The requirement includes:

- a second science park of up to 50 hectares close to the University in Loughborough;
- a strategic employment site of 20 hectares close to Loughborough;
- a strategic employment site of 30 hectares close to Leicester.

The existing, and often long established, employment areas are important assets for the Borough. Many needs are met through the re-use of such existing premises. In recent years a number of factory sites have been redeveloped for housing. In most cases this has been where the factory sites were no longer suitable for modern day business or were poorly located in residential areas. We will be monitoring this situation carefully and protecting 'key' existing employment areas.

Vital and Viable Town Centres

Loughborough is the largest County town in Leicestershire and provides a wide range of shopping, cultural and leisure opportunities. Pedestrianisation and the recently completed Ruses development has boosted its profile as an attractive shopping destination. With Nottingham, Leicester and Derby all close by the town does suffer due to the competition from these larger centres. A recent study of Loughborough indicates that the town centre is at a crossroads and that further action is needed to build upon 'The Ruses' development to help maintain its role as a principal shopping, leisure and visitor destination.

Other town and more local centres such as Anstey, Barrow-upon-Soar, Birstall, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Shepshed, Syston, and Thurmaston provide vital services and facilities for their local communities. It is important that these centres are safeguarded and strengthened where necessary.

Regenerating Communities

There is a need for agencies to work together to help regenerate areas suffering a combination of poor housing, low quality environment and high unemployment. The Structure Plan identifies priorities for focussing regeneration efforts to improve quality of life within these areas and to achieve investment to create homes, jobs and local services. Loughborough is identified as a priority as well as other areas where pockets of deprivation exist.

The Borough Council is working with key partners on a number of initiatives such as the Burder Street Regeneration initiative and the Shepshed Partnership. We will need to look at how the land-use policy set out in the LDF can support these initiatives.

The Rural Economy

Charnwood is a mix of urban and rural. Farming and rural enterprises remain an important feature across much of the Borough. Long established national planning policy means that development in the countryside, outside existing settlements, will be strictly controlled. But there is a need to work to maintain key rural services and facilities and allow for appropriate employment opportunities in the rural areas.



A Safer Borough

The Community Strategy Aim: to reduce crime and promote community safety by reducing crime and the fear of crime, strengthening social cohesion and tackling drug abuse.

What can the LDF do?

- set standards for new development to create safe environments and minimise crime;
- plan for mixed use developments to encourage 24 hour surveillance;
- provide for safe living and working environments by giving careful consideration to developments in flood plains;
- reduce conflict between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians by developing sympathetic transport schemes;

Safety and Design

The Charnwood Community Safety Partnership is the statutory partnership established to co-ordinate work in the reduction of crime and disorder. The LDF has a contribution to make by setting the necessary standards to ensure new developments create safe environments.

How housing, industry, shops and other uses are assembled, the treatment of landscaping, and the location of car parking are just a few examples of how planning can address issues of safety and help to reduce crime, and the fear of crime. The plan can promote a mix of uses which can help to increase safety and security. Occasionally a mix of uses can also present problems, for example living in the town can be unpleasant if there are a lot of nightclubs close by. Planning will have to ensure these conflicts are minimised.

The impact of the car on other highway users will need to be considered in new developments, and the provision of footpaths and cycle routes carefully designed and included where appropriate.

Reducing Flood Risk

The floodplains of the Rivers Soar and Wreake, and its tributaries, affect large swathes of the Borough. Flooding and flood risk is an issue that affects many residents and businesses. The LDF needs to set the framework to ensure that local communities are not at risk from increased flooding. This means protecting the floodplains from development and making sure the impact of development on flooding are fully addressed.

A Healthy Borough

The Community Strategy Aim: to improve health and encourage healthy living by tackling the causes of health inequalities between communities, defined groups and the public so that such groups and individuals are actively motivated and supported to achieve improved public and personal health.

What can the LDF do?

- Ensure health services are accessible to all;
- Identify and allocate land for additional facility provision;
- Secure financial contributions for improved health service facilities required as a result of new development;
- Secure sustainable development to minimise the harmful effects on the environment, such as pollution which have adverse impacts on health;
- Provide for a variety of recreational facilities for local communities;
- Minimise the adverse impacts of vehicular pollution;
- Promote sustainable forms of transport such as cycling and walking for their health benefits.

Land for Health Provision

National priorities for health focus on helping people to live longer and healthier lives, providing fast convenient and accessible health services.

