

## APPENDIX C - SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

### Core Strategy Further Consultation October 2008

#### CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

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*12 respondents: 12 comment, 0 support, 0 object*

A number of respondents made general comments about the consultation document as a whole. These comments are summarised below:

- Whilst climate change issues are implicit throughout the Plan, the approach to climate change needs to be spelt out more explicitly early on in the document, showing how the strategic aims are going to be delivered. It is important to provide a checklist of measures so that the effectiveness of the plan can be monitored and evaluated.
- The decline in fossil fuels will require us to build up local sources of energy, local food production, and a resilient localised element to the economy. The approach set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, that we must create local initiatives to "develop resilience to the challenges of high fuel and food costs", should be in the Core Strategy.
- Leicestershire Food Links Ltd manages several farmers markets in Leicestershire, including the original pilot in Charnwood. References to the increased provision of local food should be considered for inclusion. There are three main benefits in encouraging local food production and retail within the Borough over the coming decade: its beneficial impact on climate change and food security, its ability to build healthier communities, and its ability to improve local economic growth.
- In the Charnwood Sustainable Community Strategy some consideration of local food issues has been included but as yet a target has not been set in Local Area Agreement 2.
- The lack of reference to peak oil is a serious omission.
- Reference to places of worship is missing from the consultation document. Faith and faith-led activities are recognised as important ingredients in a cohesive society, and essential to the physical, social, and moral well being of a community. Reference is made to the current deficiencies in facilities. We would like paragraph 4.136 to describe "social and community facilities including places of worship".
- The website is difficult to use, and I was frustrated in my attempt to make more detailed representations. The documents are not clear or easily accessible. The document has insufficient detail to allow communities to assess the impact of the strategy properly.
- It is considered the Core Strategy would not pass the test of soundness in Planning Policy Statement 12 as alternatives have not been adequately covered, the strategy is not proven to be deliverable or sufficiently flexible and monitoring arrangements are not set out.
- This is a proposal and not a consultation. The claim that the preferred sites are dictated by the Regional Plan is suspect as they are in conflict with national policy on using brownfield sites and the stated opposition of the highway authority. Data is very limited and either not available or being withheld.
- The plan fails to recognise developments beyond the Borough boundary and that some of these will have a growing influence on the economy and wellbeing of Loughborough and adjoining settlements. The Core Strategy should refer explicitly to employment creation at the airport, and aim to deliver commensurate highway and public transport infrastructure in the appropriate Sustainable Urban Extensions.

- The proposals for a development west of Loughborough are opposed (see Question 4.10 for detailed comments).
- The public meeting held at Hathern did not have sufficient detail or substance to allow residents to comment from an informed position.
- The council has been led by government policy and has not taken account of local people's concerns or the views of local interest groups such as the Chamber of Commerce. Development should not be approved until the supporting district strategy is corrected and enhanced.
- The ideal option is to redevelop the inner areas of Loughborough and Leicester rather than plan growth on green field sites.
- The proposals for growth will result in madness and traffic everywhere. The whole of Charnwood will become one large housing estate and will be polluted.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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*16 respondents: 5 comment, 3 support, 8 object*

There was overall support for the need for a Core Strategy to be produced for Charnwood. A summary of comments made on the Introductory Chapter to the document are set out below:

- The ongoing discussions with the promoters of the sustainable urban extensions is generally supported and seen as an essential part of the emerging process.
- The evidence based studies do not include the previous work undertaken by Leicestershire County Council on the transport implications of various Sustainable Urban Extension's. It is considered that this is a critical failing of the Further Consultation Paper and has serious implications for the soundness of the Core Strategy. It is considered that much of this work is still relevant and should be included in the document list. The Council needs to work with the County Council to agree a sustainable transport strategy to support the further growth of Loughborough.
- The Barkby Thorpe Road area residents stated that they were not invited to official meetings. Some felt that a meeting should have been held in Barkby and Barkby Thorpe because of the potential location of the Sustainable Urban Extension.
- There is some concern that the process so far has not been thorough enough and that the shortness of the consultation period is not acceptable.
- There is some positive feedback about the meetings but it was suggested that more warning should be given of the meetings in the future.
- It is considered that people without online access would not be able to make their views known and it was suggested that the Council is trying to limit responses.
- The consultation document is felt to be too lengthy.
- The need to ensure alignment with other emerging statutory planning documents in the Principal Urban Area of Leicester is highlighted.
- Concern is raised that decisions will be made irrespective of the views of consultees, no matter how opposed they are.

### Section: Spatial Portrait for Charnwood

8 respondents: 6 comment, 1 support, 1 object

Respondents highlighted a range of issues that they felt should have been included in the spatial portrait of the borough. A summary of the respondents is set out below:

- Leicestershire Promotions consider that the spatial portrait should promote Loughborough University's further development as a sporting cluster.
- The serious economic and social challenges currently faced by Shepshed do not come through strongly enough, there is a need for a Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan.
- Little is made of the important routeway that exists along the original Great Central Railway corridor from north of Leicester to the south of Nottingham.
- It should be clearly recognised that many rural towns and villages have lost their traditional manufacturing bases replaced by housing creating dormitory towns with the challenges for future survival of employment, services and community activities.
- The spatial portrait should use ward names for places in Loughborough. There is confusion over whether the areas referred to are geographical locations or forum areas. The latter are not well known and have a number of anomalies (e.g. south Loughborough is in the east forum and parts are often regarded as west Loughborough).
- Strictly speaking, only *part* of Charnwood Forest forms *part* of the National Forest.
- There are discrepancies between the numbers of designated historic assets and the Heritage Counts East Midlands data report for 2008, which lists that there are 776 listed buildings (by entry) in the Borough. This could include a greater number of individual buildings, and should therefore be clarified. The County Historic Landscape Characterisation should be utilised to provide an overview of the survival of historic landscapes. There are four historic parks and gardens, including part of Whatton House.
- Leicestershire Constabulary suggest that the portrait should include basic details on crime and fear of crime statistics for the area, as recommended in 'Policies for Spatial Plans' (POS, 2005). This is an important opportunity to refer to both positive and negative aspects of crime and fear of crime. A very helpful indicator would be the number of developments achieving the Secured By Design award. Where the portrait reveals specific 'issues' it is important to identify 'drivers of change' to redress issues.
- The National Forest Company is pleased that the National Forest features in the portrait but its national significance should be more strongly reflected. It affects a significant part of the Borough and is a major delivery mechanism to achieve expansion and management of woodland cover; habitat connectivity; new recreation, access and tourism; rural economic development; renewable energy; creation of green infrastructure; new Forest 'gateways' to Charnwood and Loughborough's Science Park and Garendon Park proposals and the Council's interest in a Visitor Centre. The sum of all these parts needs to be reflected more strongly in one statement in the document, and then reflected in specific policy areas to more fully reflect the Regional Plan.
- Lafarge Aggregates Ltd operate Mountsorrel Quarry, which has been operating commercially since the 1800s and is the largest granite quarry in Europe, generating approximately 5 million tonnes of construction aggregate per year. Aggregate and asphalt from Mountsorrel is used in both national and local projects. Whilst the portrait

- is not disputed, it is considered that reference should be made to the contribution and importance of the minerals industry to the area, for mineral supply and employment.
- The identification of pockets of deprivation in Charnwood, particularly to the east of Loughborough is supported.
  - Areas to the north west of Loughborough have no or little need for development.

### **Section: The Strategic Context**

*3 respondents: 0 comment, 2 support, 1 object*

Three comments were made, two supporting the need for a Spatial Strategy and one from Rothley Parish Council raising concerns that the housing requirement imposed on Charnwood is too large.

### **Section: The Sustainable Community Strategy**

*2 respondents: 0 comment, 2 support, 0 object*

Two comments were made and there was general support for the need for the Local Development Framework to have regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **Section: The Three Cities New Growth Point**

*2 respondents: 2 comment, 0 support, 0 object*

Respondents made the following comments on the Three Cities New Growth Point:

- It is felt that the Government strategy on the basis of population density is flawed and that the UK has a far greater population density figure than most of our EU partners.
- There is support for Charnwood's role at the heart of the Three Cities in delivering the Growth Point development aspirations for the area. It was considered that development at sub-regional centres, including Loughborough, will make an important contribution to meeting the higher levels of housing growth required.
- Core Strategies need to be underpinned by sound infrastructure planning that can set the framework for bids for necessary funding. The Core Strategy needs to identify key elements of supporting infrastructure required and work with key partners through the Growth Point Programme of Delivery and Community Infrastructure Fund to secure the necessary Growth Point funding and funding secured through development.

## CHAPTER 3: A SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR CHARNWOOD

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*1 respondents to overall section: 0 comment, 1 support, 0 object*

### **Section: What are the Issues?**

*14 respondents: 9 comment, 5 support, 0 object*

There was general agreement with the issues identified in the Core Strategy. The following issues were also considered important by some respondents:

- How to maximise opportunities connected with East Midlands Airport, Donington Park and Parkway Station (Junction 24 of the M1 Motorway).
- How to facilitate ready and sustainable access to rural areas within the National Forest and other rural areas in the district especially of growing sectors such as tourism.
- How to engage with and harness the potential of service sector industry businesses eg tourism, creative, culture etc.
- Loss of employment land within the larger settlements and its affect on the balance between homes and jobs, resulting in increased levels of out commuting.
- Peak oil should also feature as an issue.
- The consultation paper underplays the issue of congestion in the town and the implications this has in terms of providing for further growth given the findings of the 6Cs Congestion Management Study (April 2008) which concluded that Loughborough's transport network was one of the worst congested networks in Leicestershire, comparable with Leicester.
- The spatial strategy fails to acknowledge the priority for regeneration in east Loughborough. The preferred growth location fails to address key deprivation issues.
- Geodiversity is not mentioned as an issue and requires appropriate policies.
- Levels of traffic and congestion in the borough, the impact on climate change, the outflow of employees, and the lack of transport choice outside of the main urban areas all have implications for the safe and efficient operation of the strategic road network.
- The National Trust considers that deficiencies in Green Space needs to be addressed as well as the wider benefits of green spaces, in addressing health and well being issues, nature conservation, wildlife corridors, alleviating flood issues and carbon storage.
- Natural England consider that the Core Strategy should provide measures to enhance and increase the levels of biodiversity; protect the numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest and local wildlife sites and increase the levels of biodiversity; incorporate good quality green infrastructure into developments; increase access to nature; improve public transport, so that it becomes a realistic option and encourages less car use for employment, business, and leisure purposes; protect the landscape character and protect the geological assets.

### **Section: Our Vision**

*19 respondents: 14 comment, 2 support, 3 object*

There is some support for the vision, however, the following concerns and suggest amendments have been put forward:

- The Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust suggest including 'biodiversity and geodiversity' in the Spatial Vision after 'landscape' in the last sentence.

- The Spatial Vision is not consistent in its statements about having diversified and encouraging more service based industry sectors.
- Tourism (Place Making / Destination Management) is identified as a key sector, yet is not explicitly highlighted in the Vision although it will be the means by which so many of the 'experiences' referred to will be created, delivered and managed.
- Natural England welcomes the commitment to ensuring that Charnwood Forest retains its special landscape character, and to managing the pressures of increased tourism. The vision should confirm that all new developments will include accessible areas of green space and that existing green corridors such as streams, rivers, and hedgerows should be retained. Rights of Way Improvement Plans should be another key factor, with safe and pleasant walking and cycling networks extended and incorporated where possible. Recreational routes should integrate with public transport nodes. Charnwood should meet the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards across the Borough. The plans regarding public transport for urban areas are commendable and would encourage such improvements to extend to rural communities too.
- The Vision is confused by the inclusion of four separate themes. Suggest combining the aspirations into a single concise vision describing the key spatial elements of the Core Strategy supported by a description of social, economic, and environmental ambitions.
- There should be acknowledgement of the positive contribution the minerals industry makes to the local economy. The quarry operations at Mountsorrel and the head offices in Syston make Lafarge a significant employer within the area employing. With regard to the use of natural resources Charnwood's role as a national supplier of aggregate should be acknowledged. Charnwood has significant reserves of hard rock available, as well as a history of sand and gravel production within the Soar Valley.
- Hathern Parish Council object to the suggestion that a new sustainable community be located to the west of Loughborough. They believe more suitable sites exist to the south and east of Loughborough.
- There is a need for a smarter, cleaner town centre.
- Purpose-built student accommodation needs to be extended to release currently rented accommodation back into community use.
- The community should be brought back into the town.
- Run-down industrial sites need to be regenerated.
- The continued use of brownfield sites rather than open countryside should be a priority.
- There is serious concern about the loss of settlement identity and open countryside, as the amount of housing required means that Barrow on Soar and Sileby may have to encroach in open countryside to meet housing demand.
- There is a concern that Wolds villages may suffer from a deterioration in local services due to the pressure that will be put on them by expanded populations in Barrow on Soar and Sileby.
- Objection is raised to a new, sustainable community to the west of Loughborough. It is believed there are more suitable sites to the south and east of Loughborough.
- The words "essential characteristics and" are unhelpful and should be deleted. The aspiration should not be simply to preserve but also to enhance. This is especially true of historic buildings 'at risk' that have potential for heritage-led regeneration. The intrinsic nature of many environmental assets is bound up in their completeness.

- National planning policy and Regional Plan seeks to preserve and enhance designated sites in their entirety, and also their wider settings.
- English Heritage has objections to proposed development west of Loughborough and east of Thurmaston / north of Hamilton. Development in these locations is not consistent with the first paragraph of the Spatial Vision, which states: “The essential characteristics and diversity of the Borough’s landscape, ecology, heritage, and built environment have been preserved.”
  - This section should refer to the wider vision of the authority’s Sustainable Community Strategy and Community Safety Strategy and acknowledge that the Local Development Framework should deliver, as required by Planning Policy Statement 12, the key components of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This includes community safety.
  - Reference should be made to Planning Policy Statement 1 and the Government’s objectives. A reference indicating that “all those living and working within the local authority’s area will be able to rely upon and have access to properly resourced social and community infrastructure (including the emergency services)” should be incorporated.
  - This section needs to reflect the Charnwood Forest Regional Park vision statement, drafted by Leicestershire County Council in partnership with the National Forest Company and other organisations.
  - The Council’s strategies continue to be inappropriately tied to the growth of Loughborough rather than addressing a sustainable greater Charnwood.
  - Without a clear strategic vision and strategy to secure necessary transport improvements for the town as identified by the County Council, the Council’s vision for Loughborough will not be achieved.
  - The suitability of the site east of Thurmaston to accommodate future additional growth, if required, should be fully recognised.
  - It is debateable whether the current preferred options provide for ongoing strategic growth as stated in the vision ‘Places and Environment Matter’. The west of Loughborough option appears to be a "boxed-in" option creating unsustainable agricultural land boundaries between settlements and exacerbation of existing traffic conditions rather than addressing them strategically.
  - Development at Thurmaston is not consistent with the vision that “the essential characteristics and diversity of the Borough’s landscape, ecology, heritage and built environment will have been preserved”. The overall level of growth will breach the environmental capacity of the area to accommodate this level of growth.

### **Section: Spatial Objectives**

*22 respondents: 17 comment, 4 support, 1 object*

There was some support for the objectives, a summary of the comments are set out below:

- The objectives provide a sound basis upon which to direct development, ensure that it is sustainable, and minimise reliance on the private car.
- SO8 is supported but wish to see a commitment to integrated transport schemes
- extended to all areas, i.e. rural as well as urban.
- On SO11, Natural England supports this commitment but would like to see evidence that net gains will be sought when considering development proposals. The Core

Strategy should use landscape character assessment and historic landscape characterisation as the underpinning element of landscape policy.

- Welcome SO12, but it should be broadened to confirm that Sites of Special Scientific Interest and local wildlife sites will receive a high degree of protection in line with Planning Policy Statement 9, and connectivity between habitats are maintained, improved, or provided. It should also extend to the landscaping and planting of land adjacent to the protected sites in order to ensure that there is no encroachment of species that might lead to the loss of the special interest of the site. A further policy to confirm that development likely to have a significant adverse effect on regionally or locally designated sites will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
- The following amendments are suggested:
  - SO3: add “Green Infrastructure network” after green spaces.
  - SO6: amend: “through influencing the type of housing and employment land provision”.
  - SO7: refer to national targets for carbon reduction and renewable energy generation.
  - SO12: amend to: “protect and enhance”.
  - SO13: amend to: “and by encouraging improvements in existing properties to work towards zero carbon standards”.
  - SO21: should also recognise a wider range of outward facing partnerships at the Leicestershire level (e.g. Leicestershire Together, Partnership for Environmental Protection, etc), the Sub-Regional level (e.g. National Forest), and the National and European level, as vital for the future of Charnwood and for the delivery of the Local Development Framework vision.
- An adequate set of spatial objectives, but are they deliverable? Is the Charnwood Together Board able to provide the leadership and inspiration to make change happen?
- Service sectors need to be highlighted especially in relation to prosperity in rural areas.
- The National Forest is set to become a major driver for transport.
- The area referred to is not clearly identified - it is about more than just Loughborough.
- Many of the spatial objectives do not contain a spatial dimension and are not specifically tailored to Charnwood. They do not add any local distinction to well-established national/regional objectives. But welcome achieving patterns of development that would reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of public transport and would assume that locations close to railway stations score particularly well in sustainability terms.
- SO19 fails to mention the important contribution the mineral industry plays in employment provision within the Borough.
- The priority objectives for the Council are not clearly identified and it is not clear how the preferred strategy addresses these objectives more effectively than other options.
- Need to recognise the needs and resource limitations of 'faith groups'. There should be identification of suitable locations for community use including for places of worship.
- SO20: Local food and energy production needs great emphasis and should be the number one priority.
- Include an objective on geodiversity as Charnwood Forest is internationally important for its geology.
- Consider options for flood alleviation that do not compromise the natural environment.
- The Environment Agency would welcome inclusion of the following objective: "Development proposals must meet the objectives and criteria of relevant

- environmental legislation, regulations, and policies" and request that SO10 be expanded to take account of reduced risk to proposed new development and the overall benefits that good design can provide.
- The reliance on sustainable urban extensions will make it difficult to fulfil SO2, SO4 and SO16. The prudent reuse of previously developed sites is dismissed outside the Principal Urban Area. It is believed greater emphasis needs to be placed on Service Centres, particularly those along the A6 corridor, to assist in fulfilling spatial objectives.
  - References in SO3 to promoting health and well being through sport and recreation are welcomed. An additional reference to good quality would be preferable.
  - SO15 is welcomed, however, the strategy does not explain how this could be achieved.
  - It is disappointing that few references are made to sport and active recreation other than in the Vision and Objectives. There is no evidence that any robust study has identified the issues that need to be addressed in the Borough, as is required by Planning Policy Guidance 17.
  - SO7 needs a climate change adaptation element.
  - SO12 should include recognition of the advantages in securing linkages between valued habitats, important for species protection and a climate change adaptation strategy, as it enables flora and fauna to migrate in response to changing weather patterns.
  - Concerned by reference to 'trade offs' (para 4.5) when experience indicates that environmental considerations usually lose out. Planning Policy Statement 1 details an integrated approach to sustainable development and is the overall approach that should be pursued.
  - SO9 should have an 'enhancement' element.
  - The Spatial Objectives should include:
    - Reference to designing out crime by adopting Secured By Design award principles.
    - Commitment to engage with the Police and other emergency services.
    - Infrastructure for the emergency services in definitions of community or social infrastructure. The emergency services should be identified as key public service providers in this context.
    - Commitment to use obligations to seek funding for emergency services.
    - Commitment to promote safe, healthy communities and deliver community safety.
  - SO1 should mention public transport links to recreation and tourism facilities.
  - SO7 should include development-related woodland planting and achieving landscape-scale habitat connectivity, as a means "to reduce contributions to climate change".
  - SO13 should specifically mention achieving green infrastructure with new development.
  - Development east of Thurmaston north of Hamilton is inconsistent with the Borough's spatial objective SO9. Development so close to the conservation villages of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe will weaken their visual and landscape appeal. Similarly further building encroachment on the deserted medieval village of Hamilton will destroy the setting of this key listed monument.

### Section: Overall Principles and Priorities

*16 respondents: 7 comment, 3 support, 6 object*

There were a range of issues raised in relation to the overall principles and priorities. There was particular concern about the scale of development and the impact of major development on the food production and the need to reduce car dependency. A summary of the comments and objections received are set out below:

- Sustainable development principles are supported.
- The Environment Agency considers that the Core Strategy should meet all the objectives without significant harm to any of them. Attempting to balance or trade-off environmental issues against local economic or social benefits is unlikely to deliver the best solution for communities in the long-term.
- Need to maintain identity through supporting communities.
- Need to encourage people to use their cars less.
- A limit must be placed on the maximum number of people living in Britain.
- Please help to provide more Christian meeting halls.
- Reference should be made to Peak Oil as it places a different emphasis on prospects for future development.
- Rural areas require economic development to survive and tourism/visitor economy should be harnessed as a means by which local businesses can grow and develop and local facilities and services maintained. Transport needs to be provided more effectively in rural areas but a lack of public transport should not negate rural tourism. Facilitate and encourage responsible rural tourism development. This will be a major challenge for the ongoing development within the National Forest area and for rural locations associated around and within proximity to East Midlands Airport, Donnington Park, Loughborough University, Ratcliffe Parkway, the M42 and the M1 motorways.
- Decrease the density of the development. Rural tranquillity and countryside will be lost and places will become overcrowded.
- The population is due to increase by 26% and is predicted to be mainly migrants from the south east. We do not want these newcomers. The houses should not be provided.
- Development to the east of Loughborough would support the strategic priorities identified by the Council.
- The Council must tell the government that the number of houses required is far too many (recent surveys show over 250,000 empty houses in the UK) so plans to get those on the market is an immediate priority before concreting over agricultural land. Housing development and growth priorities need to be centred on updating and refurbishing existing housing stock.
- There should not be in-filling and building on any greenfield land as this would impact on the need to increase the amount of land used for food production and fuel growing (such as sustainable forestry). Make self sufficiency in terms of energy and food production the main priority. Allow for disasters – loss of the best most valuable low lying arable land to the sea. Diminishing stocks of what will soon to become “precious” gas and oil. Unseasonal weather which threatens our traditional food varieties. Considering Peak Oil and rising fuel costs we expect much less demand for new housing and much greater demand for urban food production. Consideration should be given to

whether brownfield sites should be converted to Community Supported Agriculture projects or market gardens to provide affordable local food.

- Stop making your housing developments subservient to the car.
- Stop taking farm land of whatever quality.
- Stop building more roads.
- Promote “human size” developments that are a pleasure to live in.
- Bring work nearer to people, and make buses and trains work.
- The term Sustainability is often linked with an assumption of continually expanding economy but our current economy is only able to expand because of the availability of cheap fossil fuels. Building an alternative economy requires a total rethink at all levels e.g. are there aims to increase the availability of food growing land, to encourage local urban agriculture and markets, to upgrade existing housing stock through environmental improvements, to reduce the dependence on cars.

