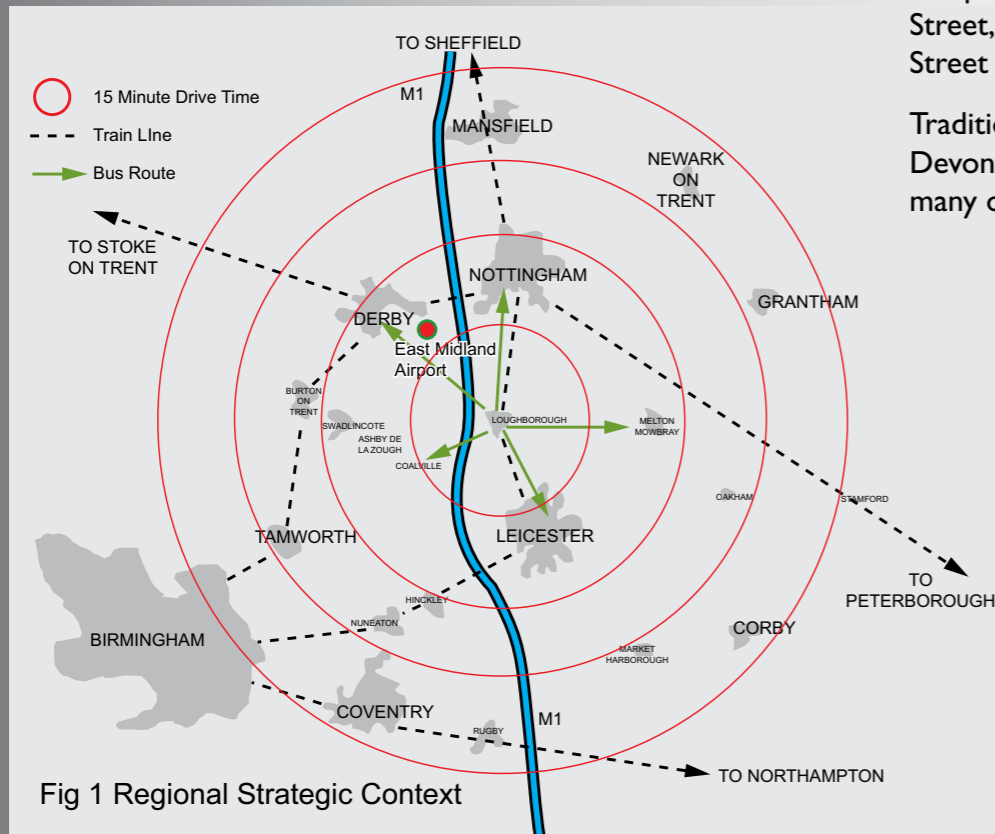


I. Introduction

Loughborough Town Centre in Context

Loughborough sits between the three major cities of the East Midlands: Nottingham (14 miles), Leicester (10 miles), and Derby (15 miles). It enjoys excellent access through its central location within the country and through its good rail, road and air connections.



It is the main town in Charnwood with a population of 57,550 (2004). It has a shopping catchment area population of about 75,000. Recent trends have shifted employment away from the town's traditional textile and engineering base into pharmaceuticals, general manufacturing, services and distribution. AstraZeneca and 3M have a major presence in the town, but Loughborough University is now the major employer and plays a key role in the economy of the town and the sub-region. The impact of the University cannot be underestimated. With its 3,000 employees and its 12,000 full time students it is a major feature in the local economy and influences the

activities, character and atmosphere of the town.

The Town Centre is relatively compact, centred on the pedestrianised Market Place and Carillon Centre. The core area has recently been extended with the opening of the Rushes Centre. The major national chain stores represented in the town are largely located in these three areas. There are many independent shops in the town too with Wards End, Market Street, Devonshire Square, Church Gate, Baxter Gate and Biggin Street being important secondary shopping streets.