Locally there is a need to secure and maintain a good level of health within the community. We will work with the relevant Primary Care Trusts (PCT) to ensure provision of sufficient accessible health services in urban and rural areas. The planning system can assist in achieving the objective of a healthy borough by identifying and allocating land to address identified deficiencies in health provision and where appropriate seek contributions from developers towards improved facilities.

Minimising the Impacts of Development

The LDF can contribute to minimising the levels of pollution and other harmful effects of development on health. Health Impact Assessments will need to be undertaken on proposals made in the LDF to ensure that the adverse impacts are avoided or minimised. Developers will need to be encouraged to use more environmental sustainable forms of development, including the use of renewable energy.

Healthy Communities

The LDF can provide for pedestrian and cycling facilities as an alternative to car use. This can contribute to the objective of a healthier Borough by helping to minimise the polluting effects of car use and encouraging healthier lifestyles. Access to the countryside will enable good recreational walking, but this will have to be in a controlled manner to ensure that natural habitats are not harmed. Other formal recreational facilities will need to be safeguarded and further provision considered to enhance existing levels of services.

A Borough with Decent Homes

The Community Strategy Aim: to secure decent homes for all Charnwood residents by ensuring an adequate supply of affordable, good quality, energy efficient housing to meet identified needs.

What can the LDF do?

- work with local communities to identify suitable sites to meet the Borough's requirements for a range and mix of housing over the next 10 to 15 years;
- set standards for well designed, energy efficient housing development;
- secure affordable housing in all new development;
- make provision for the housing needs of Charnwood's rural communities.

The Need for More Homes:

There is a need to provide more homes in Charnwood over the next 10-15 years. This is a result of population growth, people living longer, migration and changing patterns of household formation with more people forming smaller households.

The number of new homes that are needed in Charnwood is set out in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan. Between 1996 and 2016 9,400 new homes will have to be provided in the Borough. Some of these have already been built and some already have planning permission or are identified in the current local plan.

The Structure Plan splits this requirement between south Charnwood around Leicester (the CLPA) and north Charnwood around Loughborough. Some 1,359 additional houses will be needed in Charnwood as a whole, 442 in south Charnwood and 917 in north Charnwood.

	Required	Built at September 2003	With permission or Allocated	What is left to find
South Charnwood	2,950	841	1,667	442
North Charnwood	6,450	2,930	2,603	917
Total	9,400	3,771	4,270	1,359

Some of these houses will be found on small sites coming forward within existing settlements. In the last 10 years these sites have provided around 65 additional houses each year.



Brownfield or Greenfield

Government policy for housing is to make the best use of brownfield land to avoid the loss of Greenfield sites unnecessarily.

The emerging Structure Plan reflects Government policy on the location of housing and sets out a "sequential approach" to preferred locations for new housing and other forms of development.

The Sequential Approach

- looking for opportunities on brownfield sites in Loughborough, Shepshed, Birstall and Thurmaston; and only then
- considering the scope for extensions to these main settlements; and then
- looking for sites within or on the edge of other settlements with good bus services, or in Rural Centres.

Charnwood villages like Barrow Upon Soar, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby, Mountsorrel, Syston, East Goscote and Anstey all enjoy good bus services and most have access to local rail services. The LDF will have to decide whether any of the smaller rural villages should be identified as Rural Centres.

The Structure Plan advises that where greenfield land is needed this should involve an urban extension, usually of at least 250 dwellings, include employment uses or be close to existing employment areas.

The LDF will need to look at the scope to accommodate as much of the new housing required on brownfield land. The national target is that 60% of new housing is built on brownfield sites. In Charnwood just under half of the houses built in the last 10 years have been on brownfield sites. An Urban Capacity Study- an assessment of the number of homes that could be provided on brownfield land, has been undertaken. You can help by letting us know of any opportunities for further brownfield development in the Borough.

Affordable Homes

Rising house prices have made it more and more difficult for first time buyers and people on lower incomes to access the housing market. This is a national problem but is also one experienced in Charnwood. There are particular local difficulties. Borough house prices are higher than the average for Leicestershire and the East Midlands. The Loughborough housing market is affected by the high demand for student rented accommodation which has inflated the price of terraced housing in the town beyond the reach of first time buyers. High prices in many of the smaller villages means that many local people are unable to buy properties locally.

What Type of Housing is Needed?

It is important that the housing needs of all the community are provided for. The Housing Needs Survey found that, compared to national averages, there are fewer flats and terraced properties available in Charnwood but a demand for these smaller and affordable types of housing as the number of smaller often single person households increases. The LDF needs to look at how the mix of house types and sizes available locally can be improved.