### **Section: Settlement Hierarchy**

*1 respondent to overall section: 0 comment, 1 support, 0 object*

**Question 4.1:** *Do you agree that Shepshed should be considered as part of the Loughborough Sub-Regional Centre?*

*83 respondents: 4 comment, 13 support, 12 object & 54 Proforma Letters object*

Overall more respondents disagree with the inclusion of Shepshed in the Sub-Regional Centre than agree. A number of reasons are given for why, including the Regional Plan definition of the Sub-Regional Centre not referring to Shepshed, Loughborough performing the sub regional role on its own, Shepshed having a strong, separate identity and distinct character, the M1 motorway corridor and green wedge providing a clear separation and the two town centres being a long way apart. Inclusion of Shepshed in the Sub-Regional Centre is associated with the perceived threat of major growth and being subsumed in a Greater Loughborough. It is argued Shepshed is no more than a large village worthy of lower status having more in common with Hathern and Quorn. Factors in favour of including Shepshed are that it is a town close to Loughborough with strong links in terms of transport, employment, social and leisure issues. Respondents feel Shepshed would need to retain its separate identity and receive investment, including the benefits associated with a west Loughborough growth option, to address serious challenges. A summary of the representations received are set out below.

Respondents objecting to the proposal made the following comments:

- Shepshed is separate physically and at other levels, fairly self contained with a distinct quality. Loss of identity is a major issue for people living there.
- Shepshed has deep-rooted community culture and values that should not be subsumed in a ‘Greater Loughborough’ resulting from development of the green wedge between Loughborough, Shepshed and Hathern, sprawling like Thorpe Acre and Gorse Covert.
- The M1 motorway corridor is a strong barrier between Shepshed and Loughborough. The town centres are some 5.7km apart with the urban areas separated by a green wedge of open land some 1.6km wide.
- Shepshed has similar travel to work patterns with Loughborough as Hathern and Quorn. As the Regional Plan does not identify Shepshed as part of the Sub-Regional Centre it should be identified as a Service Centre like Quorn and Hathern.

- Loughborough is the main urban centre for jobs, shops and education, with a Sub-Regional role. Shepshed is a large village totally reliant on Loughborough so should be a “Service Centre” or “Other Settlement”.
- The Core Strategy presents no evidence to demonstrate that Shepshed and Loughborough operate as “mutually supportive urban settlements” (para 4.6).
- Shepshed has always been treated as an individual settlement and altering this without detailed analysis and clear evidence is inappropriate. Historic planning policies have kept Loughborough and Shepshed separate, notably the green wedge policy preventing coalescence of the two towns.
- The town should vote on the issue.

Respondents making general comments or who were undecided about the proposal made the following comments:

- Shepshed might be part of the Sub-Regional Centre if kept separate from Loughborough and investment made in services and facilities so town is worthy of Sub-Regional Centre status. The town faces more challenges than any other Charnwood community at present.
- There is concern that Shepshed’s effectiveness as part of the Sub-Regional Centre could be undermined by allocation of a green wedge and inadequate consideration of public transport links between the two towns.
- Shepshed is not part of the Loughborough Sub-Regional Centre in the Regional Plan but as the Borough's second-largest settlement it is a relatively sustainable location.
- Although Loughborough and Shepshed are not currently a single urban system, the Local Planning Authority can make the case. The planned west Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension and the Science Park both support integration of Loughborough and Shepshed. Core Strategy policies that undermine the creation of a wider urban system include the allocation of a Green Wedge in between the two settlements, specifically to separate them, and a lack of consideration given to sustainable transport links between the two towns.
- The communities in Shepshed and Loughborough should decide the answer to this question.

Respondents supporting the proposal made the following comments:

- Shepshed has grown in recent years, is relatively urban and connected directly to Loughborough. The towns are in close proximity with functional relationships sharing transport links, employment and leisure services. There are very strong social and economic links.
- As part of the Sub-Regional Centre Shepshed should be a sizeable, sustainable settlement in its own right, with scope for development to meet local needs rather than in Loughborough.
- This should not detract from the separate identity and needs of Shepshed. The Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy identifies the following priority outcome for Shepshed: “Shepshed Town Centre is improved with better range of shops, improved cleanliness, and less antisocial behaviour in the evening.”
- Shepshed should not be excluded from benefits from the Sustainable Urban Extension and associated funding.

- The Sub-Regional Centre should also include Hathern with the three communities retaining separate identities and physical separation. Their economic interdependence has to be acknowledged.
- The case made in the Core Strategy makes sense.

**Question 4.2:** *Which settlement do you live in and what sort of place would you like it to be in twenty years time?*

*18 respondents: 18 comment & 377 Proforma Letters comment, 0 support, 0 object*

The responses received to this question are set out below by settlement:

- **Loughborough**  
The Ashby Road area is a convenient place to live apart from excessive traffic during University/ school term times.
- **Shepshed**  
The town would be perceived and recognised as an attractive, welcoming market town with a full range of facilities and services for residents and visitors alike. It would have a welcoming and prosperous visitor economy based on holidays associated with recreational facilities in the National and Charnwood Forests, Loughborough's sporting legacy post the 2012 Olympics, Donington Park and ready access from Ratcliffe Parkway station. There would have been responsible tourism development in rural locations around the town.  
The National Forest would be recognised nationally and internationally as an important visitor destination with a range of facilities and services enjoyed by residents of Shepshed. The environmental and social impact of the landfill / recycling facility would be strictly controlled with nil overall adverse impact.
- **Thurmaston**  
Would remain a village and would not be swallowed up by Leicester. Although part has already been taken into Leicester Thurmaston is the larger local community base with a range of public events and lively village groups working to enhance a unique, individual identity and improve the quality of life. Residents wish to see the identity enhanced and developed over the next 20 years. A small volume of social housing is desirable, to reduce the prospects of social exclusion and the poverty cycle - not large scale expansion.
- **Anstey**  
A thriving and vibrant community serving needs of residents whilst maintaining its individuality. It would have advantages of being close to main urban centres whilst close enough to countryside to offer a good quality of life. A green belt would separate the village from Leicester. There would be better entertainment and open spaces for children in the village with schools utilised more for leisure/ recreation. Adjacent parks and wooded areas would be preserved with free access giving healthier lifestyles. Anstey should be more self-sufficient with a range of employment opportunities.
- **Quorn**  
Quorn would retain its separate identity and continue to offer a good quality of life. The village would grow organically with perhaps sensitively planned housing infill especially to enable older residents to live sustainably. There might be an opportunity to relocate Rawlins to a new campus on the edge of the village with the existing site redeveloped for mixed housing centrally in the best location.

- **Rearsby**  
Having lived in Rearsby for 40 years because of its rural character and proximity to main urban centres wish to see that rurality retained and further inappropriate housing developments resisted. Concerned the recent appeal decision allowing over 30 houses might change the village into yet another suburb of Leicester.
- **Wolds Villages**  
The Wolds villages' individual settlement identity is under threat as developments bring them closer together. Substantial green areas must be protected between them so their independent character and setting is maintained for future generations to enjoy, as current residents do. Major development making the area a Loughborough suburb would be inappropriate.  
Burton on the Wolds, Cotes and Prestwold would remain rural communities but have better services. To prosper small scale developments incorporating some affordable housing, better local schools and retail facilities and better bus services are needed.  
Wymeswold does not have the key facilities needed for Service Centre status. The recent 68 house development means the village has grown too rapidly. The village should be protected from development unless for affordable housing for local people. Any large-scale development bringing higher numbers of children into the village school would seriously affect space available for teaching and learning.
- **Hathern**  
Hathern has been for 28 years an ideal place to bring up our children, a small community where families have respect for each other, with countryside right nearby. Urban sprawl west of Loughborough would destroy quality of life for future generations. The settlement identity should be protected with its distinct character and setting.
- **General**  
The Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy sets out priority outcomes for places in Charnwood, and these outcomes are intended to inform delivery plans to show how they will be delivered at a "place" level.

*Question 4.3: Any Other Comments on the Settlement Hierarchy?*

*16 respondents: 3 comment, 8 support, 5 object*

There was some general support for the settlement hierarchy, although a number of respondents suggested that Wymeswold should have been included as a Service Centre. A summary of all the comments are set out below:

- Support the Settlement Hierarchy Review and the role of the Settlement Hierarchy in guiding the distribution of all types of development. The hierarchy accords with national guidance to achieve sustainable patterns of development
- The consultation document is well constructed and the service centres well-chosen. Other places should be protected from development unless it meets needs for affordable housing or provides local jobs/community facilities. Smaller villages should take only affordable housing or uses appropriate in countryside.
- Reservations about grouping small villages and hamlets in the same category given their differences in size and facilities available.
- Agree Ulverscroft is at the lowest end of the hierarchy, relying upon other centres to provide a range of goods and services, including day to day needs.

- Five of the seven “Service Centres” are grouped together in the Soar Valley and two are close to Leicester. This is not a sustainable or sensible distribution of the Service Centre category, as they can service little more than each other. Rural settlements in the Wreake Valley and the Wolds are too far from the intended Service Centres to facilitate good accessibility, especially for disabled or elderly people. The Core Strategy fails to meet its own spatial objectives, and does not accord with Planning Policy Statement 1. Wymeswold is well-equipped to function as a Service Centre for the northeast part of the Borough and should be a Service Centre in the proposed settlement hierarchy.
- If fossil fuels are not available cheaply, then we need to design new settlements to provide local materials and source food production locally.
- May need to consider age of existing housing. Must ensure proper infrastructure is provided to serve new housing or it will just add to problems for future generations.

### **Section: Location of Development**

*1 respondent on section as a whole: 0 comment, 1 support, 0 object*

**Question 4.4** *Do you agree that housing development in Other Settlements should be restricted to affordable housing to meet an identified local need?*

*31 respondents: 3 comment, 12 support, 16 object*

There are a range of views for and against the proposed restriction on new housing in Other Settlements. Reasons in favour of a restrictive approach are varied and include the need to prioritise affordable housing, the argument that market housing is not appropriate in unsustainable locations and local evidence from Wymeswold that building more market houses does not necessarily help safeguard services. Those in favour of a less restrictive approach seek more flexibility and conformity with national and regional guidance. It is suggested that conversions of existing buildings and use of brownfield sites could help maintain vitality and the local economy without compromising sustainability. It is highlighted that market housing is needed to fund affordable units and diversify markets and that if landowners do not release land for affordable housing then there would be no development and villages could become dormitories. Clarification is sought on whether affordable housing schemes would be viable. A summary of the comments is set out below

Respondents supporting this proposal made the following comments:

- Provision of affordable housing should be a priority as Charnwood has one of the highest house price to income ratios in Leicestershire.
- The policy should promote modest expansion of all small settlements with affordable housing for sale and rent.
- Market housing in these locations would be unsustainable, contrary to the Regional Plan and unsound.
- Whilst it is appropriate to restrict the amount of new housing in small rural settlements without services and facilities, as this would lead to unsustainable travel patterns, this should not prevent small-scale schemes to meet identified affordable housing needs.
- Yes, if the decision is made by residents of the settlement. However consultation with existing villagers might reveal a need for general development with services provided for the village at developers' cost.
- Allow affordable housing provided settlement identity is not harmed.

- Yes, preferably controlled through a housing trust. Wymeswold has grown considerably since the 1960s but has still lost services (pub, petrol station and a shop). Building new houses to support remaining services does not necessarily work as you cannot force new residents to use local services and facilities. The 2001 census data shows a lack of 16-24 year olds (5.2% of population). This reflects a lack of affordable housing in the village. Many youngsters move to Barrow, Sileby, East Leake or Keyworth as their first rung on the ladder.
- Support limiting future development to small scale affordable housing within East Goscote limits to protect the village from major developments. There is no concern at present such restraint would harm the vitality of local services.
- Yes but this should not preclude development of a brownfield area like Wymeswold Airfield for a large mixed community bringing benefits of better roads, public transport and services to residents of the Wolds villages.
- The approach set out for small villages and hamlets in the countryside is agreed, subject to careful consideration of detailed criteria applied to affordable housing exception sites. The extent of need is an important consideration, with regard to the sustainability of potential locations.(i.e. needs in a hamlet might best be met in a higher order village or other settlement relatively close by rather than in the hamlet itself).

Respondents objecting to this proposal made the following comments:

- Too restrictive. There should be a mix of housing with an emphasis on affordable housing to safeguard the character of small settlements. There is scope for some rural buildings to be converted to residential, if business use is not appropriate.
- The approach seems contradictory to spatial objectives SO6, 9, 16 and 17. Infill and conversions and redevelopment of brownfield sites (for example employment sites or farmyards) should be allowed or villages will continue to decline. There are several sites within and on the perimeters of existing settlements suitable for sustainable development that would support existing services and not compromise the sustainability of the Service Centres.
- Market and affordable housing need to be distributed across the Borough. Market housing is the main means to provide affordable housing.
- No. Housing provision should be balanced so people can move up the housing ladder freeing affordable homes.
- Affordability is only one aspect of the wider socio-economic criteria to be used in deciding whether to approve developments for local needs. All housing should be deemed affordable.
- Concerned that smallest villages presumably non-sustainable places should be used for social housing. If social housing is acceptable how can you say no to private housing? Previous social housing has been bought by tenants.
- The sustainability credentials of each village should be examined. Development of an appropriate scale that does not harm important countryside interests can help support the rural economy. Paragraph 4 of Planning Policy Statement 7 confirms policies should allow limited development in, or next to, rural settlements in order to maintain their vitality even if settlements are not local service centres.
- This is an entirely arbitrary and unacceptable approach, inconsistent with national or regional planning policy, and lacks a robust evidence base. The emerging Regional Plan, whilst seeking to concentrate growth in urban areas, also seeks to provide appropriate

growth in rural areas. It does not restrict development in rural communities to identified affordable housing needs, as this ignores the potential requirement for market housing in such settlements for those wishing to trade up or down. There appears to be no basis for the maximum number of (9) units on housing schemes. The Council should consider the findings of the Taylor Review; consider the allocation of mixed tenure residential schemes, as well as mixed schemes based on robust assessments of local need for market and affordable housing. Both affordable and market housing can be subject to local occupancy restrictions.

- Whilst affordable housing is important there is a need to extend the policy to include market housing so existing and new families can live in these places. Planning Policy Statement 3 says people should have a choice of where they want to live, and development being restricted to social housing would prevent this.
- A little more flexibility is needed. Developments reflecting the social grouping of contributors to the local economy would facilitate natural growth of a sustainable community, but not developments encouraging out-commuting.
- The proposed restrictions in Other Settlements such as Burton on the Wolds and hamlets such as Cotes risks these places becoming dormitory villages with no vibrant, growing community.
- It is unlikely that sites would be released by landowners for development for affordable housing only and therefore the proposed policy would, in effect, prevent further development of small settlements.
- The designation of Wymeswold effectively precludes any further development other than small scale schemes within the limits of development for proven local affordable housing needs and/or other community and local employment needs. As development in Wymeswold in the last 20 years has not met local needs, opportunities for young families and elderly with strong local connections to stay in the village are very limited. A mixed population to provide social support and maintain the vitality of community networks is vital for a balanced community. This needs housing association or rented schemes for young and elderly safeguarded for those groups. If not by 2026 the population will be dominated by 'well off elderly' able to own a property but likely to be out commuting to cities. Some low-key development could help grow the village and maintain rural services, if it is within the limits and meets the Village Design Statement.

One respondent also made the following general comment:

- If there is an identified need for affordable housing in Other Settlements will such development be viable under this policy?

**Question 4.5:** *Do you agree that the settlement limits should be removed from all Small Villages and Hamlets?*

*21 respondents: 2 comment, 10 support, 9 object*

The nature of a number of responses suggests that the purpose of removing settlement limits, i.e. to help restrict development in small villages and hamlets that are appropriate to consider as part of the countryside, has not been fully understood. Those agreeing with the removal of settlement limits recognise this will help prevent too much development in unsustainable locations and stop small villages growing larger. Others wish to see limits retained because these settlements are places where some small scale development is appropriate to support

community growth. Limits give a clear definition of the extent of a small village or hamlet. A summary of the comments received is set out below:

- Yes, provided local communities support any proposals.
- Yes, to prevent inappropriate development in unsustainable locations lacking facilities.
- Most of these villages are suffering from recent housing developments which do not provide smaller affordable dwellings. The balance needs to change.
- Limits should be retained to stop rural communities changing into large settlements. Unlimited housing in smaller villages would increase pressure on facilities in local service centres.
- Agree if this means new building normally limited to infill.
- Safeguards needed so open countryside protected from development.
- Unclear as to why removing limits would stop development.
- Modest expansion of small settlements needed for affordable housing and employment opportunities, including light industry and retail.
- Housing should be available using existing sites and not used as an excuse to annexe outlying villages.
- These are often quite sizeable settlements that do not fit the description or character of 'open countryside'. Infill and conversions can support continued growth of these settlements and make best use of previously developed sites.
- Oppose moving or removing boundaries, unless development is proportionate to the size of a settlement and in line with the Local Development Plan.
- A little more flexibility is needed. Developments reflecting the social grouping of contributors to the local economy should be allowed to facilitate natural growth of a sustainable community, but not developments encouraging out commuting.
- Retain limits to give a clear definition of the extent of a village.

*Question 4.6: Do you think the settlement limits should be removed for the Other Settlements as well as for Small Villages and Hamlets? (This would restrict future development to affordable housing only).*

*18 respondents: 2 comment, 3 support, 13 object*

Many of the respondents raise similar issues to those covered under 4.4 and 4.5. It was highlighted that removal of the limits will help ensure development is restricted to affordable housing in villages that do not have infrastructure and services to support further growth. Contrary comments were also made that the approach is contrary to the Regional Plan. It was highlighted that these are quite sizeable villages where small scale growth could improve sustainability, support continued growth and utilise brownfield sites. It is suggested that without growth, villages could stagnate or decline. A summary of comments is set out below:

- Yes, but these settlements should not be no-growth areas.
- Agree development in Other Settlements should be restricted to affordable housing. Wymeswold and Burton on the Wolds have had housing growth but do not have the infrastructure and services needed to sustain further development.
- This would mean the loss of habitat and countryside to increase the size of a town with villages and hamlets constrained

- Should not preclude development of a brownfield area like Wymeswold Airfield for a large mixed community with benefits of better roads, public transport and services for residents of Wolds villages.
- These are quite sizeable settlements. New infill and conversions to dwellings can support their continued growth and make best use of previously developed sites.
- Restricting development to affordable housing would stagnate village life and restrict natural growth of a community that could make it more sustainable
- Removing limits would not conform with Regional Plan guidance.
- For Burton on the Wolds, the settlement limit should be extended to include properties on Sowters Land and Seal Close recognised as being within the built up areas of the village in the Burton on the Wolds Village Design Statement. Future development should not be restricted to affordable housing.
- The settlements are of a size where it is appropriate to allow small-scale development meeting local community needs and improving sustainability.
- A little more flexibility is needed. Developments reflecting the social grouping of contributors to the local economy should be allowed to facilitate natural growth of a sustainable community, but not developments encouraging out commuting.
- Settlement limits could be removed if local communities affected agree limits are not needed to justify natural growth.
- Settlement limits should be a matter for residents of a settlement, not those who do not live there.
- Directing significant development in close proximity to main urban centres and service centres is broadly supported. However it is suggested the strategy should include a re-assessment of settlement boundaries of some other settlements in order to not preclude appropriate development, which may assist in supporting the long-term vitality and viability of these areas. Reference to a maximum of nine dwellings and limited to affordable housing is overly prescriptive.

*Question 4.7 Do you agree that further development in Service Centres could help to address local issues or improve service provision?*

*29 respondents: 1 comment, 24 support, 4 object*

There is broad support for the service centres proposed. Requests are made for Birstall and Wymeswold to be service centres and for the scale of development to be set for each centre. Some responses support further development in certain centres. It is suggested that growth of service centres could relieve significant growth pressures on Loughborough. Service Centres are considered to generally have good services and public transport accessibility. It is suggested that further development would accord with sustainability objectives provided it secures significant improvements, by concentrating development in a few places to address local issues and strengthen infrastructure. It is also suggested that brownfield sites be a priority but the potential of greenfield locations be recognised. The contrary view is that further development in service centres, with already stretched facilities, would not bring benefits or create sustainable communities and could erode community identity. Most communities want to remain clearly separate with good access to nearby countryside. A summary of the comments is set out below.

Respondents supporting the proposal made the following comments:

- Support the delivery of sustainable development in the Borough and endorse the proposed 'Settlement Hierarchy' and 'Location of Development'. The smaller scale of growth envisaged for Service Centres appears to be appropriate and achievable.
- Each community needs to be addressed on its own merits and deficiencies.
- Further development within service centres will ensure the Core Strategy reflects the national and regional principles of sustainable development. Service centres generally have a good level of service provision with better accessibility to existing facilities and public transport and additional development can help ensure their vitality and viability.
- Development could help address local issues (i.e. vitality and viability of district / town centres, affordable housing, community facilities, shortfalls in green space provision), improve jobs, public transport and service provision, and contribute to the priority neighbourhood requirements. Such improvements would reduce the need for people to travel elsewhere. Significant new development not tied to maintaining or improving services or resolving problems should not be allowed.
- More housing in Service Centres would relieve pressure on Loughborough. There will be opportunities to identify housing sites in sustainable locations, helping support these centres and avoiding some of the disadvantages of allocating large housing sites in and around Loughborough.
- Development should be concentrated where sustainability can be achieved via S106 contributions. Finance must be available to target local issues and services and ensure infrastructure is adequate to cope.
- The Leicestershire Rural Partnership and County Council's Better Places Team is conducting research to categorise settlements as Market Towns, Rural Centres, or Village Centres, based on services available within settlements. Services identified as essential for a Village Centre are primary school, post office, food shop, GP surgery, library, and pub. The settlements identified by Charnwood as Service Centres align well with those identified through research. The only anomaly is Rothley, where there is not a GP surgery. Despite this it is accepted that Rothley acts as a Service Centre.
- Further development can support the role of service centres in serving local communities and the needs of the surrounding smaller villages
- Clarification is required within the Table on page 31 and at paras 4.12-14 and 4.19 that development opportunities will be considered within *and* adjoining Service Centres with previously developed sites given priority over greenfield sites. This would avoid potential conflict with 'Small Villages and Hamlets in the Countryside', in terms of interpreting the status of suitable sites.
- The Council's Settlement Hierarchy Review, 2008 identifies a key issue in terms of the loss of employment land within the larger settlements in the Borough and the affect this has had in relation to the balance between homes and jobs, resulting in increased levels of out commuting. The Core Strategy should clearly set out the scale of development that should be directed to settlements including Service Centres in order to rebalance homes and jobs and strengthen sustainability.

A number of respondents highlighted particular villages or sites that should be considered for development, these comments are summarised below:

- Mountsorrel is a Priority Neighbourhood with deprivation in terms of education, training and skills, barriers to housing and services. New development of adequate scale could help address these issues and support services and facilities.