Traditional squares and spaces also remain – Bedford Square, Devonshire Square, Derby Square and Ashby Square - although many of these are degraded by traffic and parking compared

to the pedestrianised areas. Two key public open spaces are the classic Victorian Queens Park – a major asset right on the edge of the Town Centre – and the Parish Green in the heart of original medieval core of the centre around the Parish Church.



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Purpose of the Masterplan

The purpose of the Masterplan is to secure a successful future for the Town Centre by developing its strengths and addressing its weaknesses. In particular it:

- **Establishes a Vision for Loughborough Town Centre to guide its development and improvement to 2021**
- **Incorporates the Local Transport Plan proposals for a Loughborough Inner Relief Road and new provision for public transport**
- **Improves links to and within the Town Centre for pedestrians and cyclists**
- **Creates a linked system of high quality public spaces**
- **Provides a clear design approach for new development with an emphasis on sustainable design principles**
- **Makes specific proposals for key sites based on sound commercial principles and including indicative design briefs**
- **Identifies other sites and buildings which should be retained and those where redevelopment and improvement will be encouraged**
- **Provides the basis on which development proposals for the Town Centre will be judged**
- **Sets out how the proposals will be funded, implemented and programmed**

Status of Masterplan

The principal planning policy guidance for the Town Centre is set out in the adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004).



This is supported by a number of Supplementary Planning Documents - the most important being "Leading in Design"



and the Development Briefs for the key Local Plan opportunity sites – Devonshire Square and Former General Hospital/Aumberly Gap.



Together these documents carry significant weight in the determination of planning applications and appeals. The Masterplan provides further detailed guidance on uses and design and pays close attention to the statutory planning documents. In the light of this and the extensive public and partner involvement in its preparation, the Masterplan carries weight and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals.

Consultation

From the very start of the Masterplanning process the public, along with key partners and stakeholders, have been closely involved.

In February 2004 the Town Team was formed following a two day "visioning" exercise facilitated by OPUN at which the Vision and objectives were set. The Town Team is a representative body drawn from interested organisations from across the Town. Its membership is shown in the Appendices. The Team has been closely involved in the preparation and refinement of the Masterplan from the setting of the Vision through to consideration of detailed proposals.

Atkins were appointed as the Council's consultants on the project in August 2004. The Town Team met regularly through the process and two major public consultation exercises were undertaken – one on the Draft Strategic Framework in March 2005 and one on the Draft Masterplan itself in August 2006. It is intended that the Team will continue to meet and that it will monitor progress on the implementation of the Plan and consider development proposals as they occur.