Reflecting national trends Charnwood's population is ageing. By 2016 the over 80 year old population is projected to increase by 46%. The housing and care needs of this sector of the population will need to be addressed. This may have particular implications for policies in the LDF.

Housing Design

National planning guidance emphasises the importance of good design and layout to create attractive places where people will wish to live. The LDF can set standards for good design to create places that reflect and build on local character.

An Inclusive Borough

The Community Strategy Aim: to promote social inclusion by working to reduce the effects of poverty and physical and social isolation on people's well-being and promoting active citizenship and equality of opportunity, so that there is a more socially cohesive Borough.

What can the LDF do?

- highlight gaps in local service provision and identify suitable sites for the development of services to fill shortfalls;
- identify geographic locations where targeted effort is required to improve economic and social prospects for local people and the physical environment;
- contribute to the provision of affordable and access housing to meet local housing needs;
- safeguard existing and make provision for new employment opportunities, particularly in the most deprived wards;
- maintain vital and viable urban and rural centres to provide accessible services, particularly in the more remote parts of the Borough;
- secure high quality public transport particularly for those who do not have access to a car by working with the County and City Councils and operators;
- set design standards for new development to provide access for all;
- encourage active participation and involvement in the preparation of the local development framework.

Improving Quality of Life

Tackling social exclusion is a key Government objective. Social exclusion is a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, poor access to services, high crime, bad health and family breakdown. At the regional level the need to address social exclusion through regeneration of disadvantaged areas and reducing inequalities in the distribution of employment, housing, health and other community facilities is recognised as a priority.

Whilst Charnwood is relatively affluent, there are pockets of deprivation where communities suffer from poor access to jobs, poor housing and lack of facilities. This can be a problem that affects both urban and rural communities.

The Council will have to bear in mind issues of social exclusion when considering economic, retail, leisure and local services, housing, design and transport issues in both rural and urban areas. The Structure Plan identifies priorities for focussing regeneration efforts to improve quality of life within those areas suffering relative deprivation and to achieve investment to create homes, jobs and local services. Loughborough is identified as a priority as well as other areas where pockets of deprivation exist.

A Learning Borough

The Community Strategy Aim: to improve learning, skills and employability by valuing life-long learning in principle and following it in practice so that excellence in education and learning underpins skills development.

What can the LDF do?

- work with the community to identify where there is a shortfall in provision of educational and training facilities;
- set standards for the provision of good quality designed services;
- ensure easy accessibility to facilities;
- make provision for expansion of existing facilities where appropriate;
- positively manage the impacts on Loughborough of further growth of the University, particularly in relation to student accommodation;
- safeguard existing education land and facilities.

Providing Places for Education and Training

The globalisation of many businesses, rapid changes in new technology and increased competitiveness mean that investment in lifelong learning is essential. The Government recognises that in tackling unemployment and poverty, issues of training, education and personal development need to be addressed.

Locally there is a need to ensure that there is a wide range of opportunities of education and training for all ages, which are easily accessible, a problem encountered by most rural residents. Improving skills is important to ensure that there is a suitably skilled workforce, and to maintain and attract companies to the Borough. It is also essential for the local population to enable them to have key skills to access jobs.

Loughborough University

The Borough Council is aware of local concerns over the impact of students in Loughborough. It also recognises that the presence of the University brings many benefits to the town and Borough - not least for the local economy. The importance of the University, recognised in Regional Planning Guidance for knowledge-based employment, has attracted a large number of businesses to Loughborough to take advantage of the skills base. However the high ratio of students to the resident population has created some problems. The strong market for rented accommodation has reduced opportunities for first time buyers and family housing. The LDF will need to develop a strategy to take advantage of the benefits the University brings to the Borough and at the same time work with the University to address local concerns. This will include the development of a student accommodation strategy.

An Accessible Borough

The Community Strategy Aim: to meet local transport needs more effectively by working with transport users and providers so that there is an integrated, safe, accessible and sustainable transport system to be proud of.

What can the LDF do?

- locate developments where they are likely to reduce the need to travel;
- ensure developments are accessible by a choice of transport;
- ensure access to development is safe and convenient for all users;
- safeguard routes for new transport schemes and sites for new facilities such as rail stations or park and ride.

Addressing the Borough's transport issues is a big challenge. Congested roads reflect growing car ownership and use. In the past too much emphasis was given to access by car in the location and design of developments and in transport programmes. The LDF needs to develop sustainable and equitable transport policies and proposals conforming with:

- Government policies: designed to enable people to travel when they need to but to reduce the amount of travel and distances travelled, and to provide real choice of travel by bus, train, cycle or on foot;
- local transport strategies and investment programmes: The LDF can help achieve Regional Transport Strategy aims to reduce traffic growth, promote a step change in the quality of public transport and only provide more road capacity after all other measures are addressed.