- Quorn should grow organically with perhaps sensitively planned housing infill especially so older residents can live sustainably. There might be an opportunity to relocate Rawlins to a new campus on the edge of the village with the existing site redeveloped for mixed housing area centrally in the best location.
- Quorn with good public transport accessibility and a vibrant centre, meeting needs of Charnwood Forest villages, is capable of accommodating further development. Land at Farley Way (housing) and Meynell Road (employment) could help Quorn evolve sustainably.
- Rothley is located in a sustainable settlement within walking distance of a good range of services and facilities, land south of Town Green Street should be considered.
- Rothley and Mountsorrel are Service Centres with good accessibility by public transport and a considerable range of services and facilities serving wider catchment areas. There is potential for development to further support these areas.
- A southern extension to Mountsorrel should be considered as it would provide additional market and affordable housing to the village, open space provision, and a new link road between Mountsorrel Lane and Loughborough Road whilst securing the settlement identity of Mountsorrel and Rothley through the dedication of a belt of publicly accessible area of land between the development and the Rothley Brook.
- Promote suitability of Sileby, in particular land off Seagrave Road as a sustainable location for development able to bring local benefits.
- In Syston there is scope to direct development towards a highly sustainable location, and help regenerate the town centre.
- Service Centres along the A6 corridor should be given more emphasis and a greater role in their potential to support local communities. 'Further development' should include suitable sites adjacent to a settlement.
- The designation of Anstey, Barrow, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby and Syston as Service Centres is correct.

Respondents objecting to the proposals made the following comments:

- This would mean the loss of habitat and countryside just to increase the size of a town at the expense of villages and hamlets.
- Further development in places with stretched facilities will not improve services or address current issues.
- Seems to be more about imposing development than residents concerns.
- Poorly designed service centres as described do not address the needs of communities or the wider population and do little to create self sustaining communities.
- Further housing development could result in a loss of community identity, particularly villages already close together in the Soar and Wreake Valleys.
- Village Appraisals and Parish Plans show most communities (more than 90%) wish to keep their village separated from the next community, and that access to nearby countryside is highly valued (more than 90%).

Respondents also made a number of general comments:

- Depends on the scale and type of development promoted. Careful consideration should be given to the prospects of achieving a significant improvement in a small number of

- locations by planned, concentrated development, e.g. the regeneration priorities of Mountsorrel and Sileby identified in paragraph 4.80.
- The absence of defined Service Centres or higher order settlements in the Wolds or Charnwood Forest means that the needs of these areas will have to be met elsewhere. This is consistent with the approach that the needs of such areas can be met in nearby Service Centres and higher order settlements.
  - The Core Strategy needs to be clear about the broad locations for future growth in the Borough. Guidance is needed on the scale of development appropriate in each Service Centre on brownfield and greenfield land having regard to key influences such as the need for regeneration and the opportunity for access to services, facilities and employment
  - Birstall should be a service centre, rather than part of the Leicester Principal Urban Area. It is clearly separated from the City, and a large sustainable settlement with good public transport links and a range of services and facilities serving nearby villages and rural areas.
  - Hamilton should be added to the Leicester Principal Urban Area definition.

**Question 4.8: Any Other Comments on the Location of Development?**

32 respondents: 9 comment, 11 support, 12 object

There is support for the settlement hierarchy. It is felt that the emphasis on urban concentration can help address congestion by maximising use of existing public transport. Restricted development in smaller villages is supported. A focus on sustainable brownfield land is also supported and some respondents wish to see even more emphasis on brownfield land. Others highlight overprovision and lack of scope for high density flatted schemes. There are a number of concerns about the growth quotas, some wish to see more focus on the Principal Urban Area whilst others argue for a broader spread across the Borough. 25% of growth away from the urban areas is considered too high. There was concern that all settlements should expand in proportion to their size and that excessive development would harm settlement character. A case is also made for a flexibility to cover any problems with the delivery of major developments. There were comments about the need to provide services and source food locally. A summary of the comments is set out below.

Respondents supporting the proposals made the following comments:

- Support majority of new development being directed to main urban areas. It is particularly important in south Charnwood to ensure any sustainable urban extension is well related to existing developments in Thurmaston and Leicester. The strategy offers the best opportunity to ensure development reduces congestion. Opportunities to maximise use of existing public transport should be sought prior to taking forward sites requiring new provision.
- Support focus on previously developed land although it will not automatically deliver sustainable development.
- Support for the proposals set out in the Location of Development Table but note that 75% of the overall development is accounted for leaving 25% to be generally located in the Service Centres.
- Agree with the level of development proposed for the lower order villages.

- Support policies that continue to restrict major development in the villages and smaller settlements in the Charnwood area of the National Forest, because of the high landscape, ecological, and cultural value of the area.
- Wymeswold is correctly designated as an 'Other Settlement' because although the village has some key facilities (a primary school, shop and a pharmacy) it lacks other key services such as a secondary school, health centre or adequate bus service.
- The identification of Hathern and Shephed as 'Other Settlements' is supported. Any significant development affecting Hathern or Shephed (whether in the settlement or as a consequence of coalescence due to development at Loughborough) would not be appropriate.
- East Goscote parish Council agree East Goscote should change from a 'Service Centre' to an 'Other Settlement'. Although the village has a viable local centre other towns nearby would attract more trade.

Respondents objecting to the proposals made the following comments:

- Insufficient weight given to making best use of previously developed land. This presents the opportunity to review current plan designations and allocations so that previously developed sites adjacent to settlements and others in sustainable locations are preferred to greenfield sites.
- Useful to include a reference to seek to improve on past performance, in terms of maximising potential for developing brownfield land, to Planning Policy Statement 3 minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (net), and the potential for achieving much higher densities on brownfield sites within central areas of urban areas.
- Provision of at least 40% of new homes around Loughborough means at least 7720 dwellings accommodating c17000 residents at an average occupancy rate of 2.2 people/dwelling - a proportionate increase to Loughborough's population. There would be merit in adopting the same percentage approach for other settlement groupings. Housing targets should be minimums to be achieved, rather than maximums not to be exceeded. Development plan documents should be sufficiently flexible to respond to delivery difficulties including by the allocation of reserve sites capable of being brought forward if delivery is held up elsewhere.
- Question the figures in para 4.16. In particular, any development with flats is questionable as the 'bubble has burst' with overprovision in most towns and cities. Loughborough is no exception. It is questioned how 28 urban brownfield sites could yield 1150 new homes. If this relies on higher densities and flats the assumption is not reliable. In both cases the figures should be reassessed.
- The proposal in the 'Location of Development' Table that 35% of new homes should be within and adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area and 40% within or adjoining the Loughborough Sub-Regional Centre does not conform to the Regional Plan. As the Principal Urban Area is the most sustainable location for development 50% of new homes should be within or adjoining it and 30% within or adjoining the Sub-Regional Centre.
- The specification of a minimum percentage for 'Main Urban Centres' is unrealistic. It is unclear: how this percentage will be monitored and implemented; how development ratios of 35% for the Principal Urban Area and 40% for Sub-Regional Centres have been derived; and how in real terms they will be applied to land allocations. The provision of a broad mix of sites would achieve the delivery targets.

- The percentage splits identified in the Table should be removed, as they may be too prescriptive for ensuring sustainable development.
- A Principal Urban Area growth strategy focussed solely on one sustainable urban extension will have delivery constraints in the short and medium term. A 5000 homes site will take time to bring forward, especially in current market conditions. Option A in Appendix A should form the basis of the Preferred Option. A range of sites should be identified that can deliver a balanced growth strategy whether via individual sites adjacent to the Principal Urban Area or the Sustainable Urban Extension is broken down for early phases to be released.
- Endorse rejection of the alternative strategies promoting a larger scale of development in 'Service Centres', 'Other Settlements' and 'Small Villages and Hamlets in the Countryside'. These strategies clearly lack a sustainable framework for development in the Borough. Seeking to provide 25% of housing away from the Sub Regional Centre and Principal Urban Area is contrary to the Regional Plan. The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes in respect of housing distribution in the Borough indicate that (apart from those associated with the Principal Urban Area) the remainder of the requirement "will be located mainly at Loughborough".
- The locational strategy should reflect Planning Policy Statement 7 with regards to tourism and leisure development by providing a specific exception in relation to development in the countryside for appropriate tourism and leisure activities.
- Strongly object to proposals for a block of flats resembling a university campus in Quorn which will be visually intrusive and add unacceptably to traffic on already busy roads. Gardens flood from Poultney Brook after heavy rain. This is contrary to the Village Design Statement stating the land should not be built on.

Respondents also made a number of general comments:

- Expansion in Leicester is continuing to put pressure on neighbouring communities such as Thurmaston. Any expansion outside that already planned in Leicester and that in the Soar Valley and the Borough of Charnwood, especially Thurmaston, would have a detrimental effect on surrounding communities.
- Full facilities and services should be provided and maintained by new development to satisfy the needs of an existing community and new residents. This has not been achieved in recent developments.
- Food supplies in supermarkets are vulnerable as they are dependent on finite oil reliant transport systems. Food should be sourced locally.
- All villages, towns and cities should expand in proportion to their size.
- Excessive backland development would harm the character of Woodhouse.
- Reference should be made to the opportunities to address the deficiency in local services and facilities in 'other settlements' in order that they remain viable and sustainable communities in their own right.
- Opportunities to enhance the local landscape character of the Wolds should be taken.
- A garden area in Woodhouse is defined as open countryside in the Local Plan. This should be altered to new boundaries in any new plan.

## **Section: Direction for Growth**

*Question 4.9: Do you agree with identifying sustainable urban extensions rather than a large number of smaller extensions to urban areas?*

69 respondents: 4 comment, 35 support, 30 object

There was a mixture of views about this issue, although the majority supported the approach of identifying sustainable urban extensions rather than a large number of smaller extensions. Many respondents highlighted that large scale developments provide an opportunity to deliver a good range of supporting infrastructure with development for example roads, schools and shops. It was suggested there should be smaller allocations in addition to the sustainable urban extensions. Of those that did not support the proposed approach, many raised concerns about the impact of the proposed scale of development on one location and the ability to deliver genuinely sustainable communities. A summary of comments are set out below:

Respondents agreeing with the approach of identifying sustainable urban extensions made the following points:

- This approach is consistent with regional and national planning objectives.
- It is important the strategy takes a long term view and this approach provides this, creating an opportunity for sustainable communities linked to urban areas.
- This approach will ensure there is a critical mass to provide new infrastructure efficiently, economically, and in phase with development, delivering wider benefits for both existing and future residents.
- It is important that schemes use existing services and bring additional schooling, employment, GP surgeries, viable shopping centres and adequate transport links.
- Although the level of development will inevitably have an adverse impact on the natural environment, this approach does appear to provide the best option.
- This approach will protect smaller settlements.
- While this approach offers advantages in delivering sustainable development, this should not be at the expense of protecting the area's environmental assets.
- There will also be a need to accommodate development in other locations to support existing services and facilities, provide a better local balance of homes and jobs and help meet local affordable housing needs.
- Smaller non-strategic greenfield sites are also needed given the housing land supply situation and the lead in times for major extensions. The risk of relying on large sites is demonstrated by the Birstall urban extension, which did not come on stream until the end of this plan period.
- The scale of development that may be regarded as appropriate for strategic allocation in the Core Strategy could arguably be variable, related to the size of urban area.
- Need to consider a new brownfield sustainable rural freestanding development.
- Whilst larger scale developments are supported, consideration needs to be given to more than one extension at Loughborough. Relying on one proposal may be a dangerous strategy as there are always unforeseen issues, with two extensions, the likelihood of delays is vastly reduced.
- It will be necessary to include an appropriate level of flexibility, especially in the context of the partial review of the Regional Plan that may increase housing requirements.
- We have to address the problem of growing car ownership, congested road and climate change. It is entirely correct that future development would be channelled towards

areas with existing infrastructure and transport links in an effort to lessen the number of car journeys.

Respondents disagreeing with the approach of identifying sustainable urban extensions raised the following issues:

- Large scale developments require a full range of local services. If housing is built without the social and community facilities first, it will cause social issues and traffic grid lock as people rely on larger urban areas.
- It is wrong for one community to be burdened with large numbers of social housing, factories, gypsy and traveller sites and schools for surrounding areas. This will not improve the existing communities it will cause disruption.
- Artificial constructs often fail in building new communities, creating social problems. Smaller developments are a more socially and friendly way forward.
- Natural growth of existing towns and villages is preferable as it does not create the structural problems that larger developments bring.
- Spread housing out to spread traffic out and then existing facilities could be extended.
- There needs to be an even spread of light industry. This will have the added benefit of bringing employment opportunities to other villages and small towns.
- Employment land should be located adjacent to existing arterial roads.
- The 5000 homes required for a school could still be met in a dispersed approach.
- Design, layout and a close relationship to existing communities will be crucial to whether these are genuinely sustainable communities, which have an identity.
- To provide a robust housing land supply there needs to be over provision, where both sustainable urban extensions and a range of other sites are identified. This will provide a robust contingency plan against difficulties of large sites e.g. multiple ownership, land assembly and the cost and timing of infrastructure.
- Development should be contained within the built-up areas to preserve village character and avoid a built-up corridor between Loughborough and Leicester.
- The case for the scale of growth in the Regional Plan is not yet approved.
- This approach fails to prioritise brownfield sites as directed in the Regional Plan.
- 'Bolt-on' builds at Garendon/Shepshed and Thurmaston will not do anything for increasing trade in Charnwood: they will only access the motorway. Housing should be spread evenly throughout Charnwood.
- This proposal enhances the negative change occurring in rural areas, with villages not able to maintain services without substantial tax payers funding and the young unable to afford homes, creating deep divisions not cohesive communities.

*Question 4.10: Do you agree that future growth of Loughborough and Shepshed should be focused west of Loughborough/north of Garendon Park?*

*790 respondents: 9 comment, 31 support, 154 object & 596 Proforma Letters object*

The vast majority of the respondents disagreed with future growth being focused west of Loughborough. The key concerns raised related to the traffic implications of development, loss of the green wedge, impact on the identity of Shepshed and Hathern, loss of a traffic free recreational area, flood risks, impacts on habitats, wildlife and the historic park and gardens. There were particular concerns that the proposal does not take account of the Highways

Authority's concerns. A number of respondents put a case forward for one of the other alternative options, the majority suggesting east Loughborough either at Cotes, linked to road proposals or at Wymeswold, to make use of the brownfield opportunity at the Airfield. A summary of the comments are set out below:

The respondents that disagreed that future growth should be focused west of Loughborough raised the following issues:

#### *Transport Issues*

- The ongoing disagreement between the Borough Council and the Highways Authority and the significantly different traffic modelling outcomes, illustrates the lack of sound evidence base on transport and causes great concern.
- It is understood the Charnwood transport study has been carried out independently with no consultation with the Highways Authority and they have raised concerns about the robustness and soundness of the Charnwood study.
- The County Council highlight that their own studies conclude that in order to deliver significant housing growth it will be necessary to remove a considerable amount of traffic from the town to make the network function so that it is possible to improve public transport, walking and cycling. The proposal for a sustainable urban extension west of Loughborough is in conflict with conclusion from previous studies undertaken by the County Council. The Highway Authority remain of the view that, as part of an overall package of transport measures, an eastern distributor road offers the best prospect of delivering sustainable growth, wherever it is located. The County Council raise serious concerns about how the Charnwood study has been undertaken, its robustness, and the soundness of its conclusions. Specifically that it:
  - is not based on Central Leicestershire or Loughborough traffic models;
  - underplays current traffic issues and no assessment of impacts on the city;
  - assumes development traffic can be catered for through walking, cycling, and public transport, but no proposals as to how this can be delivered;
  - no evidence provided on the level of modal shift that would be required.
- There are serious reservations about the robustness of the Charnwood evidence. It uses a more simplistic approach and has not used the County Council modelling, which has been tested and approved. Question whether the extent of the congested road network in the locality has been properly assessed and raise concern about the level of detail applied to the analysis as it does not appear to take into account of the impact of the proposal at Dishley Grange.
- The transport study undertaken by Charnwood does not take full account of current congestion levels on the A512, A6 and B588 Hathern/ Shepshed Road, including the road junctions and their capacity to handle increased traffic flow. It assumes that increases in traffic levels can be reduced substantially by promotion of cycling, walking and public transport but makes no proposal as to how this can be achieved or to what level, given the current congestion levels.
- The promoters of an Sustainable Urban Extension east of Loughborough have undertaken further assessments of a partial Eastern Distributor Road using the Loughborough Traffic Model. These further assessments demonstrate that a partial Eastern Distributor Road will support the development of the proposed urban extension and deliver significant transport benefits for the town centre and east Loughborough through the reduction in traffic volumes. The promoter considers their

- proposals would secure delivery of key elements of the package of transport measures identified by the County Council, including part of the Eastern Distributor Road from the Epinal Way to the A60 Nottingham Road.
- Loughborough is already at saturation point. The proposal will worsen the considerable peak time traffic hold-ups and add more pressure on overloaded roads, especially A512, A6 which is failing to cope with the Astra Zeneca traffic, Epinal Way and B588 where there are problems just accessing the refuse tip.
  - This will mean a lot more cars on roads where there are already serious and fatal road traffic accidents and raises serious health and safety issues.
  - There is poor access to the railway station from this proposal.
  - The County Council project 'unsustainably high' increases in traffic volumes from this option, plus there are proposals for an adjoining Science Park, landfill site at Newhurst Quarry, industrial site at Dishley Grange, a hotel and golf course and academy at Shepshed, expansion of the lorry park on the A512 and the use and expansion of Donnington Park for the Grand Prix. Traffic and CO2 emissions will rise to an unprecedented level.
  - Even with the connecting roads through the park, this will not be enough to relieve the congestion, even with the proposed ring road earmarked for 2010.
  - Junction 23 is already a problem. The proposed new junction linking the A512 with the A6 will make matters worse. Loughborough already becomes gridlocked during the frequent times the M1 motorway is blocked. Further development will increase problems and undermine the impact of the M1 motorway widening by increasing traffic.
  - Traffic implications during construction as well as on completion are important.
  - There is no A6 bus-lane in Hathern, so how can the aims for public transport be achieved with an additional 3,500 homes?
  - How much have you budgeted for spending on an alternative or improved road system, when the current proposals don't work?
  - Residents wishing to drive to Leicester will use the A6, but the consultation document highlights that routes within the town already experience congestion.
  - This development would simply be a commuter zone to get to the M1 motorway for people to work in other areas. The presence and proximity of the motorway will be a major incentive for long distance commuting and for other journeys.
  - There is no provision for the increase in traffic through Hathern to junction 24 of M1 motorway, the A6 is already very busy and dangerous to get across or turn on to. This proposal should not be considered without a bypass for Hathern.
  - An easy route between junction 23 to junction 24 of the M1 motorway will provide a rat run if there are motorway problems.
  - Shepshed cannot cope with more traffic through its centre.
  - It has been hinted that a new road will be built creating a western bypass linking the A512 to the A6 at Quorn. The road would be in the area of Nanpantan and the Outwoods. Developers will put pressure on filling in along this road, ruining this beautiful area and footpaths where the town meets Charnwood Forest.
  - Whilst some mitigating measures are suggested, no firm indication is supplied on the practicality of delivering improvements to public transport, walking and cycling facilities given traffic conditions and highly constrained road network.

- It is not expected that the cycle will be promoted in any way, cycle ways are not just a shared space with cars.
- Need to be looking at better sustainable transport solutions such as the Parry People ultra-light tramway.
- There is a rumour of a possible new bus route running through the Thorpe Estate and onto Garendon Park. If this is true, consider the dangers to all local schoolchildren who walk to school in the area this would cause.
- The expense of road infrastructure is too high.
- An objective of the strategy is to reduce the need use cars and encourage other modes. The proposal would compromise three existing well-used, traffic-free, public rights of way currently used for walking, cycling and horse riding and increase car use as new homes are located further from the town centre.
- We disagree that levels of traffic can be reduced by the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport, as from experience cycling is dangerous due to the current level of congestion and the fact that cycle routes criss-cross busy roads. The main safe route into Loughborough from Hathern, if you are cycling, running or walking, is through Garendon Park, which is a beautiful and quiet route used by many walkers, joggers and cyclists.
- Cycling and walking are leisure activities not methods of commuting to work.
- The proposal has been put forward on the flawed premise that the people who move into the new development will walk or cycle to work as the plan includes employment nearby. This premise is unrealistic since small business units do not employ large numbers and the Science Park employs highly specialised personnel. People and businesses cannot be prevented from using vehicles.
- There is concern that Derby Playing Fields may be built on and that a link road will join the A6 and then on into Garendon.
- The M1 motorway is being widened to four lanes to the side which runs along the proposed build so this will affect level of expansion.

#### *Environmental Issues*

- Part of the area is a recognised flood area (in particular Black Brook and Stonebow Washlands area) and flooding will increase with climate change, the area is heavy clay and does not lend itself to good drainage. This will increase flooding including in Thorpe Acre.
- We badly need more trees not less, each one felled is a travesty and is seriously bad for our future environment. Each tree absorbs many gallons of water and prevents floods.
- Loss of prime agricultural land close to a large urban centre, which will otherwise contribute to the provision of local food. With the projected world shortage of food, agricultural land will be in very short supply.
- This consultation has not been informed by the proposed development strategy, since the preferred option will destroy the environment not safeguard it.
- Loss of countryside, this is a greenfield site rather than using brownfield land.
- The green wedge provides essential breathing space with traffic free cycling, walking and horse riding, well used by residents of Hathern, Shepshed and Loughborough. This proposal would swallow up this green wedge, which would be lost for future generations to enjoy despite only being identified by the Council as a green wedge as recently as 2000.

- This option would be most destructive with the loss for habitats, high grade agricultural land and rare traffic-free access would be far greater than the Council's suggested gain.
- Loss of existing habitats, wildlife corridors and environmental conditions for biodiversity, including wide field margins, wildlife including protected species, feeding and breeding habitats. The area has badgers' setts, bat colonies, great crested newts, finches, jays, birds of prey that nest in the woods close by and kingfishers in the brook, skylarks at the top of the hill between Hathern and Shepshed and many other birds including raptors. There are over 90 recorded species of breeding birds. There were water voles and kingfishers associated with the Black Brook before recent developments. Not enough has been done to see the full impact on the environment. There is no conservation plan.
- The land identified for building is part of a green corridor, which is good for wildlife in the area with links to Outwoods, Charnwood Forest and Soar Valley.
- The current nature reserve encompassed within the existing washlands, lakes, woods and fields of the Garendon Estate is something that is truly remarkable and unique to this part of Loughborough and should not be destroyed but designated a conservation area.
- This will add air, light and noise pollution to an already heavily congested area.
- This is green belt land and should be protected.
- The land provides an important green wedge between Loughborough, Shepshed and Hathern. The strategy states that green wedges are areas of land which influence the form and direction of urban development preventing coalescence and maintaining the physical identity of settlements. This proposal removes the preservation qualities provided by the green wedge.
- The land is used by local school children for environmental studies and exercise and this would be irretrievably lost for future generations to enjoy.
- The proposal for Garendon Park will create a small, isolated country park bordered on all sides by housing and industry. This does not fit well with the strategic vision for 'green spaces connected together' and does not meet the objective regarding habitat fragmentation. Society would benefit from keeping some areas free of human trampling to allow diverse wildlife to flourish.
- This is an area of outstanding natural beauty. There is a breathtaking landscape viewed from the top of Shepshed Hill, near Hathern.
- Residents will be living close to a sewage works, refuse tip, traveller site and affected by noise and air pollution from the motorway and dual carriage way.
- It contradicts some of the spatial objectives in terms of the loss of high grade agricultural land and impacts on important historic or archaeological assets.
- Access to Garendon Park will not compensate or outweigh the loss the development will cause. The consultation document failed to state what would be lost to achieve access to the historic park and gardens, i.e. loss of habitats, a traffic free breathing space, agricultural land and displacement of wildlife.
- To ensure quality of life green spaces must be protected, this area is well used by residents as a recreation area for walking, cycling, jogging and horse riding. Riders will be forced on to the roads and walkers into their cars to access green spaces, what will this do for Charnwood's carbon footprint as people use their cars to access and overuse places like Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill? Has the current amount of

recreational use this area already, it is the only natural open space between the town and villages in this area.