I. Introduction

Definition of Areas

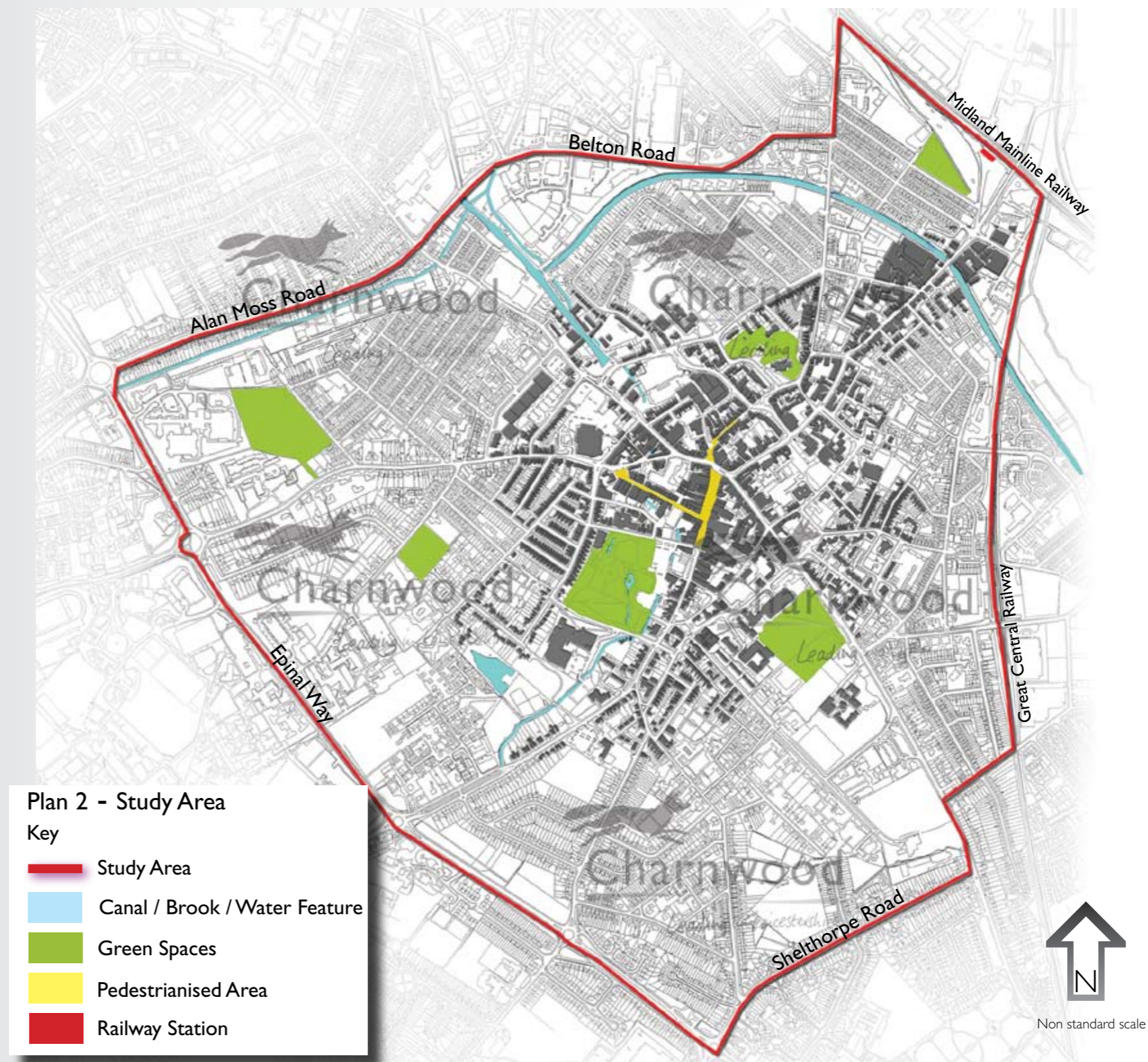
In the preparation of the Masterplan two distinct areas were recognised.

For the purposes of analysis and context a fairly wide Study Area was identified. This is shown on Plan 2 and is bounded broadly by Belton Road, the Midland Main Line, the Great Central Railway, Shelthorpe Road and Epinal Way. This approach enabled an understanding of how the Town Centre relates to the rest of the Town particularly in terms of access and movement.

For the formulation of the Development Framework and specific Masterplan proposals a more tightly defined area was drawn. This is shown on Plan 3. It is defined broadly by the line of the Inner Relief Road, Southfields Road, Brown's Lane Frederick Street, Ashby Road and Broad Street but it does include proposals on either side of some of these roads and includes a recognition of the importance of the Nottingham Road corridor and the links to the Main Line Railway Station.