The location and content of new development strongly influences travel patterns. Locating homes, workplaces, shops, and other facilities close together can reduce the need to travel. Development well served by public transport, cycling and walking also help reduce car use.

Access by Public Transport

The bus offers the best alternative to the car for most trips in Charnwood. Quality Bus Partnerships have encouraged operators to invest in vehicles, drivers and information alongside investment by local authorities in shelters and bus lanes.

In parts of the Borough rail offers a realistic alternative. Loughborough has good rail links. Barrow upon Soar, Sileby and Syston enjoy Ivanhoe rail services to Loughborough and Leicester. However there is a lack of parking and poor interchange at most stations.

A new station is proposed in the Local Transport Plan at East Goscote. The LDF will need to identify a suitable site for the station. The Great Central Railway operates as a tourism facility between Loughborough and Birstall. This could be used to help relieve traffic congestion. Opportunities may also exist to move more freight by rail.

A new park and ride site proposed on the A6 north of Birstall will help transfer car trips in and out of Leicester onto the bus. We need to consider if park and ride could be viable elsewhere, notably in Loughborough as part of an integrated transport strategy.

Walking and Cycling

Walking and cycling are the most sustainable travel modes and need to be used more for shorter trips. There are reasonably good cycleway networks in Loughborough and the larger villages, and the Sustrans National Cycle Network runs through the Borough linking Derby and Leicester. The LDF can encourage walking and cycling by safeguarding important routes, by locating homes closer to jobs, shops and other uses and by ensuring facilities are provided in and around new developments.

Road Improvements

The LDF can help secure measures to relieve bottlenecks, ensure developments are adequately served by road or remove unacceptable traffic flows. In all cases it needs to be demonstrated that full use has been made of the existing network and other transport measures would not work. The LDF is able to safeguard land for new road schemes. Most roads are publicly funded but some are privately funded, for example the Epinal Way Extension secured as part of residential development south of Loughborough.

Reducing the need to Travel and Widening Choices

Travel planning initiatives by local employers such as AstraZeneca and Loughborough University help establish alternatives to driving alone to work. Voluntary action can make a real difference to traffic levels at peak times. Travel plans are also required for new developments likely to generate significant travel. Effective school travel plans and safer routes to schools can make a significant contribution to reducing traffic. The Government estimates nationally almost 1 in 5 cars on the road in the morning peak are parents on the school run.

Travel in Rural Areas

In rural areas it is more difficult to get about without a car. Policies are needed that help reduce the need to travel, ensure access for those without a car and offer alternatives to the car. The County Council's network of hourly bus services gives most communities an hourly weekday service to at least one urban centre. In remoter areas flexible links may be needed with bus and rail services or direct to popular destinations.

The LDF could reduce travel by, for example, locating development in local service centres, by facilitating rural diversification and by safeguarding local employment and community facilities.



A Culturally Rich Borough

The Community Strategy Aim: to develop leisure and culture opportunities by encouraging a diverse range of cultural, sporting, tourism and leisure provision in the locality, so that there are opportunities for leisure and culture for all.

What can the LDF do?

- Preserve or enhance Charnwood's cultural assets – the Forest, Loughborough Town Hall, Charnwood Museum - for local residents and visitors;
- Conserve and enhance, and where appropriate guide the sensitive change of, the historic environment as well as retaining local distinctiveness;
- Ensure that there is adequate provision for sport and recreational facilities;
- Ensure that new play and recreation facilities are provided with new development;
- Create vital and viable town and other centres for leisure, tourism and other uses, as well as for shopping.

Cultural provision is an essential ingredient of a lively and vibrant community. It is fundamental to our quality of life and well-being. Within Charnwood, direct employment in cultural industries is becoming an increasingly important market sector in its own right. Cultural provision has a proven track record in achieving economic benefits by contributing to increased employability via education, skill development and life long learning. It can also make a positive contribution to the environment by enhancing the image of the area, creating a sense of pride in the local community and creating a safer environment.

Preserving Our Cultural Assets

Natural assets such as Charnwood Forest and River Soar, historic buildings such as Ulverscroft Priory and venues such as Loughborough Town Hall and Curzon Cinema all contribute to the cultural well-being of local people and visitors. One of the purposes of the LDF will be to preserve or enhance these and other valuable cultural assets.