- The strategy objectives highlight existing deficiencies in green space provision, yet this proposal will reduce it further.
- Charnwood Forest needs the protection of a buffer zone of green land around it, not development up to and into it. This land is precious for its landscape character, of national importance ecologically and of international importance geologically. It is already used as a recreational area for most of the county. Massive population growth in the town will put dangerous pressure on the landscape, ecology and geological interests of the area.
- This proposal goes against the national, regional and local policy of using brownfield sites as a priority. It also goes against the view reflected in the Stakeholder Workshops held in September 2007 where participants showed a clear preference for 'A Priority for Safeguarding Environmental Features' and 'Green Development' and identified a preference for east of Thurmaston, west of the A46, east of Loughborough at Wymeswold Airfield and Cotes. The development strategy ignores the wishes of Charnwood residents.
- Alarmed that a development west of Loughborough might create the need for a Western Bypass cutting through the Outwoods, (part of the Charnwood Forest and Site of Special Scientific Interest) and the fields that separate the Outwoods from Loughborough. That green wedge is an essential element of the beauty of the Outwoods, further encroachment, should be avoided. A western bypass would be an environmental disaster. If the additional dwellings would create that need then the dwellings should be located elsewhere.

#### *Historic Environment Issues*

- English Heritage objects to this proposal because of the unacceptable adverse impacts it will have on the nationally designated assets of Garendon Park (Grade II registered park and garden, a scheduled monument, and 14 listed buildings including the Grade I Triumphal Arch and Grade II\* Temple of Venus). The proposed road will cut directly through the registered park, and will adversely affect the setting of other designated assets. Despite the fragmentation caused by the M1 motorway and development to the east and north-east, there is still an open rural prospect to the west and north of the Park which should be retained. If development went ahead, it would no longer be parkland in a rural setting.
- The historic park and garden, of local and national importance, would be subject to unprecedented volumes of traffic and the proposal will change its landscape setting forever.
- The parkland is a very historical area and boasts many unique features, such as the three follies. These will be vandalised if they are not protected.
- The section between Oxley Gutter and Bailey's Plantation contains ancient boundary hedges and the medieval Stonebow Bridge, which makes it as historically important as any other part of the estate.
- Garendon Park will prove too small an area to maintain an identity as a country park. It is likely to become a site for anti-social behaviour and vandalism.
- A distinction should not be made between Garendon Park and Garendon Estate.
- Linking the A6 to the A512 would be environmentally damaging to a sensitive area. The proposed Eastern Distributor Road would also be environmentally damaging (threat to

Site of Special Scientific Interest, flood plain, intrusion into rural area), and would only encourage inward commuting in private vehicles.

#### *Settlement Identity Issues*

- The proposal is at odds with the objective to 'respect the environment' and 'the character of towns and villages'. It would instantly destroy the identity of Shepshed and Hathern with its charm, identity, character and rural setting. Hathern would be linked to Shepshed, Shepshed with Dishley, Dishley with Hathern, a dreary Loughborough extension with all the problems of inner city estates.
- This will create a sense of urban sprawl. It already feels like there is no gap between Loughborough and Hathern along the A6.
- The proposal is contrary to advice contained within the Regional Plan objective 'To minimise the impact of development on the coalescence of settlements'.
- This consultation has not been informed by the proposed development strategy, since the preferred option will swallow up Hathern and Shepshed into an urbanised Greater Loughborough resulting in a complete loss of their identity.
- The proposal is outrageously massive given its proximity to Hathern and Shepshed, these villages will be adversely affected and overwhelmed by the pressures of additional development in this location.
- Regional plans for East Midland's development has taken away the identity of the communities in this area, referring to it as the three cities area, i.e. nothing more than a space between Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. Loss of identity like this will reduce the sense of pride of Charnwood people in their area.

#### *Employment and Regeneration Issues*

- As a proposal this site would add nothing to the regeneration of Shepshed, Hathern and Loughborough.
- The site is wrongly sited to assist the regeneration of the most deprived communities in Loughborough.
- The people who will live in this area will not have local jobs so will commute to bigger cities for work by car and contributing nothing to the local towns. 3,500 homes would require at least 7,000 jobs and suspect this will not be provided.
- It is unclear how the proposal will contribute to the west Loughborough priority neighbourhood, which is affected by low education, skills, and employment levels. The strategy claims that development will assist health and well being by improving access to Garendon Historic Park, but this would seem to be low down on the list of priorities. It also claims that residents may be able to access jobs in the Science Park, but it's unlikely to draw many workers from deprived areas. The proposal does not include a secondary school that could help residents progress into further education and university. We presume that existing schools are performing poorly as the area suffers from low education levels.
- Building houses, shops and small industrial units when there are so many houses, flats and shops in Shepshed and Loughborough that are empty seems ludicrous and could lead to houses, shops etc staying empty.
- Other than the proposed Science Park there is no significant means of employment around Hathern, therefore this proposal is not in line with the government's strategy of encouraging people out of their cars and onto public transport or work locally. All these residents would have to travel for work.

### *Access to Services & Infrastructure Issues*

- The proposal is some distance from the town centre and its associated services and facilities, employment and railway station. The nearest dwellings would be 3.5km from Loughborough town centre and 4km from the railway station, as the crow flies. Walking and cycling distances would be significantly greater. It will not encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling. Even with a small amount of retail, the nearest shopping facility for many will be Shepshed, it is already clear that Shepshed does not have the infrastructure in place to cope with an increase in housing or population.
- The links to the centre of town are too long to make these developments part of town, they are likely to become a soulless community.
- It will require significant infrastructure.
- Merging with Shepshed will affect its centre. Service and trade would naturally go to Loughborough. Shepshed serves villages such as Belton, Griffydam and Osgathorpe. If these services are lost it will increase congestion.
- Despite its size it would not deliver the level of community and social facilities necessary to make it self sufficient.
- The preferred option is of insufficient scale to meet the Regional Spatial Strategy's definition of a 'sustainable urban extension'. As such it will not deliver the level of community and social facilities necessary to make it self-sufficient.
- It is questioned if the proposal is based on sound evidence, is viable and if there is private sector funding to provide facilities and infrastructure required. The promoters submitted reports in October 2007 based on a proposal for 1,800 homes but there are no more recent reports looking at an enlarged proposal.
- The presence of Garendon Park prevents new housing from being truly integrated into the existing urban area, which may discourage residents from accessing services such as schools and health care in existing neighbourhoods.
- The infrastructure will not cope with all the extra housing concentrated in this area. Shepshed's fire station is already under threat of closure and the police service in the area has already diminished.
- It will be a new substantial village not an extension of Loughborough, there is no direct road into the town and it is further out than Thorpe Acre, which has a 'semi-detached' relationship with the town.
- Hathern Primary School raised concerns about whether their village primary school would be 'at risk' of closure if two new schools are built in the vicinity, highlighting that the school and the attached Community Centre are an important focal point of the community and if either were to close the impact upon the village would be significant and detrimental. It would also increase traffic as 100+ pupils are transported to the new schools, raising levels of pollution. Travel from Hathern for our pupils would be across an already busy A6, increasing the probability of accidents and even fatalities.
- This location has no cultural, landscape or economic context, placed near the motorway without a proper vibrant centre, it will feel a 'cold' sort of place, somewhere to exist and meet basic need not a real destination place to thrive.
- The proposals will lead to overcrowding.
- Need to insist that any development includes a requirement for space for a church. Many churches would be willing to make their main hall a multi-use sports hall that can be used for community sports and social purposes.

### *Other Issues*

- The Partial Review of Regional Plan has commenced and it is possible that there will be a significant increase in housing in Leicestershire to 2031. The proposal in this context is inflexible, as it does not provide for long-term further expansion.
- There will be high costs of site preparation for the building of houses and access roads on flood plains.
- This will reduce people's quality of life in the area, taking away an unspoilt haven and give people a sense of being closed in.
- We need affordable homes for our own townsfolk and not flats that are only for students use.
- The enclosed form of the area would not lend itself to further extension.

A number of respondents opposing the direction for growth made a case for one of the alternative options, these comments are summarised below:

- Only development to the east can deliver the package of transport measures identified by the County Council, including an eastern bypass for the town and utilise the train station. The approved inner relief road will help contribute towards this distributor road and provide much needed infrastructure to support the Wolds villages. This would take the pressure off commuter routes and relieve town centre congestion. Considerable improvements have been made recently near the railway station and there is scope for public access to the water meadow for recreation, regeneration of east Loughborough and new secondary school so that the claimed separation from Loughborough could be less significant. This area would create a new community and would also be best placed to benefit from the renewable energy resources. The environmental impacts on the Soar Valley should not be underestimated but could be reduced with good design. The challenge will be to overcome the considerable constraints of flood risk, transport linkages and impact on biodiversity and high quality agricultural land. East Loughborough also has better potential for further expansion.
- More appropriate sites exist east or southeast, where there are closer links to priority neighbourhoods. Although there are priority neighbourhoods to the west there is significant separation typified by owner-occupied housing.
- Using land in Charnwood Forest area or Wolds area would offer the ability to start from scratch, rather than add to an already considerably congested area.
- The Wolds area is poorly served in terms of public transport, affordable housing, shopping facilities and schools, and could benefit from some attention. It would be a good use of the former Wymeswold airfield, removing an unattractive brownfield site and avoid the use of good agricultural land, links could be made with Prestwold Park and the poor the entry into Loughborough from the A60 which regularly floods could be improved. The County Council is proposing to build a distributor road and residents would be able to use the A46 for Leicester. This option provides opportunity to alleviate traffic problems, offering the chance of Light Rapid Transit connection via GCR and Loughborough Station/Town Centre, avoiding congestion and with a direct link to Epinal way by widening unused cycle ways. Bus routes could be established to accommodate changes in travel patterns to the Loughborough and Parkway Stations. Road improvements could be made to the A6004 and between Hathern and Rempston and Burton-on-the-Wolds to Six Hills to improve access to the airfield without any new roads.

- Land to the north west of Shepshed could contribute to an alternative solution which does not result in the loss of green wedge. This would provide a seamless continuation of the settlement into relatively unconstrained land. The area is well connected in terms of public transport provision.
- Land north west of Oakley Road, Shepshed provides an alternative which is highly sustainable for new housing on the perimeter of Shepshed which would provide a seamless continuation of the built up area of the adjacent settlement and is not in a green wedge. The site lies adjacent to a development site which is subject of a planning application for golf and hotel development and is well connected in terms of public transport provision. It could form part of a wider allocation for housing north and west of the town. It is considered the site meets the aspirations of Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing) and Planning Policy Statement 13 (Transport) and would make a valuable contribution towards the sustainable growth of Shepshed.
- An alternative approach would be to have a second extension to the southwest of Loughborough in the area known as “Nanpantan Grange”. This would be of a similar size i.e. approximately 3000 dwellings with associated infrastructure including extensive green spaces. The land to the west requires extensive strategic infrastructure, including roads through the extensive floodplain and a number of major concerns remain about the proposal. The Council needs to consider the ability of the proposed development to deliver within the time frame. The Regional Plan requirements are the minimum that need to be achieved so overprovision might be appropriate.
- This proposal bolts directly onto the urban area, giving the greatest opportunity for reducing the need to travel, with up to five accesses proposed to link directly into existing residential areas.
- It is proposed that land to the south-east of Loughborough in the vicinity of the A6 Loughborough Road and A6004 Ling Road roundabout better accords with the Government’s objectives to create sustainable communities. It could accommodate 1500 – 2000 dwellings. The land is well related to the A6 and A6004 which provides access into Loughborough and Leicester and avoids the need for costly and time-consuming new strategic links. The nearest dwellings would be 1.3km from the railway station: a distance that can be cycled in 5 minutes and walked in 15 minutes. Development would be capable of integrating successfully into the existing urban area. This would benefit the east of Loughborough Priority Neighbourhood through the provision of a new market and affordable housing and infrastructure such as employment, schools, health care, and better public transport.
- A compromise solution would be to reduce development west of Loughborough to increase the gap from the M1 motorway reducing noise and air pollution, the southern part being used for sports and leisure. Development should be moved further north abutting Shepshed road, annexed to Hathern, which, as it is serviced by secondary schools in Loughborough, should be regarded as part of the sub-regional centre. Wymeswold should be developed into a properly planned residential and industrial community. Land west of Shepshed could then accommodate 1,000 dwellings without a significant impact on Charnwood Forest.
- Other sites are available at the edge of Loughborough, which would have less environmental damage, which when used in combination would not require the extensive road development required by the proposed approach.

- The proposal is not necessarily needed given other available options i.e. greater allocation to the service centres, other smaller options with less adverse impact and greater use of brownfield sites.
- The proposed development is not actually big enough to achieve the critical mass, smaller developments should be added to the areas South of Loughborough that would welcome such additions, as well perhaps a small extension to the town to the west, north of the A512 opposite the University.
- Why not consider using all of Garendon Park for this development instead of developing so close to Hathern. It has never been possible to access the park and the area proposed for development is extremely picturesque.
- The proposal should be reduced and south Loughborough at Woodthorpe should be the focus of development. This meets the assessing factors and will spread the traffic out, enhancing access to services and jobs. It also means the development will be close to two areas of deprived households. This would allow the character of the area west of the town to be maintained. Whilst cost is very important, quality of life for those already living in the Loughborough is as well.
- There are empty homes available in Leicester, Derby and Nottingham which should be made habitable and reduce the need for greenfield development.

A number of respondents raised concerns about whether the process has been adequate, these are summarised below:

- The proposal is not supported by a sufficiently robust and credible evidence base, particularly on transport and fails to demonstrate that the proposals represent the most appropriate strategy compared with reasonable alternatives.
- There are serious weaknesses with the sustainability appraisal which sought to assess 4,875 dwellings, failing to take account of the Regional Plan Proposed Changes. It does not consider the specific proposals presented by the promoters of east Loughborough as one of the reasonable alternatives, contrary to Planning Policy Statement 12. The appraisal of this option is not therefore an accurate assessment. An assessment undertaken by the promoters of the east Loughborough option demonstrates that the east represents the most appropriate solution and highlights inconsistencies in the Council's assessment, which calls into question the robustness of the conclusions.
- The consultation exercise is not about choice, but to agree the planner's option.
- Why is it a 'must' in the provision of these sites? What will happen if they are not built?
- This option is being pushed as the preferred option without due, clear and objective evaluation of other sites, particularly brownfield sites.
- This is the easy option where the Council gets all its problems solved in one hit.
- The whole process seems focused on the west of Loughborough despite detailed plans for Wymeswold Airfield and Cotes.
- The Council has undervalued the agricultural, landscape, biodiversity and recreational value of the Garendon Estate land in its Sustainability Appraisal. This vital green space that is used and enjoyed by local residents would be wiped away if the proposed development goes ahead.
- This land is designated as green wedge and the green infrastructure map indicates that this is also a broad area of diversity. There is no reference in the examination of this option to its implications for these designations.

- When looking at the issue of settlement identity in the Sustainability Appraisal, it is clear that the west of Loughborough option has been treated differently to other alternatives. There is inconsistency and bias and there is suggestion of pre-determination of this option as the preferred option.
- The proposed strategy states that using brownfield sites for development is a priority therefore safeguarding greenfield sites, which are only used if no brownfield sites are available. The term 'preferred option' in relation to the Garendon Estate land is not understood.
- The selection of appropriate locations needs to be based on an understanding of the key local issues and strategic priorities and ability to deliver infrastructure. The proposal does not adequately address the key issues for Loughborough relating to the inadequacy of the transport network, regeneration priorities in east Loughborough and local priorities to safeguard settlement identity.
- The proposal being made is based on the perceived path of least resistance in terms of objectors.
- The Council has not undertaken a sufficiently rigorous review of all potential options. The earliest iterations of the strategy should identify and assess all potential growth options, but this has been restricted to broad and imprecise description of the key benefits and constraints of each compass direction.
- Growth options appear to have been assessed without a Landscape Character Assessment to determine whether areas are capable of accommodating growth.
- A decision appears to have been already made, with no attempt to actually justify the decisions presented. In general, the existing proposals seem to lack imagination. If it has to happen it must be possible to incorporate new ideas and real benefits for the future.
- The main road proposals were not drawn to scale and the type and size of carriageway did not appear to be known.
- In the current economic climate how can I be assured that I will not be living for years next to an incomplete building site? Who will be able to afford to buy these homes?
- There is very little evidence relating to deliverability. Who owns the land? Has it been promoted for development? What is the anticipated timescale for delivery?
- The location and scale of development planned for Charnwood needs to be considered in connection with the scale and location of development planned for north west Leicestershire. The combination of development in both of these areas makes both the transport situation and likely change in our living environment and quality of life frightening.
- The Council rejects the idea of an eastern distributor relief road on the grounds of impact on biodiversity, especially on the river corridor. This judgment takes no account of mitigating measures which are available in the design and routing of the proposal. When it comes to the Garendon area, miraculously, mitigation becomes available. This demonstrates a complete lack of balance and impartiality in the proposals.

There were also a number of general comments made including concerns about whether the housing numbers are appropriate, these are summarise below:

- Should we be planning this development given the economic future, the difficulties obtaining mortgages and considering that builders are abandoning projects as houses are not selling? Properties on Pear Tree Lane remain unsold.

- Reducing immigration would reduce the need for these homes. Will all these houses be necessary when many Europeans are now returning home?
- Money spent on this development could be used to improve amenities in Loughborough and Shepshed, which need investment for the future.
- There are lots of houses that are and will be empty due to repossession and by 2012 the University want to house the majority of students on campus, thus leaving a lot of spare property, these could be used to house people.
- When the university can finally house all of its student population within the campus, there will be a large number of houses available in the area.

Respondents that agreed that the west of Loughborough represents the best location for development or did not raise an objection made the following comments:

- The Environment Agency welcomes the decision to allocate the Sustainable Urban Extension sites in areas of lower flood risk, away from the River Soar and Wreak Corridors.
- GOEM supports the approach of road improvements being a last resort and notes that the transport modelling carried out by MVA has taken this approach, in contrast to the earlier evidence provided by Leicestershire County Council. Never-the-less, there is scope to include more information on what walking, cycling, and public transport measures will be sought. In addition, alternatives to an A512-A6 link road through Garendon Park must be thoroughly examined as such a road is most likely to harm the registered historic park and possibly the setting of some of its listed structures.
- The National Trust, subject to impact of development on Garendon Park and its wider setting, do not object to the general approach or the location of proposal.
- Any proposals for a public park must be informed by a full recognition and understanding of the registered historic park, its setting, its aesthetic suitability and its physical capacity to absorb change. There is scope for the Park to be restored to a historic green space but with relatively low impact and with few modern intrusions with a combination of public and private funding.
- The selection of this option is a sound proposal and the assembled evidence base and the comparative assessment of alternative locations supports it.
- The area is already built up with the motorway and development either side.
- The area is not liable to the scale of flooding seen in the Soar Valley.
- The existing land ridge forms a natural boundary and natural separation between this development and Hathern.
- The proposal avoids incursion into sensitive areas such as Soar Valley and Charnwood Forest.
- The proposal allows restoration of the historic Garendon Park and brings this area into use as a district park available for public use.
- The proposal maintains, through planned green infrastructure, the separate identities of Hathern and Shepshed from the main urban area.
- The proximity of Charnwood Forest means there is a recreational amenity for development on this side of the borough.
- There are opportunities for walking/cycling and use of the public transport network to access town amenities.

- There is potential to regenerate the western side of Loughborough and Shepshed.
- The proposal will be close to the hospital, which is likely to house the walk in centre in future years.
- It logically extends the town in a sustainable manner with good communication options. The existing major road network of the A512/M1/A6 provides the best opportunity to use transportation strategies to reduce car usage and it is well related to existing public transport routes that can be extended.
- The promoters of this proposal suggest that criticisms of the location in terms of transportation implications are not well founded. The assessment of the merits of the proposal must attach weight to the scope for internalisation of trips, the potential for modal shift away from car dependency, and the implications of deliverable new road and public transport infrastructure.
- The proposals will provide a new link road between the A512 and the A6, with a further link to Hathern Road that will be fully funded by the development. These links will provide connections to existing and proposed employment sites, including the Science Park, Dishley, Shepshed, and the M1 motorway.
- That the road infrastructure would need to cross land at risk of flooding is not necessarily an issue or a disadvantage, it may be possible to come up with an appropriate design for the road to avoid and flood risk.
- Whatever the preferred direction of growth, a key issue is the provision of major new infrastructure for private and public transport. For example a bypass northwest of Loughborough around Hathern or to the east, a bypass for Cotes, Hoton, Prestwold, Burton, and Wymeswold as well as a complete Eastern Distributor road around Loughborough.
- This is the least worst option. There are no merits in a standalone settlement east of Loughborough since this is not a sustainable urban extension.
- This proposal will be a part of Loughborough and therefore have an identity rather than needing to establish one which would be a problem for east of Loughborough or Wymeswold Airfield, which would be freestanding and separate from Loughborough creating problems of identity and communications, building into an established countryside. This will create the need for massive road infrastructure, which may not be economically feasible or practical. Developing the east side of Loughborough is a non-starter, as these sites cannot fulfil the criteria set out in the objectives.
- Potential for longer term additional development in a particular direction should not be used as a reason to choose a location for growth that is otherwise shown to be unsuitable in other respects. There should be flexibility in the Core Strategy to consider the options for longer term needs but not necessarily prescription of the location for future development beyond the plan period.
- This appears to be the only option that is compatible with the premise that Loughborough and Shepshed should function together as an urban system.
- Development will have less impact on the Town Centre.
- Need to ensure the historic park is looked after in a proper manner.
- The promoters of the proposal state that this proposal provides a highly sustainable location for delivering balanced housing growth associated with the substantial existing and committed employment opportunities at Loughborough (notably at Dishley Grange) to the north, and the proposed extended Science Park to the south.