The Planning Policy Context

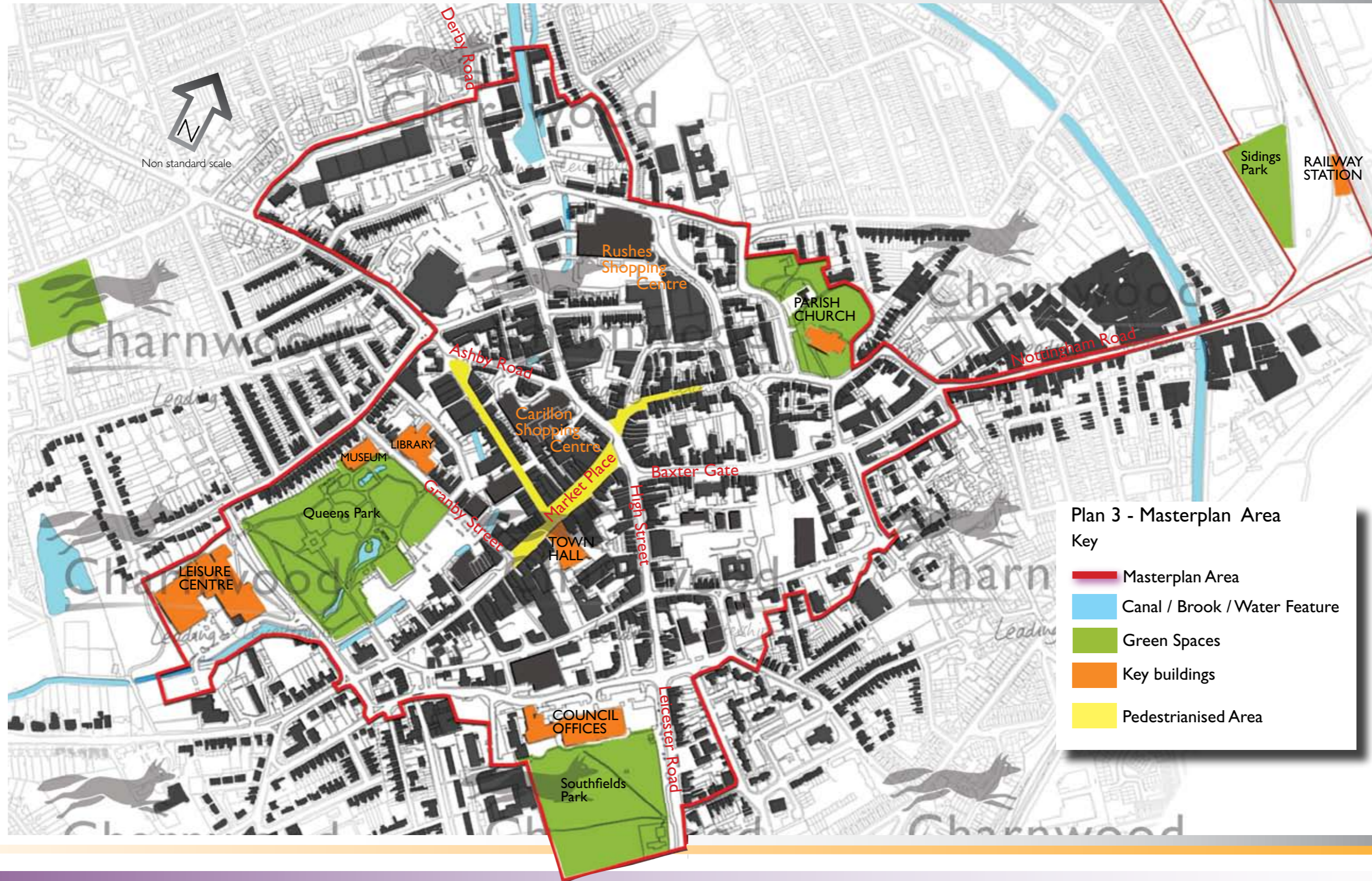
The Masterplan has been prepared in the context of National and Regional planning policies which encourage the improvement of Town Centres and sustainable patterns of development. The County and Borough Councils have made more specific proposals in the Structure Plan and Local Plan respectively. The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan in particular makes detailed proposals for the physical improvement and extension of Loughborough Town Centre and includes policies to encourage and control activities within it.



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