Tourism and Leisure Activities

The LDF can identify areas for potential tourism growth where there is adequate environmental and infrastructure capacity. The Great Central Railway, Carillon in Queens Park and Charnwood Museum are current attractions. The country parks – Bradgate, Swithland Wood, Beacon Hill and Outwoods - in the Charnwood Forest are well used by local residents and visitors alike. New attractions will help to ease the pressure on these sites.

Making Provision for Sport and Recreation

The LDF will need to identify locations where sport and recreational facilities are inadequate. We will assess the current standard and distribution of cultural and leisure provision and provide a strategic framework for prioritising future investment and facility development.

Loughborough Town Centre

Loughborough is the Borough's largest town centre and as well as shopping and local services provides a range of leisure and cultural opportunities – Charnwood Leisure Centre, the Market, bars and restaurants. A town centre strategy is being prepared to co-ordinate future development and investment in the town.

How to get Involved

Complete the Questionnaire

At the back of this leaflet are a series of questions to stimulate your thinking. You don't have to answer all the questions just those that interest you. Please fill in the questionnaire, cut it off and send it back to us or drop it off at the Council offices. Please attach additional sheets if you need to.

You can download the form from www.charnwood.gov.uk or email your response to:- localplans@charnwood.gov.uk. (please include your name and address in your email)
Please ensure that you have submitted your views and comments by **18th June 2004**.

Request a Meeting

Officers of the Local Plans team are willing to discuss the issues at a meeting of your local group or society. Please telephone 01509 634769 to arrange this.

What Next?

We will consider all the responses received. They will help us to understand the key issues facing Charnwood that need to be addressed in the next stage of the LDF. We will publish a summary of the responses and place it in the Council offices, libraries and on the website.

We will work to produce the LDF by 2007.

The Council will publish:

- a Local Development Scheme - detailing the documents we will produce to form the LDF as well as a timetable for their production. A draft version is available on the website;
- a Statement of Community Involvement - illustrating how we will consult with local residents and other key interest groups in producing the LDF.
- an assessment of how the LDF conforms to the principles of sustainable development

If you would like this document in your language or to obtain copies in Braille, on audio tape or large print, please contact the Local Plans section (tel 01509 634769, email localplans@charnwood.gov.uk or fax 01509 219723)

Gujarati

આ દસ્તાવેજના સમાવેશમાથી જો તમને કોઈ પણ ભાગની તમારી ભાષામા સમજણ નોઈતી 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।

Some Issues & Questions

- 1. Have you any comments on the issues raised in this paper? Are there any other issues that you would like to raise?**
- 2. How can the LDF help to promote sustainable development and build more sustainable communities?**
- 3. Which settlements are the most capable of accommodating new development in a sustainable way? Why?**
- 4. Which settlements in Charnwood could act as Rural Centres providing local services for a wider rural hinterland?**
- 5. Which settlements do you think should remain as they are – because they already have enough homes/ jobs or because more development would be harmful? Why?**
- 6. Which aspects of Charnwood’s environment should the LDF seek to protect?**
- 7. Are there any brownfield or greenfield sites in Charnwood that would be suitable for:**
 - a. a substantial science park of up to 50 hectares close to the university in Loughborough?**
 - b. a strategic employment site of some 20 hectares close to Loughborough?**
 - c. a strategic employment site of some 30 hectares close to Leicester?**
- 8. Which of the existing employment areas in the Borough do you think are most important and should be retained?**
- 9. How do you consider the LDF can contribute to making Charnwood safer?**
- 10. How do you consider the LDF can contribute to making Charnwood a healthier place?**

- 11. Are there any brownfield or greenfield sites in Charnwood that you think would be suitable for new housing?**
- 12. What types of housing do you think are needed, for example affordable housing or sheltered housing for the elderly? Where is this housing needed?**
- 13. Are there enough shops within the Borough? If not, what is needed and where?**
- 14. How can the LDF contribute to improving the quality of life particularly in run down, deprived or remote areas?**
- 15. If Loughborough University is to expand where should this be accommodated? How should student housing requirements be addressed?**
- 16. How do you think the LDF can contribute to reducing congestion and car use? What measures should the LDF concentrate on?**
- 17. What contribution could park and ride, light rail or other measures make to local transport needs? Are there any specific schemes you would wish to see considered? Where?**
- 18. What improvements are needed to local provision for walking and cycling? Are there any routes that need to be created or improved?**
- 19. Are there any new road schemes you feel should be considered for inclusion in the LDF as part of a safe, effective and sustainable transport system?**
- 20. Is there a shortage of leisure, cultural, recreation, tourism or sporting facilities in Charnwood? If so, what additional facilities are needed and where?**