- It is close to potential areas of employment such as the University/Science Park.
- The Science Park will increase the visitor numbers to Loughborough and encourage the development to become a thriving extension of the towns of Loughborough and Shepshed.
- It may assist some of their less affluent areas of Shepshed with the introduction of new businesses.
- This will be great for local jobs and house values and a provide a much needed renovation to this side of town.
- Bus and Cycle lanes could easily be installed on the A512.
- Need to make the bypass of A512 to Hathern with direct access without kinks.
- There are two large secondary schools close by, which could be expanded.
- Its close to the M1 motorway.
- There is easy access to healthcare, employment, leisure services and retail.
- The promoters state that the proposal is capable of providing a good range of services and facilities including new employment, primary schools, local shopping, and community space. Land can also be identified for a renewable energy facility linked with the employment area within the development.
- The pattern of development strikes general accordance with the approach to development form set out in the Draft Regional Plan.
- This provides a fantastic opportunity of a 250 acre park facility to provide a tremendous leisure amenity, in perpetuity for all the local residents. Garendon Park has the potential to be a 'gateway' to the National Forest.
- The promoters state that the proposal is considered deliverable at the proposed scale over the plan period. The site has been assembled and can be phased to allow delivery of dwellings off the A6 as a first release, in parallel with the phased construction of the roads, public transport routes, social infrastructure, and restoration of the historic Garendon Park as part of the wider green infrastructure. They highlight that they are house-builders who are active in this area with considerable knowledge of the local housing market. The infrastructure associated with the development can be funded through the development.
- Whilst the proposal is supported it should not preclude other development of an appropriate type and scale coming forward on alternative sites, particularly previously developed land to complement growth at Loughborough.

*Question 4.11: Do you agree the future growth of Leicester should be focused east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton?*

*316 respondents: 11 comment, 22 support, 283 object*

The vast majority of respondents did not agree that development should be focused east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton. The key concerns raised related to the increase in traffic and pollution, the loss of open countryside and the impact on people's quality of life in this area, the unfair impact of such a large development on one community, the impact on the identity of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe and concerns about urban sprawl of Leicester into Charnwood. A number of respondents suggested alternative approaches to accommodating growth, many highlighting land north of Birstall or Glenfield. A summary of the comments is set out below.

The respondents that disagreed that future growth should be focused east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton raised the following issues:

*Transport Issues*

- The present road network including the Thurmaston Retail Park and Asda roundabout, Humberstone Lane, Troon Way, Hamilton Way, Thurmaston Boulevard, Barkby Thorpe Lane, Barkbythorpe Road and Colby Drive cannot cope now. The infrastructure has been stretched by the development of Hamilton, ASDA and new shopping centre. 5000 new homes would generate a huge increase in traffic and increase the problem of congestion massively, causing serious health and safety issues.
- ASDA and Thurmaston Shopping Centre will attract a large number of cars from any new development. Even if shops are built within the new development they will have to compete with not only ASDA but Tesco at Hamilton and Aldi, Somerfield's and the Co-op at Syston. The existing road system is very difficult to improve and will never cope with the additional traffic as today shopping is designed to attract customers with cars.
- Access to this proposed site would be on roads that are totally inadequate for such a large development, particularly lorries servicing any industry that would be sited in what is a predominantly residential area.
- The implication that the new residents will use existing transport is nonsensical in light of current usage. People do not travel by public transport to areas outside their immediate area because it doesn't exist. There is no train station and buses would have to run through Barkby/Barkby Thorpe or a new road built.
- The statement regarding transport is pie in the sky as the only transport service that would be profitable and viable are routes into the city. Thurmaston people already have a problem in getting into Loughborough or from east to west. There is no way a bus company would run services linking this new proposed extension with the rest of the village or even Syston. It is all very well to say that cycle lanes and footpaths would be created, but it isn't practical in this day and age to think people will not want to go further afield for work and shopping.
- There is no information regarding public transport, the only route appears to be into the city of Leicester and not connecting to Thurmaston where all the facilities are i.e. schools, doctors, dentist etc. There is currently no public transport access from Colby Drive to ASDA, Thurmaston shopping centre, Tesco in Hamilton, Syston or Melton Mowbray, this needs to be considered.
- There is a lack of suitable roads to support this proposal so there would be a need for major roads development. Thurmaston is poorly served with arterial roads compared to other options. The Syston bypass is fundamentally flawed as traffic loops back into a choked Melton Road via Barkby Lane and past Roundhill College. Development should be aligned with established road networks that can handle the traffic movements to mitigate congestion and air pollution.
- If residents are going to be using existing infrastructure for travel into Leicester, this will create even more traffic travelling into Syston for the railway station.
- New residents will inevitably want to shop at ASDA and the Thurmaston shopping centre and this area is already congested and a serious safety issue for the children, parents and staff of Bishop Ellis Primary School.
- Any proposed new connecting roads will have to go through residential areas creating massive pollution problems.

- The volume of traffic through Barkby and Barkby Thorpe continues to be at an unacceptable level, these small country roads are used as rat runs to short cut between the A47 and A46 and Melton via the Rearsby bypass. This is despite the traffic calming measures implemented recently and shows there is no way of ensuring people use the roads the planners intend them to, so no reliance can be put on promises to deal with traffic. There will be severe traffic congestion.
- Perhaps there should be a tramway, say part of the route from Pennbury.
- It is implied that new residents will only use road that go into Leicester and will not use routes to the motorway, this is unrealistic.
- The majority of traffic will go into the city during the week but what will happen at the weekend?
- The map provided excludes the road which currently links Barkby Thorpe Lane and Barkby Lane. This would create an obvious rat run from the proposed development to Syston, the service centre, according to your map.
- It is not a good idea to open up of Colby Drive. Colby Drive, Hillrise and the Roundway have already become a rat run and this will unacceptably increase traffic in the area, there are a large number of bungalows in this area and high volumes of traffic would be hazardous for the elderly as well as for children that walk to school under Churchill Road rail bridge. This bridge cannot be widened without seriously affecting the mainline trains to the north. At present, the footway is barely wide enough for a pushchair and is a dangerous hazard.
- Humberstone Lane is already suffering from heavy traffic, it is abused by overweight vehicles and speeding drivers. This proposal will inevitably significantly increase the volume of traffic using Humberstone Lane as it is a direct route from Thurmaston and Rushey Mead to Hamilton and the East of the city.
- The South Charnwood Transport Assessments weaken the case for the proposal. The assessments makes it clear that traffic congestion is likely to increase and could be running at 24% more, despite new roads and bus and train options. At the same time the Infrastructure Assessment warns that journeys out of new development are likely to be higher than first thought. The mitigation measures for 2,500 dwelling at Anstey projected real improvements of 18%. To keep traffic levels down a bus corridor and a half-hour rail service to Leicester are proposed but not fully costed or checked with the city and rail authorities.
- The Transport Assessments state that the aim would be to reduce traffic flows through Barkby Thorpe, but the current use of the village roads as 'rat run' by drivers heading for Leicester, Hamilton Tesco, Scraftoft, the A47 and via Stoughton to the A6 gets no mention. Traffic will inevitably increase with 15,000 extra people and so there is no prospect of reduced flows on this route until this is addressed. The County Council has insisted on traffic calming in Barkby Thorpe, which means large lorries get stuck on the narrow stretch of road.
- Developers will start building before all the infrastructure is in place, leaving local residents with noise, traffic and pollution for months or years. The town and local area will become gridlocked and noisy while new main roads are waited for.
- ASDA roundabout in Thurmaston and the A46 roundabout onto the Leicester western bypass have both been subjected to being reconstructed three times and still have major problems. How many more times? At what cost?

- Thurmaston already hosts large numbers of incoming workers from surrounding areas, to increase traffic is irresponsible and an injustice to Thurmaston residents.
- Queniborough is a rat run for people living in Thurmaston so there would need to be a bypass for Queniborough with this extra traffic, it should contain large areas of forest planting to offset the additional greenhouse gases from traffic.
- Government figures for road movements per household, which historically is eight movements per day, would generate traffic movements of 40,000 not including traffic from the new industrial site which will need roads capable of carrying articulated lorries. On these grounds this scheme should be rejected. For the Council to have no outline plan or road network is incredibly naive and gives no basis for a considered judgement.
- Employment land would be more suitable to a brown belt area with road infrastructure already in place.
- Roads will need careful thought through to avoid problems like those at ASDA.
- In the autumn the fields are saturated so with extra concrete Barkby would be awash constantly and therefore allow no access to the Rearsby bypass.
- Humberstone Lane is already too busy and this will make it worse. During busy times it takes 20-30 minutes to cross. It is dangerous for children crossing to get to and from school and for elderly people who cannot hurry across.

*Environmental and Historical Environment Issues*

- Barkby and Barkby Thorpe have conservation areas and when renovating and extending buildings plans are vigorously examined and altered. This all now seems to be dismissed. Will these villages remain in a conservation area?
- The proposal will add to the significant air quality problems in Syston with nitrogen dioxide levels way beyond the maximum permitted.
- The proposal will damage fauna and flora of which there is great diversity. There would be a loss of wildlife including pheasants, foxes, hedgehogs, moles, hares, rabbits, badgers, bats, barn owls, squirrels, sparrow hawks, field mice, fieldfares, thrushes, woodpeakers, god crests, goldfinches, yellow hammers, blackbirds, sparrows, plovers, skylarks and many species of bird and a loss of habitats including hedgerows, ponds and trees.
- How can Watermead Park survive when it is becoming an isolated island with no access for animals and birds to make their way in and out of it? Geese, swans, herons, flocks of crows regularly fly over to access fields to feed in this location.
- New roads, more traffic, more traffic calming measures, more traffic lights, more of stop/start traffic will certainly not reduce the effect of greenhouse gases.
- Air, noise and light pollution. Pollution levels in this area are already massive. Particularly concerned about health problems for existing and new residents particularly for children.
- Plants and trees are a natural way to get rid of CO<sub>2</sub> so to destroy fields would be a bad thing for the area.
- A unique area of outstanding natural beauty would be lost forever.
- Residents are still coming to terms with the loss of Rushey Fields and we have of course now lost the sky larks which used to nest near there.
- Thurmaston does not have a lot of green area for a place of its size and these fields are our green lungs.

- We do not understand how destroying open countryside and wildlife habitat can be 'sustainable'. We also understand. The only way for this to be carbon neutral is to leave things as they are.
- The proposal will damage the countryside and lead to the loss of an area of outstanding beauty and result in a loss of tourism.
- Landscape features such as historic Abbots Pond and Roman remains will be lost to future generations.
- This proposal will remove footpaths and mean the loss of green space enjoyed by residents. Building on this green space will deny the community safe walking in the countryside away from noise and traffic, reducing people's quality of life.
- The next generation will have to travel out of the area to see any wildlife in its natural habitat, increasing the use of cars and the environmental impact.
- Should be against building on good agricultural land, we currently import food which means that rather than helping the rest of the world with its food shortages we are actually making the problems worse.
- The land is stated as grade ii and iii quality as if this was poor land. The vast majority of farmland in this country is grade ii and iii and grows 80% of the crops this country produces. This land is, in fact, prime agricultural land and the Leicestershire Structure Plan says that this type of land should not be built on. When there is a forecast food shortage we should preserve our arable land, to counteract the likely reduction in productivity as the cost of fertilizers rise and reduce food miles and the need to import food.
- When we are told that Britain should become more self-sufficient in food and green energy, why concrete over so many acres of fine agricultural land? This proposal will be adding to climate change.
- As the document states the area is a natural bowl, which means water drains into it. From early Autumn until Spring the low lying areas are completely sodden, having a natural clay base. 'Sustainable drainage systems' cannot deal with this, there would need to be significant pumping works to deal with this proposal. The majority of the water from the proposed development drains via a small dyke through a small culvert under the railways embankment (the railway being an effective dam) sudden extreme weather will certainly cause flooding in the Silverdale drive area of the village. We already have a bridge on Churchill Road which often floods.
- Since the Hamilton development flooding has significantly increased. A full scale survey needs to assess whether this proposal is viable.
- There are two potential flood areas published by the environmental agency, one extends from the old village of Hamilton into Thurmaston and the other extends from Barkby to the railway line near Barkby lodge. A document from the environment agency discusses the problem of runoff from hard paving and roofing causing flash flooding and flooding downstream in this case the river Soar, which already floods quickly at times of heavy rain. The Environment Agency promote sustainable drainage systems (SUDS), but they seems expensive, complicated and will reduce the area of land available for building.
- Residents will lose the views of the beautiful countryside towards Barkby from Thurmaston and enjoy the peace and quiet.
- There is an ancient temple buried somewhere on this land. This site should be discovered and explored, not buried under tons of concrete.

- This development would signify to all who fall within the area of Charnwood Council influence that the Council does not support any green issues and will plough up prime agricultural land for the sake of expediency.
- At present, many villagers within Barkby and Barkby Thorpe carry out tasks which, strictly, fall under the remit of the Council. If this development goes ahead, no-one will take the time or have sufficient pride in their home environment to clear overgrown paths, clear out rubbish-infested waterways etc.
- We would ask you to consider that as an absolute minimum the green wedge must be maintained between the rear of Colby Drive and the proposed road.

#### *Settlement Identity Issues*

- It is unfair for Thurmaston to take all this development, 50% of the balance to be found from the Regional Plan figures, it would increase the local population by approximately 50%. This will link Thurmaston with Hamilton. Thurmaston has already taken its fair share of development including the Watermead development on Sandiacre Drive, Rushey Mead and Hamilton.
- Thurmaston is already divided by a bypass, a Thurmaston/Hamilton development will split the village of Thurmaston even more, taking the houses beyond the railway line into the new development and lose its identity.
- If this goes ahead it is inevitable in time Thurmaston will be regarded as a part of Leicester losing its identity as a village.
- Thurmaston has been expanded, had a dual carriageway build through the middle of it and been totally ruined. It used to be a nice place to live with a proper small village community spirit until building and development took place. It is now unrecognizable and now the same will be done to Barkby and Barkby Thorpe.
- There is a great community spirit in Thurmaston and separate identity. This will be lost forever for future generations. Surely the ideal of 'green wedges' is to create a rural and open appearance separating local settlements allowing each village to maintain their own identities. It would be difficult to maintain the community spirit if the population size were to increase further.
- The consultation booklet states that "This proposal will need to take account of the separate identities of Syston, Barkby and Barkby Thorpe and the deserted medieval village at Hamilton, which are nearby." By this statement it appears that the Council considers the separate identity of Thurmaston to be unimportant.
- There will be subsequent in-fill of further new builds, and like so many lost rural villages in the Borough, Barkby and Barkby Thorpe will become just a small hamlet of old houses surrounded by a large soulless estate.
- Any separation of villages from the town will be compromised by the degradation of the intervening land and visual impact of development only 200 metres away.
- The development envisaged, said to be approximately the size of Shepshed, is not confined to low lying land, it will climb ridges to within 200m of Barkby Thorpe obliterating the identity of Barkby Thorpe and the residents of isolated houses along Barkby Thorpe Lane; and seriously compromise that of Barkby, Beeby and the Hamilton deserted medieval village. Barkby and Barkby Thorpe are conservation villages and preserved by a number of grade II listings on its buildings and first mentioned in the Domesday Book. The identity of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe are entirely formed by their working farms, the surrounding agricultural land is an integral part of these villages. The 200 metre separation contradicts the Structure Plan which states: "development

will be permitted only where it would not result in a material reduction in the degree of separation between the neighbouring built-up areas." Barkby Thorpe is a thriving and special village with its own church, cricket club, school and village hall that will be swamped.

- The properties on Barkby Lane, within the parish boundary, which would be dissected from the rest of the village by the a proposed bypass are not shown in the consultation document and not been considered in this process.
- This will add further to the urban sprawl. Having seen Syston creeping along Barkby Road in an easterly direction over the past few years, there will be too much temptation for further building in this area, Syston will lose its identity and will become one sprawling mass of houses and roads.
- The area has already had its fair share of urban development. Major developments in Hamilton, Barkby Thorpe Road and Syston have already encroached on the rural nature of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe, further building will alter beyond recognition the nature of the two rural communities.
- Barkby Thorpe's open space, wildlife, heritage, agricultural land, small village community seem less precious than others. This area is far more rural than many of the other options and yet because the area is on the city boundary this area is seen as less sensitive to development than already urbanized parishes.
- The road network that will be created to service this development has implications far beyond the area for development, it will impact hugely on Syston, Queniborough, Beeby Barkby, Barkby Thorpe and Hamilton this part of East Leicestershire is largely unchanged and the affect of this development will mean the loss of countryside to the building of roads far in excess of just the area outlined in the strategy document.
- This is a beautiful part of the city with open countryside that will be lost if ugly houses and busy roads are built all over it. We need to save our wonderful local town of Thurmaston, before it ends up like Hamilton with no centre, no heart, no community, just a Tesco's and a lot of rubbish.
- Consideration should not just focus on the village buildings but also the land around them which has supported people living here for at least two millennia or more. Need to consider the impact on the livelihoods of those families of farmers and farm workers who work the agricultural land, the five working farms in Barkby Thorpe and Hamilton Ground. The villages of Barkby Thorpe and Barkby are centred on working farms and to lose this will permanently change their identity, which has only been lightly touched by change and progress.
- To build a development of this size would create a township the size of Syston, and turn Thurmaston into an annexe of Leicester.
- No objection to more housing per se at Thurmaston, but object to 5,000 dwellings doubling the settlement size and the 2,000 of which would be social housing. The proposals will unbalance the community.

#### *Infrastructure and Social Impacts*

- We rely on this area for easy access to the leisure and health benefits of the countryside but this proposal will place all these amenities out of easy reach.
- This will require more shops, schools, medical centres, religious places and so on.
- Local facilities and transport amenities are already overstretched. Medical services, NHS dentists, police resources and schools that are already full to breaking point.

Services such as electricity, gas, lighting will not support such a large development. New people will need new infrastructure.

- By building on this land Charnwood Borough Council would prevent many residents from taking regular exercise in a beautiful unspoilt countryside area.
- Despite reassurance that new infrastructure would be forthcoming, the Council are taking legal action against the ASDA because the sporting facilities promised. Therefore the lack of guarantee for the infrastructure for the development raises very serious doubts in our minds about the viability of your proposed plans.
- This proposal will drain existing resources for years to come: new schooling facilities would need to be built and from experience will be last thing to be completed putting additional pressure on existing facilities for a number of years. Already the village school in Barkby is oversubscribed. Developers promise facilities and then nothing happens. We are still waiting in Thurmaston for the football pitches near ASDA.
- This will create an intolerable situation unless new schools, industrial areas, leisure areas, health facilities are built first.
- In relation to the proposed new schools, if the current education facility for primary children in Hamilton is anything to go by, Barkby School will be bombarded by yet more disgruntled parents, already nearly 10% of the pupils come from the current development and many more on the waiting list.
- People moved into this area to be nearer the countryside not to be in a town with traffic congestion, more pollution, higher crime rates, higher taxed. We need to keep the countryside alive for future generations.
- If there is more industry in Thurmaston surely the council tax will go up.
- Local families who have farmed this area for generations will lose their livelihood. This not only affects the farmers that work the land and animals but has a knock on effect on other industries. The less we produce in this country, the less processing facilities are needed.
- The sewer systems of Thurmaston and surrounding areas would need millions of pounds worth of work to bring them to be able to cope with this proposal.
- The fine words about improving the area of social deprivation do not fit with the proposals offered, there is no detail as to how this would happen and it states that parts of the area would be further away from employment and services.
- There is a current shortage of 4-5 bedroom homes and retirement accommodation for the elderly in Thurmaston. In all other respects the village is a self-sustaining community. Contrary to the Council's report there is very little deprivation: in 2002 unemployment was 2.5% and the number of people on benefits was significantly lower than the national average. One in eleven buildings in Thurmaston is a business: there is plenty of work available. The proposal could act against the community's interests doubling it's size, which would be disruptive, and represent a genuine threat to the quality of life in the village.
- The large housing estates and industrial buildings on Barkbythorpe Road are already having an adverse impact on the area, with no amenities and services.
- Present economic climate will leave many houses empty, encouraging vandalism.
- What cultural facilities are envisaged?
- The creation of 5000 homes as a relatively fast development offers no chance for the unfortunate people trapped within it to weld together as a community. The results will

not only be likely to produce behavioural problems within this development and spill over to affect the surrounding communities.

- There will be years of disruption for residents who will have to endure hold ups, filthy roads, noise, pollution and diversions.
- This proposal will bring social problems in the future, it could lead to problems seen elsewhere such as drugs, noise, pollution, trouble and aggravation.
- This proposal will damage residents standard of living, bringing down house prices and taking away the countryside people have chosen to live in close to.
- Adding over 15000 people to an area that can only just manage the amount of people it currently has, it can only mean that this area will deteriorate and not at all benefit from this build.

#### *Viability Issues*

- Both the “South Charnwood Transport Assessments” and the “Leicester and Leicestershire Growth Infrastructure Assessment” point to the huge cost of building the infrastructure (in particular roads and schools) to support the new town and the massive funding gap to be bridged before development can take place. Across the county the gap is £1344 million. In the past developers have paid for infrastructure but in these harsh economic times this is no longer the case. The Growth Infrastructure Assessment reveals that Charnwood can only expect £2.3 million in developer contributions for all its projects and yet the transport infrastructure alone for this proposal is estimated at £11 million. Even if new sources of government funding are attracted there is still likely to be a huge deficit. Given this it makes more sense to consider smaller scale developments partly using existing infrastructure e.g. 2,500 dwellings at Anstey (£6 millions) is half the price of Thurmaston.

A number of respondents raised concerns about whether the process has been adequate, these are summarised below:

- Soon the Council will be submitting the plans for government approval. How many people affected by the acceptance will have had sight of the plan? As residents we need to see a copy of the plans which show how roads and infrastructure will be accommodated and how it will affect our property.
- It is shocking to find out about such a huge development in the Thurmaston Times and not to have received an addressed letter from the Council.
- The Council has given up on Thurmaston as it is on the very periphery of the Council’s area so they are dumping this development here.
- There are a large number of unsold properties on brown field sites and new developments, so why do we need to build on green areas?
- How can residents be expected to make detailed objections to a poorly defined map and a presentation with little/no definitive details, within just three weeks? Are we expected to go along with proposals trust the Council to overcome the problems with the transport and other infrastructure?
- This strategy is an overly inward-focused solution that has looked to provide the most quickly and easily achieved solution failing to address the long-term implications of its proposed solution and working in grand isolation from adjoining authorities. A development strategy that in itself has failed to build on the more organic and holistic approach of the former county-wide structure plans that it replaced and there is a

serious possibility of repeating all the errors of many new towns of the past in the rush to achieve build targets

- We were told at the meeting that the Council had got to build on the boundary with Leicester but the literature says “We think that planning for sustainable urban extensions is the best way to plan for the future.” Thinking is not the same as being instructed by the government. The Core Strategy document refers to an emerging regional plan which infers that the plan is not actually in place yet.
- There appears to have been no scoping of any of the proposals various impacts and synergies beyond the physical boundaries of the borough. This has led to the development being proposed in the easiest and most developer friendly area that will accommodate the speediest resolution of build targets.
- The South Charnwood Transport Assessment calls for a bigger area to be developed than the one consulted on in 2008 with extensions north adjoining Syston and south-east to Hamilton. If the Council accepts this report the consultation process should start again as the development area is so different.
- Surely if the government is pressuring the Council to meet their objectives, the Council should be arguing against schemes when it is clear that the existing infrastructure cannot cope with current demand let alone future proposals.
- No mention is made of the housing already being built and lying empty in Thurmaston or to the use which the derelict warehouse/industrial area between ASDA roundabout and the canal/river Soar/Wanlip Country Park is being put.
- The surveys for this area have not been carried out effectively. There are massive disadvantages for wildlife and habitats but there are no wildlife census forms, the farmland is used to produce crops of greater significance than those to the rear of Birstall, but it is graded lower, there is no transport infrastructure to support further development and evidence has not been provided of what is proposed.
- This option is not well developed in terms of specific housing, road and employment implications.
- The case for 5000 new dwellings in this location and for the 19,300 in Charnwood overall has not yet been confirmed by the East Midlands Regional Plan which is still awaiting ministerial approval. This proposal is also out of kilter with the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan adopted as recently as 2005 which called for less than 3000 units in the Charnwood sector of the Central Leicestershire Policy Area.
- The plan makes no reference to the development proposals of the City of Leicester and the Harborough District Council in the area contiguous to the proposed development. This appears to be planning in a vacuum.
- Charnwood seems unable to make a decision as to whether they are creating new community or adding on to an existing one?
- The Council has chosen the easiest option for a quick fix a part of the Borough which is often neglected. There is little or no concern for the residents, the character and identity of the villages or the appalling consequences of traffic congestion, flooding and urban sprawl.
- Charnwood are no longer planning for our next generation, but for someone else's. The instruction to build 19,300 homes between 2001 and 2026 amounts to new accommodation for some 50,000 people. The Council's own published figures for population growth are for an increase of 12,500 people between 2007 and 2029. That is to say, in a period three years longer than that covered by strategy, indigenous growth

is a quarter of that imposed by national government, the result of unfettered immigration. 50,000 new bodies constitute 30% of the borough's population in 2007. The Borough is also subject to the influence of Leicester, shown from question 4.11 "Do you agree that future growth of Leicester should be focused east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton.

- Would we need these homes if the immigration policies were stronger? Will the homes provided for the needs of our poorly housed or merely help to meet the needs of the economic migrants entering the country? Will the jobs created help the unemployed?
- A decision on this proposal should be postponed until a decision has been made on the Pennbury eco-town. A go-ahead for the eco-town will probably make the proposal redundant and unviable. The proposal should also come after the development of Ashton Green so as not to undermine Leicester's contribution to housing. The location of the proposal will need some serious work by Leicester to make access from this new town into Leicester a reality.
- Is there a real need for these homes? Leicester City Council have reported on 19th November 2008 that there are 5841 houses empty and have been for over a year, in the Leicestershire area alone. With the credit crunch affecting most people would it be more cost effective to renovate these houses?
- Need to take into account the unemployment situation, people haven't got the money to buy houses and houses are being repossessed. It is totally unacceptable in today's economic climate to build 5,000 houses for the simple reason people will not be able to cope with the water shortages, electricity, gas and sewage treatment works.
- With the recession we are told businesses will close so why change countryside that produces food into employment land that for years nobody will occupy. There is a very large industrial complex around Thurmaston Boulevard, Barkby Road and Cannock Street/Mountain Road in the city and in other areas, with many acres of land and empty units still available around that area.
- Recent news coming from sources close to the government is beginning to question the governments' own figures. Charnwood should challenge the quota that the Borough has been given.
- The Council need to take into consideration the residents of Barkby and not be so pro development.
- Disappointed that a proposal to cover prime green belt land with concrete and tarmac has not been given eco town status.
- We discovered that the farmland proposed for this development would not be as a result of compulsory purchase but has been freely offered by the landowners in question. Please do not assume that the actions of these landowners in any way represent the wishes of the residents.
- Need the details of a traffic survey prior to us making more detailed comments.
- Our human rights as country people, tax payers, rate payers are being invaded in the most serious way. Our way of life and culture are being seriously invaded.
- Why did this proposed development not come up in the land searches.
- In relation to the public presentation, on arrival at the hall tables had been set out with pens and paper. Each table was then asked to conduct a workshop to discuss and rate a list of items which, as planners, it was told the Council had to consider. If this workshop style of presentation was intended to soften the audience's attitude towards the planners we regret that it appears to have the opposite effect.

A number of the respondents suggested alternative approaches to future development in south Charnwood:

- Measures favouring brown field sites over green field land should be reintroduced. The government should investigate vacant buildings to create up to 1.2 million new homes.
- The total number of houses to be built between 2001 and 2026 is 29,300; from the council figures we have built 9,300 since 2001 these have been spread around Charnwood, as there are 18 years to build the remaining 10,000, why not continue this method, using up all empty properties are used and using green wedges only as a last resort. Schools, GPs surgeries, parks etc have all kept pace with this gradual expansion and it will spread the traffic around a larger area.
- There is less fertile land in adjoining districts which should be developed.
- North of Birstall appears to be the best choice as the infrastructure is already in place, saving several million pounds on road building. This location would mean few disruptions to existing homeowners and has no flood risk. There would be no loss of agricultural land, it's close to arterial roads of the A6 and A46, buses run every ten minutes to Leicester or Loughborough during the day and hourly at night, plus there is the new Park and Ride and road improvements have already been undertaken. This location also has schools that could be extended, land available, easy access to the M1 motorway, far better shops with parking and huge potential with the nearby shopping centre of Beaumont Leys. Also the community would have its own identity which is very important. Although this area can not accommodate 5000 houses, villages in the process of building new houses can make up the short fall.
- In the Glenfield area the secondary school facilities would benefit from development, as has happened at Birstall. With less money required for building roads, the developers could contribute more to the necessary health, schooling and work facilities. Working with Glenfield may increase the number of homes that can be provided in the area and may warrant new schools.
- Both of the alternatives of Birstall and Anstey would be better as they have existing road infrastructure with access to the M1 motorway, bus services, green wedges that could be maintained and development would not destroy village identities.
- Development should be split between Anstey/Glenfield and Birstall for the following reasons:
  - Access to jobs and services is easier and there are already good public transport links. There is a park and ride at Birstall and a further facility planned at Enderby. There is a proposal to link the Ivanhoe line to the Great Central rail way line
  - It will not involve wholly green field land or grade I agricultural land, which is important factor in light of predicted world food shortages
  - There is little difference between options D & E and A to C in terms of the benefits that can be brought to reducing deprivation in the area.
  - The sites are attractive to investors The sites will provide good access to the countryside.
  - The impact on wildlife is similar to sites A to C.
  - Flood risk is much less at options D & E than A to C.
  - Two smaller sites would better protect settlement identity in south Charnwood

- Sure that the residents of Birstall, Anstey, Glenfield would prefer that they and/or their children could buy their affordable housing in the areas they grew up and probably work in, not on some massive estate that they would have to travel to, creating further traffic congestion.
- Suggest the Thorn Lighting site, land near to Birstall and Bentley Rose Gardens where it would be easily accessible to the main roads, land at Heathly Park Thurcaston where the roads and sewers are already in, land at Lanesborough Road, Leicester, sewers and roads put in 20/30 years ago and never developed.
- The delivery rates identified for the proposal are ambitious. The Core Strategy should identify additional 'strategic sites' for development on land to the east of Syston for circa 500 homes. Syston is a highly sustainable location with a good range of services. The provision of the eastern link road is central to the achievement of the strategy and it is proposed that a development east of Syston would enable delivery of the northern part of this link road. This alternative proposal could also fund better facilities at Syston railway station, improved bus services, potentially improved cycle links, support existing local services and facilities, enable funding for environmental and regeneration projects, provide new small scale retail facilities, affordable housing, employment space and a range of community facilities including a new primary school and a community centre. The proposal for east of Thurmaston raises concern as to its impact upon the vitality and viability of Syston town centre, unless Syston itself also grows.
- A new road should be built northwards from Leicester, west of Barkby, east of Syston, and between the gap of Syston and Queniborough, to link into the existing highway network north of Syston. A development this size is the only way such concerns can be comprehensively addressed. This road would provide a strong outer boundary for further development to the east of Syston, adjacent to new residential development, without compromising the green wedge to the south. Likewise, at Thurmaston, such a road could create a strong outer boundary to development, and prevent future encroachment to Barkby Thorpe.
- There is a need to consider splitting the development over two or three sites, even if this means Thurmaston has to take some of the development.
- Development should be divided amongst all the villages in this area not just Thurmaston.
- There should be smaller developments sited north of Birstall using existing roads, Hamilton to leave a green wedge between Thurmaston and Hamilton, west of Loughborough and Glenfield to Anstey.
- Development should be build directly north of Hamilton and a green corridor should be preserved between the development and Thurmaston, like the green land separation with Syston.
- Existing areas of housing should be redeveloped instead.
- There appears to be a lack of will to take a more proactive and dynamic planning approach which is environmentally sustainable i.e. to look at breaking down the mass of the development into distinct but associated settlements that can grow distinct identities yet share, through integrated transport systems and site services, a more economically and environmentally sustainable future. All the local authorities within the county should work together to produce a more holistic and integrated suite of development proposals, applying joined up thinking to transport, economic and infrastructure planning and more aggressively engaging with developers to develop and push through longer-term site responsibilities for developers that would facilitate more investment in renewables and community owned/managed site services.

- Wymeswold aerodrome should be used for a new development as a brownfield site where the community would welcome development. The sole criterion for Thurmaston's suitability is in its geographical location.

Respondents that agreed with direction for growth east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton or did not raise any objections made the following comments:

- The Environment Agency welcomes the decision to allocate the Sustainable Urban Extension sites in areas of lower flood risk, away from the River Soar and Wreak Corridors.
- Leicester City Council officers seek joint working to address key issues and state they have no objection to the proposed development as long as it includes at least 25 hectares of employment land, the shape of the development does not preclude an additional 25 hectares being provided in the future, any potential highways issues for the City can be satisfactorily be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity and any impacts to open and protected space which affects the city especially involving the Green Wedge North of Hamilton is properly mitigated and the City is involved in any proposed changes to this Green Wedge.
- The County Council highlight that they have undertaken two studies submitted in evidence to the Regional Plan Examination. The conclusions of this work broadly correlate with Charnwood preferred option for a Sustainable Urban Extension at Thurmaston/Hamilton. County Council officers remain broadly supportive of this providing it is supported by transportation infrastructure.
- Development would be in an area that is already urban, and on the periphery of the Borough, so would have less impact compared to the rest of Charnwood.
- The development would provide housing for people who wanted to focus their employment or lifestyle on either Charnwood or Leicester.
- It is an area that is not liable to major flooding, although the precise boundaries will need to take account of any flood risks.
- The promoters of this proposal state that it will support the strategic priorities to safeguard environmental features and the identity of individual settlements, with a strong focus on regeneration in urban areas. It would not adversely impact environmental features and would support regeneration initiatives in Thurmaston
- The alternative north of Birstall is far less sustainable and the area north of Glenfield does not provide the sustainable development area required due to the area largely being designated as flood-plain and/or as green wedge.
- This proposal is consistent with guidance set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- It will bring benefits to the priority neighbourhood in Thurmaston.
- The site is the best choice if integration of the railway and other key services is to be achieved.
- It is well located to the edge of Leicester and the city's services and facilities.
- It will have a relatively low impact on the landscape.
- In general terms, Leicestershire County Council agrees that this is the most appropriate location. They highlight that it would have the least impact on nearby settlements and is of sufficient size to deliver the size of extension required.
- Need to ensure this proposal is adjacent to Hamilton.

- It is possible to provide a railway station which could also serve existing houses at Thurmaston and could be paid for by the development. Now the Ivanhoe trains go to Nottingham and Lincoln, not just Loughborough-Leicester, this should be viable plus the new East Midlands Parkway Station will open soon. Only one platform would be needed but should be sited to allow a second and an increase in the speed limit from 50 to 60 mph should allow for the stopping time.
- Extra and amended bus routes will be needed.
- Need to include the down grading of dual carriageway, which separates the original village centre from the main residential areas and the proposal, to a single carriageway for local traffic as it is the key problem for identity of Thurmaston. Through traffic should be routed along the new A46 to the A6, and around a new perimeter road for proposal to join the Leicester Ring Road at the A6030.
- Either the former Humberstone Station, or a new Thurmaston Station, should be rebuilt to provide local commuters access to the Ivanhoe Line.
- Need to work with Leicester City Council to look at the feasibility of a Northern Tram route from Thurmaston, and a new Park & Ride to the city centre.
- The proposal must include a secondary school, a choice of GP surgeries and a shopping centre.
- The proposed development needs to be well designed and set out in a manner to maintain the separation between Thurmaston and Syston.
- Government Office suggest there is potential for this proposal to be considered as two extensions, one east of Thurmaston, and one north of Hamilton. This would allow the proposal to build on the existing identity of the two host locations, looking towards the District Centres of Thurmaston and Hamilton, extending public transport services and preserving the Green Wedge that currently provides a green lung into the Principle Urban Area between Thurmaston and Hamilton. It may also be able to achieve a better build rate.
- It would be useful to refer in the text to the need to work with the adjoining authorities to consider the relationship of any proposed development to existing development in Hamilton, within the City, and impact on Scraftoft, as well as looking at the relationship with, and impacts on, Thurmaston, Syston, Barkby, and Barkby Thorpe within Charnwood.
- Need to consult English Heritage about the impact on the historic environment and the Environment Agency about potential drainage and flood risk issues.
- Any future growth in this area should be referred to Leicester City Council and the local communities affected.
- English Heritage highlight that there are two scheduled monuments at Hamilton, the visible remains of a deserted medieval village (DMV) and the buried remains of the site of a Roman villa to the northeast. There will need to be a buffer zone around the monuments and the DMV in particular, which should define an acceptable area for development. The sites and their buffer zones should be an integral part of the green infrastructure, with appropriate provision for the management and interpretation of the schedule monuments. The setting of listed buildings in Barkby needs to be considered.

*Question 4.12: Any Other Comments on Directions for Growth?*

27 respondents: 14 comment, 6 support, 7 object

There were a large range of comments made in response to this question on the Directions for Growth section. A number of the respondents raised concerns about the scale of growth proposed for Charnwood and the need for such a large amount of development. There were also a number of respondents supporting the overall approach set out in the Directions for Growth section. A summary of the other comments are set out below:

- English Heritage raised concern that the overall proposed level of growth will breach the environmental capacity of the area. All of the options will result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the landscape, and/or the natural and historic environment. The historic environment can only accommodate a certain level or rate of change before it is damaged permanently and loses its character or value.
- The strategy states that over the period 2001 to 2026 at least 35% of new homes will be located within and adjoining the Principal Urban Area (PUA) of Leicester. Policy 13 of the Draft Regional Plan states that 47% of new housing within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area should be within or adjoining the Leicester PUA. While there is not necessarily any conflict between these two figures it does call for close working between other local authorities if this figure is to be achieved. It is not clear from the Charnwood 2026 document how this will be achieved.
- Local Government need to impress upon National Government that the projected house building will not be viable under a Post Peak Oil scenario.
- Fewer houses would be needed if developments were planned to combine private space with shared facilities e.g. gardens, laundries and car share pools. This would improve community cohesion, reduce crime and make streets safer.
- The Borough's priority needs to be to create an attractive and inclusive town centre.
- Windfall site allocations should be included as they have provided a useful contribution in the past and will reduce the number of greenfield sites.
- The projected housing requirements to 2026 are very questionable. There is a glut of unsaleable houses on the market and a large proportion of large family homes occupied by elderly single persons and couples. It's reasonable to assume many of these homes will be available before 2026.
- Concern that there isn't the work to sustain such development in the Borough.
- The selection of urban extensions needs to be based on an understanding of key local issues and strategic priorities and the ability to deliver key infrastructure. They must be capable of delivering a mix of uses and sustainable transport.
- English Heritage highlight that site-selection needs to be informed by the County Historic Landscape Characterisation, which should be part of the evidence base.
- This section is insufficiently detailed to give certainty for the general direction or quantum of housing growth. The document only includes a draft residual requirement, there is no overall quantum given. The location of other development is left to the Site Allocations document. A stronger steer is required. Sites that are strategic in supporting a continuous housing land supply should be included in the Core Strategy. A percentage of development should be allocated to the A6 corridor Service Centres, which should be recognised as highly accessible locations ideally placed to serve the needs of rural communities.

- The approach to phasing suggested is unnecessary and is likely to restrict rather than encourage development.
- 50% of homes should be 1 & 2 bed and 30% should be social housing to meet the needs of an aging population and the need for affordable housing.
- The location of development needs to support the strategy is being produced for the River Soar and Grand Union Canal.
- The Highways Agency has stated that they are keen to work closely with the authority and the Leicestershire County Council to identify sustainable urban extensions. They are concerned that the modelling work undertaken to date is insufficient and that further work is required.
- The Environment Agency highlighted the need for a Water Cycle Study for the area, in light of the extra pressures put on a number of the service providers, by such major development proposals. They also noted that this section makes no reference to there being a requirement for developers to address the criteria of Planning Policy Statement 23 in relation to the redevelopment of brownfield land. This includes providing adequate protection of controlled waters and associated receptors, ensuring that the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems on sites with land quality issues do not lead to contamination of controlled waters.
- Support is given to prioritising previously developed land in urban areas and more needs to be done to identify all sources of sustainable brownfield supply.
- It should be recognised that there are also suitable previously developed sites both adjacent to Service Centres and in other appropriate locations. Where such sites are sufficiently large they should be identified and allocated.
- The approach of planning for more than the minimum regional requirement is supported. This should ensure flexibility to deal with a change in circumstances.
- It is important that the strategy takes a long term view identifying the most sustainable directions of growth to meet the future needs over the period to 2026 and beyond.
- The promoters of the east of Loughborough option highlight that Leicestershire County Council has concerns about the capacity of the preferred option, west of Loughborough, to expand to accommodate further growth. They confirm that there is the potential for the further expansion of the east Loughborough option if required.
- Support is given to the recognition that in order to build sustainable communities, the strategy should support development that may continue after 2026, e.g. by granting more housing permissions that are required.
- The Council will need to discount those sites that currently have permission but will not come forward as Planning Policy Statement 3 is clear that such sites should not be counted as part of the supply.
- It is agreed that significant amounts of greenfield land will be necessary to meet development requirements within the Borough.
- Could land opposite quarry on Inglebury Road, Shepshed be given consideration for places of religious worship?
- Only once all brownfield sites have been utilised should development of greenfield sites be considered and then only after re-assessment of the need.
- A combination of the South, South Western and East Loughborough proposals make most sense and would have the least adverse impacts.

- Opposed to the massive developments proposed. The residents of Charnwood have not asked for 10,000 new homes. This is central government ruling local government, and local government not acting as people's local representatives.
- Whilst there is a requirement to build new homes and changing lifestyles mean that more homes are needed the figures put forward in the regional plan should be questioned as figures provided by the Government cannot be trusted. The figures have been developed at a macro level. It is dangerous for the Council to say “9000” homes are needed particularly when so much property in and around Loughborough is empty, in decay or just not selling. Need to be extremely confident of the figures rather than just accept them and develop a plan to fit them. Have the figures been examined, questioned? Are the Council confident about how they were arrived at? Everything that follows is based on these figures. The figures are baffling and incomprehensible.
- It is not apparent maximum use has been made of brownfield sites possible in Loughborough. Such sites need to be developed so people want to live on them.
- Disagree that it is better to plan for the future with huge developments rather than a piecemeal approach. Huge developments serve only to alienate whole communities of people. They do not allow for changing times, or reaction to any requirement to downscale the plan, or that in five years time the figures may be wrong but in the meantime the land has gone.

## **Section: Employment Provision**

*Question 4.13: Do you agree that there should be further employment land in the borough and that it should be located at strategic urban extensions and at the science park?*

*36 respondents: 4 comment, 29 support, 3 object*

There is strong overall support for the provision of further employment land in the Borough and the proposal to locate it at Sustainable Urban Extensions and the proposed science park. However, some respondents felt this should not be at the expense of service centres or settlements along the A6 corridor, which should also be supported. It was also suggested by one respondent that a wider spread of employment land would enable a quicker take-up of land. The mix of employment types was seen as important on Sustainable Urban Extensions, particularly in South Charnwood to ensure it complements provision in Leicester rather than competes. Meanwhile, it was felt by some that the science park should not accommodate large warehouses due to the visual impact on the Charnwood Forest. Waste management facilities should be considered at Sustainable Urban Extensions. Others considered that there is little explanation in the plan as to the justification for the quantum of employment land in Sustainable Urban Extensions, which should take account the existence and availability of employment land nearby.

A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- There is little evidence that business demand has been matched to the preferred location of Sustainable Urban Extensions. The Science Park could be located anywhere in the Loughborough area and still be successful. It is unlikely to support local jobs.
- The requirement for employment within Sustainable Urban Extensions is broadly supported but the 20 ha figure is arbitrary and should be reconsidered in light of the proximity of the sustainable urban extension to existing employment areas.

- The Science Park together with proposed employment in a west Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extensions option will attract employment to the west of the town limiting employment opportunities for residents east of Loughborough.
- A development option to the east of Loughborough at Cotes is well-related to the North East employment area and the town centre. 12 hectares of employment is appropriate in this context and will provide a better balance of jobs in the town given the proposal for the 50 hectare science park to the west.
- Employment land should not all be within the strategic urban extensions. Land for employment or mixed use should also be identified close to the Service Centres along the A6 corridor to support their role in serving the local communities and in enhancing their self-containment
- More detail is required to explain why 20 ha of employment is proposed in the Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extensions and how proposals for employment supply in East Loughborough, Sileby, Shepshed and Mountsorrel relate to the overall employment requirement.
- It is not clear if the 27ha (net) of land for uses demonstrably connected with the university will be adequate to provide for the student accommodation, teaching facilities, elite sports facilities, and research-related business developments that are required to maximise the contribution of the university to the local economy and community over the long term.
- The Development Strategy gives no indication as to the scale of employment provision that is sought or how this will be distributed between the identified locations.
- Whilst the need for employment to accompany Sustainable Urban Extensions and to provide for the Science Park is supported by the PACEC study, the provision of land to meet local employment needs is not.
- Further employment land should be high quality, and guarded against excessive B8 class uses, which gives little employment.
- Consideration should be given to accommodating waste management sites within SUE employment areas. The Sustainable Urban Extensions should also provide facilities to deal with waste arising within them (industrial/commercial and residential waste).
- Further employment land should not be restricted only to Loughborough and the Science Park as this would not provide for a choice of sites.
- Concern that despite focussing employment on major development areas this will not prevent commuting
- Focussing employment land on Sustainable Urban Extensions will result in a slower take-up than if it is spread over a number of locations.
- Large employment sites need to be well-served by the strategic road network but larger sites tend to be visually intrusive and adversely affect the landscape character. There is no guarantee that large sites next to new housing will reduce commuting. Storage and distribution uses should be resisted at the science park due to its potential impact on Charnwood Forest
- Existing employment sites should be utilised to their full potential before greenfield sites are considered for employment development
- New employment land should be provided focusing on industrial and small-scale warehousing. Care should be taken not to conflict with the proposals to focus large floor plate office development in the New Business Quarter in the City. Limited small

scale office provision to meet local needs may be appropriate where this is part of a balanced mix of uses.

- Further work is needed to ensure existing employment sites and brownfield sites are being used to their full potential before greenfield land is released.
- Support the aim of the Council to develop a low carbon economy and to benefit from the use of a range of renewable energy opportunities. Support the efforts for new employment sites attached to Sustainable Urban Extensions to provide for the 'first zero carbon development'.
- Employment provision on Sustainable Urban Extensions should not preclude the location of waste management facilities. Sustainable Urban Extensions should contain facilities for dealing with waste arisings.
- Extending the Science Park is a good idea as there is not enough hi-tech space for companies.
- A more general approach to employment land is required than focusing on Sustainable Urban Extensions and the Science Park. Achieving a balanced supply of employment land should be a prime consideration
- Mechanisms are required to enable employment land allocations to be reviewed without a wholesale review of the Local Development Framework.
- There needs to be a clear distinction between the needs of Sustainable Urban Extensions in north and south Charnwood and the needs of the science park and other local employment sites.

*Question 4.14: Do you agree that development at the science park should be restricted to research and development firms that complement the university's activities or other research and development firms in Loughborough?*

*20 respondents: 6 comment, 9 support, 5 object*

There are mixed views about this question with some different interpretations of the regional policy framework and evidence base. Some respondents suggested that a range of uses should be allowed alongside research and development uses to complement its provision or, to support wider policy initiatives such as the airport. Whilst others sought to highlight the shortage of research and development uses and the lack of evidence to support further office space in the borough. Development of a science park was likely to be visually intrusive and adversely affect the setting of nearby listed buildings and the registered Garendon Park and Garden. Its design and layout will therefore be very important. A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- Include start-ups and spin-off companies at the Science Park
- A more flexible approach to the type and mix of uses at the Science Park should be considered.
- A science and employment park, including more general employment uses and housing, phased westwards from Snells Nook Lane will help to cross-subsidise the Science Park.
- Office space is skewed to the south of the Borough at Watermead and more should be provided in North Charnwood
- The Science Park has potential to complement Pegasus Business Park at the Airport especially as this area is to be brought under the umbrella of Airport operational use.
- As the PACEC Employment Land Study report finds no evidence of a qualitative need for further office development in the borough a restriction on the range of permitted uses appears justified.

- Development should be controlled to ensure that occupiers have appropriate links with the University, each other or other 'high added value' high technology, or research and development based companies in the town.
- The university should be allowed to expand to the west and uses such as sport and recreation, academic floor space and ancillary staff and student facilities should be allowed alongside R&D uses. Allowances should also be made for complementary development such as hotels, day nurseries, retail/food and drink uses and health and fitness facilities.
- There is a shortage of science and technology users in the three cities sub area and pressure from the logistics industry is restricting sites. Restricting the science park to research and development uses will be important.
- The science park is likely to have an adverse affect on the setting of the Garendon Park, views to the Temple of Venus and other listed buildings. Its uses should be restricted and high quality design and landscaping framework and management plan sought.
- Any restriction should be monitored and if demand and take-up for research and development type uses proves limited, the land should be released for alternative employment uses
- Let the University develop what it likes on the land.
- Restricting uses will distort the market and prevent entrepreneurs from establishing in Loughborough
- Support should be given to small workshops and managed office space

*Question 4.15: Do you think the Council should consider alternative types of employment on the science park if a large single employer was interested in locating there?*

*16 respondents: 6 comment, 4 support, 6 object*

There is overall support for an approach which does not allow a large single user to locate at the Science Park. The reasons given do however, vary. Fundamentally, it was felt that the approach would undermine the rationale for a science park as set out in the PACEC report and Policy 20 and SRS 4 of the Regional Plan and that large single users should be accommodated elsewhere. A number of responses warned against storage and distribution uses at the science park or called for particular types of employment or other uses. A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- This would undermine the rationale for a science park
- A large single user would not synergise with the university and should be located elsewhere in the Region such as one of the PUAs
- Major employers should be encouraged and if a large user wishes to locate in Charnwood it should be accommodated elsewhere in the borough such as at Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- A large single user should be considered if there is insufficient take-up at the Science Park
- A large warehousing operation might not be appropriate whilst manufacturing might be more suitable.
- The site should have a wide range of users to benefit from skills and ideas. The site should not support storage and distribution uses.
- All businesses should be treated equally regardless of size

- All reasonable employment activities should be encouraged in Loughborough
- An hotel, conference and banqueting facility should be provided

*Question 4.16 Do you think we should seek to replace all the employment land lost since 2001 in addition to replacing the poor quality sites left in the borough?*

*21 respondents: 7 comment, 6 support, 8 object*

The need to identify land to replace that lost to other uses since 2001 is not supported overall by respondents. The general feeling is there is little evidence for this and that the Council should focus instead on what is needed to serve future needs rather than being concerned about what had been lost. Many of the respondents went further and called for a more flexible approach to the supply of land in future so as to be more responsive to market demand and to avoid the need for core strategy review. Others highlighted a need for more local employment sites to provide for sustainable communities. Suggestions were also made to reuse poorer quality employment sites to serve business incubation. A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- The approach is not supported by the PACEC employment land study
- This might provide greater flexibility
- Retention of employment facilities in local communities is essential to achieve sustainable settlements
- Recognise that employment is restructuring and moving away from urban cores towards well-located and managed provision accessible to a range of transport modes.
- Safeguarding poor quality employment land and premises for its own sake serves no real purpose.
- Providing good quality sites at the right time in the right places will be important to maximise the areas economic potential
- The plan should allow further release of land if monitoring suggests this is needed to maintain fluidity and flexibility of supply.
- It is not necessary to replace the employment land lost since 2001. Focus on what is needed for the future.
- Employment should be located first on previously developed land
- Employment land should be provided within service centres to improve the balance between homes and jobs.
- Emphasis should be given to retaining a high quality employment portfolio combined with strategically located employment zones. Low quality sites should be released for alternative uses.
- Poor quality sites should be redeveloped for smaller units for business start-ups, managed workshops and office space.
- A more general approach to employment land is required than focusing on Sustainable Urban Extensions and the Science Park

*Question 4.17: Any Other Comments on Employment Provision?*

*20 respondents: 16 comment, 2 support, 2 object*

By its nature this section provides a catch all for general issues relating to employment. However there are some common themes around the need to provide a range of employment

in accessible locations to meet the needs of the wider demographic and young people in particular; making best use of previously developed land and poorer quality employment sites for new employment; and recognising that the employment needs of local communities must also be met. A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- Focusing employment on specific locations is not ideal; a more general approach is needed.
- The existing science park should be extended as there is not enough space for high-tech companies in the borough.
- The Council should consider a wider definition of employment than B use classes and should consider Suis Generis uses (such as Costco) as these can provide significant employment for local people.
- The Council should consider a wider definition of employment than B use classes and should recognise the important contribution that the minerals industry makes in this sector.
- Existing brownfield sites with residential potential should be considered to see if they are suitable for employment purposes as dedicated business parks are not always the most suitable locations for business and generally rely on the private car to access them.
- The Core Strategy should consider how to tackle the 50Ha of industrial/warehousing and 13,000 sqm of offices that is forecast to become vacant over the plan period rather than deferring to later DPDs
- Demand for local employment sites may increase once oil reserves dry up and the cost of commuting is established
- New business should be directed to empty units in the town centre rather than taking up sites in the countryside.
- The new jobs proposed will be low paid and not help the community
- Green infrastructure should be provided as part of the Science Park Proposals
- Land adjacent to the Loughborough Sewage works should be released for employment purposes
- The Core Strategy should reflect the PACEC employment land study and allocate 50 ha of employment land in South Charnwood.
- The Core Strategy should recognise airport linked development does not need to be located at the airport and could be located in Loughborough
- The Science Park could be used to provide student accommodation provided this was clear in the policy
- A robust Framework Travel Plan and demand management solution will be needed for the science park to limit its impact on the M1 motorway and junction 23.
- Proactive policies are required to replace poor quality employment sites in Anstey with higher quality employment sectors, provided there is no environmental or community impact.
- The minerals industry within the Borough is a large employer and the important contribution this sector makes should be highlighted within the employment provision section of the Core Strategy
- Consideration should be given to the accommodation of warehouse clubs, cash and carry businesses and builders merchants on employment allocations in Loughborough. These operations are similar in nature to other B class employment uses and have

potential to provide up to 250 jobs directly as well as supporting local businesses. The Council should recognise the full spectrum of employment generating uses on allocated employment sites so as to be flexible and responsive to a changing economic environment.

- Job opportunities are a major factor for young people and any new developments must be located near centres of employment and transport links.
- Consideration should be given to making better use of poor-quality employment sites and brownfield sites.
- There should be proactive policies to replace poor quality employment sites with higher tech sites, providing there is no negative environmental or community impact.
- The Council needs to be clearer about what are acceptable uses within the science park. If student housing is proposed then this should be clearly stated and separated from the science park designation.

### **Section: Loughborough University**

*Question 4.18: Do you agree with the approach to student housing in Loughborough?*

*24 respondents: 9 comment, 6 support, 9 object*

There was mixed views on this approach. Some felt that the proposed approach was good, provided that it would regenerate the town and return housing to permanent residential accommodation rather than student accommodation elsewhere and unmanaged student residences elsewhere should be strictly controlled and avoided in primarily residential areas. Others felt that concentrating housing in the just the town centre will lead to an unbalanced community and an almost deserted town centre out of term time. It was felt that the Supplementary Planning Document needs to cover the town centre to ensure that this does not continue to happen. A summary of other comments are set out below:

- Some felt that it was inevitable and unavoidable that student "Ghettos" would continue to develop in Wards close to the University.
- Paragraph 4.42 assumes that residents have no aspirations to use the town centre. Residents across the town want a vibrant centre which attracts them to retail space at many hours of the day and early evening. Both these aspirations are undermined by permitting unrestrained student accommodation developments in the Town Centre.
- The monoculture of student housing is against the Town Centre Development policies, which call for mixed use. High densities of young transient occupiers lead to a dominance of alcohol in the student culture. 'In-term' businesses are virtually closed out of term, leaving the area a ghost town during holidays.
- There were a number of differing views on the Student housing Supplementary Planning Document. Some considered that student housing in Loughborough appears well controlled by the Student Housing Supplementary Planning Document, with the exception being Loughborough Town Centre. It would be sensible to extend the Supplementary Planning Document approach to the town centre. Measures should be sought to ensure that open market as well as affordable housing is provided along side student housing. Others considered that the Supplementary Planning Document should be strengthened to ensure that is a greater balance in the town centre community between students and families.
- Loughborough University suggested that additional sites should be considered case-by-case, where it can be demonstrated that the proposals would not impact on the

character of the surrounding area, or give rise to residential amenity issues. The Development Plan Document does not strike an appropriate balance between the positive and negative impacts of the university's presence in the town.

- GOEM do not support this approach. Purpose-built student accommodation anywhere in Loughborough could address most of the issues identified in paragraph 4.40. The restriction of opportunities for such development to the town centre and university campus alone could reduce the potential for beneficial student development, and hence be counterproductive. Some further work on the amount of student accommodation that is likely to be required over the plan period, and the capacity of the town centre and university campus to provide for this need, may be required in order to justify this approach. As a spatial plan, the Core Strategy may also refer to other initiatives to improve student-community relations.
- Charnwood Borough Council should liaise with Loughborough University to provide more accommodation on campus, thus releasing private accommodation in the town.
- Some felt that the Core Strategy lacks serious approach for brownfield/ waste areas within inner poorer areas of Loughborough, and there is little mention of the town centre masterplan. Money spent on new infrastructure and greenfield build is money not spent on our inner poorer areas. For these reasons the student policy is destroying inner Loughborough.

**Question 4.19: Any Other Comments on Loughborough University?**

*6 respondents: 5 comment, 0 support, 1 object*

The East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) felt that the approach dwells on the perceived detrimental effects of having large numbers of students in the community instead of the reputation for excellence of the University and its role as a catalyst for economic development which deserves more emphasis in this section. There is little mention for example of its strength in sports science and its potential enhancing economic spin offs associated with the London 2012 Olympics. A summary of other comments are set out below:

- Exclusion of the Town Centre from the existing Student Housing Supplementary Planning Document should have been consulted on.
- Student housing in the town centre should be constrained by the same 20% output area as in the Supplementary Planning Document 'Charnwood Development Framework, Student Housing Provision in Loughborough, Supplement Planning Document, Dec 2005.' The Local Development Framework and related documents should be rewritten so as to include this policy.
- There was some confusion as to what is meant by 'mixed use'. Most of the current problems with the town centre developments stem from this lack of clarity. What are the maximum percentages of any one use in a development.

**Section: Transport – Managing Travel Demand and Widening Transport Choice**

**Question 4.20: Do you agree with our approach to transport?**

*44 respondents: 12 comment, 17 support, 10 object & 5 Proforma Letters object*

There is broad support from a variety of interests for the proposed approach. The responses point to a wide range of initiatives that could increase use of public transport, especially buses, cycling and walking as alternatives to the car. Some respondents want such initiatives given

greater priority than road improvements. A development strategy focussing growth on main urban areas and service centres with good accessibility is seen as most likely to reduce car dependency. Large scale growth can help fund improvements. At the same time some respondents advocate an approach that would make better provision for car use, in particular better roads to meet demands and address congestion. There are doubts public transport can be improved to levels that would make it a realistic alternative for many people, notably those from rural areas. A lot of responses raise issues relating to the overall Development Strategy. A summary of comments is set out below:

Respondents supporting the proposals made the following comments:

- Support aim for balanced and integrated land use and transport solutions
- Agree road improvements should be a last resort. This is in keeping with the sustainable development principles of Planning Policy Statement 1, the climate change considerations of Planning Policy Statement 1 annex and the DfT policy response to the Eddington and Stern reports: “Towards a Sustainable Transport System” (October 2009).
- The Highways Agency fully endorse the approach seeking to manage travel demand. In reducing the need to travel, distance travelled, reliance on the private car, and working with providers to encourage greater use of public transport the Core Strategy accords with national guidance and forms a sustainable basis for supporting growth. The Vision and Objectives form a sound basis for sustainable development in the Borough and accord with the guidance provided in Planning Policy Guidance 13 with regards to reducing the need to travel and reliance on the car.
- Maximise use of existing infrastructure. Better existing public transport viability would allow resources to be focussed in areas with greatest needs
- Transport must meet the needs of users in order to reduce reliance on car use
- Further development can help reinforce and enhance the frequency of viable (public transport) routes eg by partnership working. Concentration of development in urban areas and Service Centres with best public transport accessibility (eg Syston and along the A6 bus corridor) and services and facilities readily accessible by foot or bike, offers most potential to reduce car dependency in a sustainable manner.
- The suggested Sustainable Urban Extensions could utilise current transport infrastructure with some adaptation and fund new infrastructure other than roads. This strategy would relieve the burden on service centres where current infrastructure is unsuitable for large scale development.
- Thurmaston has one of the highest levels of commuting in the East Midlands but inadequate roads, poor air quality and poor public transport links to Loughborough. A comprehensive package of significant improvements is needed to travel by road and rail. Maximum use should be made of existing networks.
- There are public transport successes. The Derby-Loughborough Skylink bus service has grown dramatically in recent years and now carries about 12,000 passengers each week on the 24-hour service from Loughborough and Hathern to East Midlands Airport.
- Public transport needs to be much improved: more comfortable, better subsidised, quicker, more convenient and cheaper. A huge shift is needed to provide the necessary improvement.
- Most local people currently require a car in evenings and on Sundays when bus transport is impractical and insufficient. Morning weekday peak bus services are

- insufficient in villages eg Mountsorrel. Unreliable public transport encourages car use adding to congestion.
- Specific public transport improvements mentioned include:
    - A new rail station at Thurmaston
    - Reopening the National Forest railway to benefit south west Charnwood residents,
    - Discussions with the City Council on the feasibility of an A6 based tram
    - Improved bus services for rural villages especially in evenings and at weekends if necessary by public subsidy.
    - Affordable community taxi system for villages and those living a long way from public transport routes could induce greater use of public transport.
  - There is Insufficient mention of Town Centre Masterplan. A bus station is needed in Loughborough to provide a suitable balance of facilities in the town centre. A bus hub is not a good idea as pavements are crowded creating an uncomfortable shopping experience for everyone else.
  - Schemes that could reduce car dependency are cooperative car schemes, park and ride, or reliable bus / rail / community transport services covering times outside work time. Employers must encourage working practices that facilitate car sharing to help reduce high levels of commuting by car.
  - Strongly agree commuting must be minimised. Identify where development is best placed and press for public transport provision to serve it.
  - Roads may be needed but strongly against a road across the wetlands (east of Loughborough?). Greater use should be made of A6004.
  - Need to reduce the amount of roads. They harm the environment and wildlife and pollute watercourses.

Respondents objecting to the proposals made the following comments:

- Do not disagree with the objective of reducing the need to travel by car but the guidance does not outline how alternative solutions might be delivered. The lack of a coherent and more detailed presentation of transport issues raises considerable concerns as to whether the proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions could provide more sustainable transport systems.
- The demand for car use must be met with better roads, convenient car parking and fewer road signs.
- The revamped Tesco store layout at Shelthorpe has created significant traffic problems. Guidance is needed to 1) better control traffic at new superstores so ancillary facilities are located to ensure congestion is confined off the highway and 2) change the Tesco petrol station layout at Shelthorpe so it is only accessed outbound from the car park to remove queuing from Park Road.
- The 2008 Congestion Management Study concluded Loughborough's road network is one of the most congested in Leicestershire, comparable with Leicester. Available evidence suggests the proposed west Loughborough growth option is not sound.
- The proposed transport strategy does not reflect the findings of the County Council's assessment of Loughborough growth options using the Loughborough traffic model. The County Council has re-affirmed that a package of transport measures, including an Eastern Distributor Road, represents the best solution to address deficiencies in the town's transport network and support sustainable growth, wherever it is located

around the town. A partial EDDR from Epinal Way south of the town to A60 Nottingham Road supporting an east Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension could deliver significant benefits for the town centre and east Loughborough by reducing traffic volumes.

- It is encouraging a transport evidence base is being developed to support the directions for growth. The Highways Agency has previously expressed concerns on the MVA boroughwide transport assessment. As a result of assumptions made the actual impact on the highway network in terms of congestion, travel times, and delays, cannot be fully established and the level of mitigation required accurately identified. These issues need to be addressed, further tests undertaken, and suitable mitigation measures identified before a view can be taken on the preferred Sustainable Urban Extensions. The Highways Agency is keen to help establish a suitable model. Clarification is sought as to whether PTOLEMY may be used to give an over-arching assessment of strategic impacts of growth around Leicestershire.
- Transport statistics may have been misused by the Borough Council to produce results that support a different growth option.
- It seems inconsistent that reference is made to an Eastern Distributor Road being most beneficial in highway terms for Loughborough, but the main focus for growth is west of the town.
- A single carriageway Epinal Way is inadequate. Duelling would more cost effectively facilitate traffic movements through Loughborough than an Eastern Inner Ring Road
- Para 4.52 should recognise Sustainable Urban Extensions will require new roads to serve them. Where necessary, roads should be designed to maximise their wider benefit. Tests of good value for money and deliverability should be key criteria to assess the merits of transport solutions.
- The proposed new road linking A6 and A512 through the proposed west Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension and the registered park and garden of Garendon Park would have a direct adverse effect on the park and setting of listed buildings within it.
- Alleviation of Loughborough's traffic problems requires a dual carriageway bypass, like the A50 through Stoke: buried to reduce noise, with slip roads off to roundabouts.
- The B676 should be upgraded as an alternative route to the A6 capable of serving a Sustainable Urban Extension at Cotes/ Wymeswold Airfield.
- There is a lack of clarity about the impact of traffic from 5000 new homes at Thurmaston on Barkby and Barkby Thorpe. Traffic surveys in recent years show traffic through both villages is intolerable already. Absolute gridlock is inevitable without a definite commitment to new roads and serious traffic management.

Respondents also made the following general comments:

- The Sustainable Urban Extension development process needs a clear and transparent approach to all transport issues with detailed discussions between relevant parties to ensure the best transport solution is delivered.
- Major leisure and tourism schemes need access by non car modes but this is impractical for small farm diversification. There needs to be sensible judgement as to which types of development need to have non-car alternatives supplied.
- May be useful to refer to the Regional and Sub-Regional Transport Investment priorities included in Appendix 6 of the Draft Regional Plan (as proposed to be changed).

*Question 4.21: Any Other Comments on Transport?*

26 respondents: 23 comment, 1 support, 2 object

The responses cover a similar range of issues to those under Q 4.20. An additional issue is that the plan fails to indicate how potential problems relating to peak oil are best addressed. The range of transport solutions suggested to resolve transport problems in Loughborough may be better considered in taking forward the Development Strategy. A summary of the comments is set out below:

Respondents made the following general comments on transport issues and development strategies:

- The Strategy needs to acknowledge the concept of peak oil, and make the necessary policy adjustments. Hope to see details in the near future of planned investment in public transport, especially the bus network.
- Development should be sited in locations already served by sustainable modes of travel, which could be improved as part of development infrastructure. Optimal locations are near existing services, within or abutting the Principal Urban Area.
- Fringe developments generally mean people find cars essential.
- Transportation is a major concern. In the Wreake Valley the rail corridor does not serve the local community. With new stations and community taxi links, this could provide a rapid a transport system to both Loughborough and Leicester. The Soar valley railway line lacks frequency of trains and has poor starting and finishing times. A major change and attitudes and much more investment is needed to better utilise these potential resources and reduce car use.

Respondents supporting improvements to sustainable travel modes made the following comments:

- Sustainable transport should be improved throughout the Borough, with better, more frequent bus services, more cycle paths. Initiatives such as the free bus pass help reduce car use. Off-road paths should be developed between villages.
- Need positive encouragement of measures to reduce car use eg blanket 20mph speed limits, dedicated cycle only routes to main destinations and design for more bus use in-town.
- Public transport needs substantial improvement to provide a better choice of routes and times. Rearsby currently has no direct links to south Leicester or to Loughborough. If public transport cannot be improved cars will be essential and better roads needed eg a Leicester eastern bypass as part of a Thurmaston Sustainable Urban Extension.
- Reinstate the Loughborough-Hathern-Shepshed bus route to enable Hathern children access to Shepshed's secondary schools, Shepshed residents access to jobs in Loughborough and to open up Shepshed shops to Hathern and surrounding villages.
- It is not enough to build developments with access to public transport. People with access to bus/train routes still use cars because buses and trains are not as flexible as car use. Public transport to be attractive to the majority needs a huge fleet, more convenient stops for local journeys and far swifter /fewer stops for through journeys. The Shepshed to Leicester service is regular but takes over an hour for a journey of less than half an hour by car. Massive investment is needed and all new road building should cease with funds diverted into effective mass transport systems. In Brazil, public transport providers are paid by the distance covered, not the number of passengers -

- giving an incentive to provide frequent services. Public subsidy means poorer users travel cheaply. In Finland bus travel is free to anyone boarding with a pushchair. Currently a return from Shepshed to Loughborough with a child costs £6 return - and all day parking being less is a disincentive to using public transport.
- Loughborough needs a bus station as part of real improvements to public transport. It would enable proper integration of services. The old hospital site would be a suitable location.
  - Deliver the Great Central Railway project. Work with Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire County Councils to make Ruddington to Birstall a viable commuter link.
  - Deliver the National Forest rail line
  - Park and Ride near Hathern could give a direct link to Loughborough station for commuters to the Three Cities and a link to the (town centre) bus hub.
  - Personal Rapid Transport should be considered as a public transport solution. Due for public use in 2009 at London Heathrow and the preferred option for the Daventry Town expansion.
  - Cycle tracks need much improvement if congestion in Loughborough is not to increase. Better, joined up, off road cycle ways are needed down the Soar valley.
  - Incorporate waterways into integrated transport solutions
  - The section on transport is rather vague about road infrastructure. New roads are often more disturbing to biodiversity than the development areas served, as they frequently sever biodiversity networks and fragment habitats. It is important that the need for any major road infrastructure is identified at this stage.
  - The idea that life is impossible without the car is a falsehood but it has been encouraged by Government support for failing car makers and out of town shopping. Drastic steps are needed to break the bond. Building roads for more cars is outdated. Planners must not pander to people who feel they can't live without their car but take actions to usurp the car as the prime mode of transport. Housing developments must not be subservient to the car, work needs to be nearer to people, and buses & trains need to work. People sat in their cars doing nothing for 6 to 8 hours every work day contributes to our worker efficiency figures being the worst in Europe.

Respondents supporting more emphasis on improvements to the road network made the following comments:

- The redevelopment of industrial sites for housing has generated significant commuter traffic adding to serious congestion on main roads in Loughborough and Leicester. No further growth should be allowed without major improvement of the road network. Most people use cars as public transport is not efficient.
- Roads in the area should be upgraded to ease congestion and pollution. Underpasses should replace pedestrian crossings.
- Comments relating to transport problems in Loughborough
- The Highway Agency (HA) is keen to encourage sustainable modes of transport and to promote modal shift but needs to be satisfied that any proposed development in the area takes account of the potential impacts on the Strategic Road Network. The M1 motorway within the district operates at between 100-110% stress suggesting there is no spare capacity on the route and that further development in the area may accentuate this situation. The A46, however, operates at between 0-90% stress. suggesting there may be some strategic capacity on the route to accommodate growth. However, the

operation and capacity of the network at this strategic level can mask localised delays and capacity constraints.

- Loughborough suffers severe congestion. The A512 is already overloaded. A bypass or 'relief road' is needed to tackle congestion problems.
- The Borough Council not having enough money to build an eastern distributor road is a good thing. New roads should not be built in the Soar floodplain.
- A dual carriageway across rather than through the Soar Valley east of Loughborough and two new link roads into the town could help relieve congestion in and open up the area east of the town for development.
- The Sustainability Appraisal appears to reject the idea of an eastern distributor relief road for Loughborough on the grounds of its impact on biodiversity, especially on the strategic corridor.
- A western bypass would be an environmental disaster. If the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension would create that need then development should be located elsewhere. A Science Park and the link road between the A6 and A512 could make Snells Nook Lane and Breakback Lane a "rat-run" bypass of Loughborough.
- Development at Garendon with or without M1 motorway widening will result in serious problems at J23, on the motorway and at the University entrance. Only an eastern bypass can provide the relief necessary.
- The One Ash Roundabout, south of Loughborough, is one of the main "bottlenecks" in the Borough. There should be no further development in this area. Consideration should be given to road safety measures.
- Fence Epinal Way between Forest Road and Ashby Road, remove pedestrian crossings and construct two pedestrian bridges.
- Para 4.48 refers to historic transport work done by the County Council as part of the Regional Plan Review broadly supporting a Sustainable Urban Extension east of Thurmaston. Since then MVA have completed a Study for the Borough Council.
- Keep people out of Loughborough centre.

## **Section: Green Infrastructure**

*Question 4.22: Have we identified the most important features of green infrastructure within the Borough?*

*29 respondents: 15 comment, 6 support, 8 object*

Some respondents considered that the most important features of green infrastructure had been identified, however many respondents included suggestions for additional features of green infrastructure or made more detailed comments on the features that been identified. A summary of comments is set out below:

- Designate linear park/Country Park along the River Soar which would be protected from development other than recreation, amenity and tourism. Should be given the same treatment as River Trent in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Support for Charnwood Forest Regional Park, but should restrict development (particularly minerals extraction)
- Concern that Charnwood Forest Regional Park may follow example of River Nene Regional Park, and that this may not be appropriate.

- Need for areas of open space (play) identified around Parklands Drive, Loughborough
- Green wedges are supported as a means of safeguarding settlement identity.
- A number of respondents have stated that Charnwood Borough Council have identified the most important features of green infrastructure.
- Concern that the purpose of green wedges to prevent settlement coalescence is being eroded.
- River Soar corridor should be protected. One of the proposed means of doing this is through green wedge designation.
- English Heritage consider Garendon Park as landscape scale green infrastructure for Loughborough.
- Garendon Park & Countryside Protection Group have published an alternative long term vision for a true "peoples' park" which is not linked to surrounding urban development
- An objection made by National Forest Company that National Forest should be included within the important green infrastructure within the Borough.
- Northeast of Borough around the Wolds deserve more attention.
- Cossington Meadows should be identified separately from the River Soar
- GOEM objects to the principle of green wedge between Loughborough and Shepshed because it is contrary to the definition of the two settlements as an urban system, it contradicts proposals for Sustainable Urban Extensions and Science Parks in this area, and the M1 motorway clearly separates the two settlements
- Concern raised about the precise boundary of a Charnwood Forest Regional Park, highlighted that the
- Historic Parks and Gardens are missing from key diagrams.
- Major (unspecified) open spaces not identified on key diagram.
- Ulverscroft Nature reserve needs to be identified as a green infrastructure asset.
- The plans does not show an appropriate level of detail and omits many watercourses, and should be reference to woodland and farmland to biodiversity.
- Some consider that Rothley Brook is not a significant landscape feature.
- Proposals for an urban extension to the East of Loughborough would provide formal and informal recreational provision in this area, and would not involve green wedge.
- Green spaces provide multifunctional benefits including flood prevention, and this function requires more attention within green infrastructure in the core strategy.
- A number of recreational, biodiversity and health benefits are highlighted for floodplains.

*Question 4.23: Do you agree that dealing with all green infrastructure assets in a single approach is the most appropriate way of achieving a net improvement?*

*19 respondents: 10 comment, 7 support, 2 object*

There is general support for dealing with green infrastructure assets in a single approach. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- There is a need for a unified approach to sport to avoid disruption and conflict at the planning stage. Indicating broad areas which are acceptable for sport would help to do this.

- The promotion of non-car transport is unrealistic if tourism is to be developed.
- There is agreement to single approach to green infrastructure provided there is detail for specific areas such as National forest and Charnwood Forest.
- Charnwood must include tourism development especially accommodation.
- The Borough of Charnwood needs to develop its visitor economy, and make more of visitors staying overnight.
- Some concern that single approach to green infrastructure will involve making trade-offs, possibly involving the selling-off of assets because some assets are considered by some to be more worthwhile than others.
- A respondent did not support the single approach and felt that sites should be considered that tailored an approach to a specific site,
- Leicestershire Wildlife Trust suggested that dealing with green infrastructure in a single approach is a worthy objective but there is a need to deal with conflicts.
- Environment Agency raised that biodiversity may be underplayed compared with other aspects of green infrastructure such as recreation and recommended a more fine grained approach to green infrastructure within development which link up with strategic green infrastructure.
- The East Midlands Water Resource Zone is forecast to be in deficit in 2012 -2013, and so the principle of water neutrality should be considered as integral to new development. The Environment Agency recommend minimum standards for residential and non residential buildings.
- Water Framework directive River Basin Management Plan will requires improvements in overall water quality.
- The Environment Agency would particularly welcome a focus on reducing all forms of waste through increasing recycling, re-use and recovery of materials.
- It will be important to have an approach to Green Infrastructure which will access funding associated with 'New Growth Point Status'.
- There is a need to recognise the difference between existing assets, mechanisms that can deliver new assets, and other approaches that are primarily restrictive policy mechanisms. Green infrastructure assets that provide a landscape backdrop must be distinguished from other assets that provide multi-functional public benefits, particularly in terms of accessible greenspace'
- It is important that each element in Green Infrastructure is given its appropriate status. Concern that single approach to Green Infrastructure may mean that importance of biodiversity is underplayed. Loss of sites of biodiversity may be compensated for by increases in recreation.
- GOEM highlight the need to be specific about what green infrastructure will be delivered (type, amount, where and reasons).
- Green Infrastructure elements of the planned Sustainable Urban Extensions merit separate consideration in the context of implementation policies relating to the allocation of each extension as a Strategic Site, under the terms of Planning Policy Statement 12 policy.
- The single approach to Green Infrastructure accords with the Regional Plan.

**Question 4.24 Any Other Comments on Green Infrastructure?**

30 respondents: 21 comment, 6 support, 3 object

There were a number of general comments made in relation to Green Infrastructure which are summarised below:

- The functions of the River Soar and Wreake valleys as flood plains must be respected, and should have no further development pressure
- There is a need to locate development where it safeguard and enhances landscape character, and where it helps to deliver strategic objectives in the Core Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy.
- There is a need to review green wedges in light of Regional Plan policy. Examples given of how this might be achieved sensitively.
- There is no mention in the Core Strategy for formal recreation facilities such as golf courses.
- Concern that further recreational development in Charnwood Forest could affect biodiversity and that development should only be allowed if it can be demonstrated that such damage would not occur.
- Barkby & Barkby Thorpe Action Group object to the proposed urban extension East of Thurmaston, and highlight the loss number of aspects of green infrastructure (agricultural land, landscape, village identity, wildlife habitats).
- Concern about the lack of reference to areas of separation.
- Queniborough Parish Council request special character status for land previously designated as an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside.
- Green Wedges should be retained (or alternative designations such as countryside/green belt considered) because of access to recreation and protecting settlement identity.
- Some support that Green Wedges can be/or shall be reviewed, and that they not prevent development.
- Land managers should be encouraged and incentivised to provide green infrastructure network.
- Natural England consider that through developer contributions, the Core Strategy should deliver green infrastructure within the Borough that is: part of 6Cs Green Infrastructure Strategy, achieves Area of Natural Green Space standards, provides recreational opportunities, provides investment opportunities at existing visitor hotspots and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, permit only high quality design.
- The network of Rights of Way in the district remain the single most important recreational resource to explore and enjoy the area.
- The Local Development Framework documents should place more importance on this substantial resource [rights of way] at a local level. Routes linking communities and the countryside offer the best opportunities to contribute towards the goals set out in the Draft Regional Plan
- Local Access Forum welcome the idea of a country park at Garendon, make specific recommendations for rights of way provision as part of the proposed urban extensions, including links to wider network and the provision of green bridges.
- There is support for the approach to biodiversity issues and evidence used.

- Geological conservation is not mentioned at all, which is an extremely important part of Charnwood's heritage. The British Geological Association proposed Charnwood as a geo-park
- There are suggestions for how Strategic River Corridors can be improved in the context of Regional Spatial Strategy, and the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Houses must be self-sufficient with spaces to grow vegetables.
- Cars must be reduced, cycle paths increased for access to work and facilities.
- Rubbish could be burnt for fuel.
- Suggestion that conveyor belt and sidings connected with Mountsorrel Quarry are safeguarded through the Core Strategy.
- Representors have highlighted potential waste treatment development associated with a minerals site, north of Watermead Country Park.
- Leisure pursuits will need to have as small a carbon footprint as possible, and will have to minimise the use of agri-chemicals.
- The role of Wymeswold Airfield is unclear and could have a role providing green wedge/green infrastructure for the Wolds villages
- Inappropriate to propose development in a Green Wedge between Loughborough and Shepshed when alternatives exist. Land north west of Oakley Road, Shepshed could form part of alternative proposals for housing in the Borough.
- There is strong support that there is a need for large open spaces across the Borough.

## **Section: Regeneration**

### *Question 4.25: Do you agree with our approach to regeneration?*

*397 respondents: 8 comment, 9 support, 3 object & 377 Proforma Letters object*

Most respondents support the approach to regeneration set out in the consultation document although there are concerns about how it relates to the four Priority Neighbourhoods and whether it is proactive enough to address the key issues within them. There is also some unity around the issue of how the preferred locations for sustainable urban extensions actually deliver regeneration benefits to surrounding communities and if the right sustainable urban extensions have been chosen. Other respondents supporting the overall approach ask that regeneration be a determinant of the scale of development within service centres and the Council ensure viable rural communities are maintained. Those objecting to the approach suggest that the Council has identified the wrong location for a sustainable urban extension in Loughborough and that greater regeneration benefit could arise if land east of Loughborough was developed instead as this is more clearly linked to a Priority Neighbourhood to the east of Loughborough. One respondent suggested that the reliance on sustainable urban extensions to deliver growth diluted potential regeneration benefits and that better outcomes might arise from spreading development around settlements in the borough.

A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- East Loughborough Priority Neighbourhood and Town Centre include areas that fall into high risk flood zone 3 and only lower vulnerability uses should be considered in these areas.

- Need to consider the impact of Peak Oil and the need for localised food/resource production
- More proactive measures should be identified within Priority Neighbourhoods rather than relying on the added value delivered by measures nearby. Regeneration is often seen as a threat to some people in these areas, because it is acquainted with changes in the built environment that are irrelevant to them and their livelihoods.
- The strategy should indicate the measures intended to address the issues identified in the Priority Neighbourhoods and set out the housing, community, tourism, open space, skills employment and transport improvements are needed;
- Regeneration can also be taken as a threat to some people because of the impact it may have on their built environment and livelihoods.
- A west Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension will not help address issues of deprivation in the East Loughborough Priority Neighbourhood.
- The indices of Multiple Deprivation identify Loughborough Hastings, Lemyngton and Shelthorpe wards as some of the most deprived in the East Midlands in terms of education, poverty and housing. Targeting development to the worst areas of deprivation should be a higher priority when considering where to locate Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- Development east of Thurmaston/north of Hamilton will assist with the regeneration of Thurmaston
- The need for regeneration should be a key factor influencing the distribution of development to Services Centres.
- Development at Mountsorrel would contribute towards its economic and social regeneration. A new road link from Mountsorrel Lane to Loughborough Road would aid economic regeneration
- The strategy to include large Sustainable Urban Extensions in the Core Strategy is flawed. In terms of meeting regeneration objectives, it would be better to allocate smaller mix used schemes across the borough, particularly in communities in the River Soar Valley, as these can be brought forward with minimal delay and will enable regeneration to take place in and around all four of the priority neighbourhoods.
- The strategy should consider a need for development to support smaller settlements like Burton on the Wolds as viable settlements
- More emphasis should be given to proactive regeneration initiatives that focus on and prioritise the underlying economic challenges within the Priority Areas: reducing the relative deprivation as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and improving the quality of life within the Priority Neighbourhoods at a faster rate than other parts of Charnwood.
- The issues surrounding studentification of west Loughborough need to have a higher priority within the regeneration approach: although a strategic housing issue it has wider regeneration impact and is at the heart of place-shaping. It also can have a significant impact on social cohesion.
- The Core Strategy should identify precisely what employment, community, tourism, environmental, housing, open space, skills and transport improvements are sought for each priority neighbourhood. This would support delivery.
- Mountsorrel and Syston are service centres that contain priority neighbourhoods. The strategy is not clear if these places should receive housing and enabling development.

- The strategy identifies a need for employment land at East Loughborough, Sileby, Shepshed and Mountsorrel but it is not clear how this relates to the overall employment land requirement.
- The west of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension is some distance from the West Loughborough Priority Neighbourhood, which appears to have a closer relationship with the town centre. No evidence is given to back up the claim that Sustainable Urban Extensions have a relationship to priority neighbourhoods or will improve the quality of life of residents within them.
- A west Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension will provide new community facilities, environmental improvements, public transport, cycling and walking measures and the restoration of the Garendon Park and Gardens. This will improve the economic prosperity of the borough and surrounding communities.
- Development at Mountsorrel would achieve economic and social regeneration of the village through the provision of affordable housing and a new road link from Mountsorrel Lane to Loughborough Road, Mountsorrel.
- The Core Strategy should allocate smaller mixed-use development in Mountsorrel as the delay in the LDS programme is hindering much needed development-led regeneration in this community

*Question 4.26: Are there any other general regeneration priorities that we should be considering?*

*8 respondents: 7 comment, 1 support, 0 object*

By its nature this question has generated a mixed response from commentators although some share a view that development should be allowed in Service Centres to support them as sustainable communities. In some instances the inference is that development should be supported in much smaller places than Service Centres. A number of comments refer to the need to consider development which would lead to an improvement in tourism related activities including at Shepshed, Wanlip/Watermead Park, on the edge settlements within the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and along the River Soar corridor. A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- Co-ordinate development opportunities around Watermead Park and Wanlip Park (proposed hotel / leisure / marina) in order to present cohesive offer for living, working and leisure in the area.
- Some rural tourism development and investment is required in the area around Shepshed with links to Loughborough University. This should be high quality accommodation, conference, banqueting and leisure
- The regeneration priorities should include a reference to providing housing choice, including affordable housing, to address issues of social exclusion and to ensure good quality housing for all sections of the community.
- The Development Strategy should not preclude appropriate regeneration and urban renewal opportunities within smaller settlements
- Reference should be made to the potential role of heritage-led regeneration in some parts of the Borough.
- The approach should recognise the potential of new tourism (eco-forestry related) related development close to communities on the edge of Charnwood Forest Regional Park

- The approach should recognise and acknowledge the benefits of focusing regeneration activity on town centre development in the main service centres.
- The approach should recognise that improved learning opportunities and community cohesion can occur from initiatives that seek to link and cluster together a wide range of agencies, including the voluntary and community sectors
- The areas of deprivation should have higher priority than the areas of urban extension.
- Greater emphasis should be given to the role of smaller development sites [than Sustainable Urban Extensions] in the Core Strategy to regenerating areas and supporting Service Centres as sustainable communities helping to support tourism and recreation along the River Soar.
- The regeneration approach should recognise and acknowledge the benefits of focusing activity on town centre development within the main service centres. It should also maximise the benefits in terms of improved learning opportunities and community cohesion afforded by initiatives to cluster service provision through links with a wide range of agencies, including the voluntary/community sectors
- Co-ordinate development opportunities around Watermead Park and Wanlip Park (proposed hotel / leisure / marina) in order to present cohesive offer for living, working and leisure in the area
- Some rural development of tourism investment is required in area around Shepshed with links to Loughborough University. This should be high quality accommodation, conference, banqueting and leisure.

*Question 4.27: Do you support the idea of Area Action Plans for Shepshed and Thurmaston?*

*8 respondents: 2 comment, 6 support, 0 object*

There is a general consensus amongst the eight respondents that Area Action Plans should be prepared for Shepshed and Thurmaston with one respondent believing that Mountsorrel and Sileby should also benefit from this approach. Leicestershire County Council has suggested other approaches should be explored first before undertaking an Area Action Plan. Thurmaston Parish Council has expressed support and a desire to work with local people and agencies to bring a Plan forward. A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- Area Action Plans are urgently required with priority afforded to Shepshed. The Council should lead a multi-agency approach.
- There should be greater involvement of stakeholders in the process of Area Action Plans
- Mountsorrel and Sileby should also be included.
- The Thurmaston Parish Council will work with interested parties and agencies to create sustainable and environmentally sound projects that contribute toward the welfare and well-being of local people and visitors.
- More consultation is required with stakeholders to explore alternative approaches before the Council commits to preparing Area Action Plans

*Question 4.28: Any Other Comments on Regeneration?*

*15 respondents: 11 comment, 2 support, 2 object*

Some of the issues raised against other questions in the regeneration section are rehearsed in this section with particular references being made to the relationship of the west Loughborough

sustainable urban extension to areas of deprivation and the need for development to support Service Centres. There are calls to ensure that biodiversity is protected, to improve the public realm in across the borough and to make better use of vacant houses. One respondent had no quarrel with the scale of housing proposed at Thurmaston but suggested that the area was not deprived and was more in need of 4 and 5 bedroom houses to balance the housing market.

A summary of the key comments is set out below:

- The West Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension does not adjoin an existing area of deprivation. However, the East Loughborough option is better related to the town's largest single area of deprivation and will contribute towards its regeneration.
- Further employment provision north of Quorn would help to meet the educational and employment deprivation in south and east Loughborough
- supports the regeneration priorities listed, but question if it is necessary to identify them all in this document as it clearly adds a great deal to the length of the section.
- It is unlikely that regeneration objectives will be fully achieved without focusing larger scale sustainable development in those places that provide the greatest access to services and facilities. This should be a factor influencing the level of development distributed to service centres.
- References in the consultation document to tourism, employment, new community facilities, improved access to open space, education and training suggest a golf, leisure, tourism, residential and hotel related development north west of Shepshed would be appropriate.
- Recreational potential should be maximised but without compromising biodiversity
- There is an issue about how owners of housing and neglected land will participate in regeneration. New employment will create a need for better education.
- Run down areas should be improved and empty houses brought back into use so as to reduce the amount of houses that need to be built.
- The old hospital site at Baxter Gate presents a poor impression of Loughborough and is in need of attention
- There is very little deprivation in Thurmaston however more 4 and 5 bedroom houses will help to make the village more self-sufficient.
- Paragraphs 4.79 and 4.80 recognise that the Indices of Multiple Deprivation show that parts of Thurmaston are ranked within the 20% of the most deprived areas in the Borough. The Sustainable Community Strategy has responded to the these issues by declaring parts of South Charnwood (parts of Thurmaston) as priority neighbourhoods where focused effort will be made to overcome hardship.

## **Section: Delivering Well Designed, High Quality Developments**

*Question 4.29: Do you agree with our approach to design?*

*25 respondents: 5 comment, 18 support, 2 object*

The majority of respondents supported the Council's approach to delivering well designed, high quality developments. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- Charnwood has some fantastic buildings from which a lead should be taken. However, recent developments in Loughborough have, in many cases, been blandly designed, with

- a poor choice of, sometimes cheap, reconstituted, materials and limited relief on facades.
- A policy against lurid colours on buildings would be useful.
  - The Core Strategy should encourage good quality design and use mechanisms such as Building for Life criteria for all developments in order to fulfil the Government's objectives and policy requirements as outlined in Planning Policy Statement 1. Any policy should be consistent with targets for renewable energy, energy efficiency and carbon reduction and must also refer to the importance of green infrastructure.
  - Clarification was sought as to the planning policy mechanism by which compliance with these non-statutory standards of Building for Life is achieved. It was stressed that the Council should develop these standards through public consultation and independent scrutiny. It was therefore suggested that a general design policy within Core Strategy is followed up by detailed proposals in the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.
  - There was concern that the Building For Life Criteria does not fully address local distinctiveness and sense of place and so it was important to continue to use Historic Landscape Characterisation and Conservation Area Appraisals to support these particular issues.
  - The references to "conserve and enhance" in respect of heritage are noted and confirm the need to add the "enhance" dimension to the Core Strategy Vision and Objectives.
  - The Council needs to develop detailed design briefs to influence applicant's Design and Access Frameworks for major developments, such as the urban extensions and the Science Park.
  - The University agrees that quality in design is a key objective.
  - The Government supports the use of the CABI Building for Life standard in assessing development proposals, and expects all major schemes to be assessed and recorded under National Core Output Indicator H6 in statutory Annual Monitoring Reports. Reliance on national policy statements in relation to build heritage is also supported by Planning Policy Statement 12, where the local planning authority has nothing to add to those policies.
  - The existing character and the use of local materials and building styles will be taken into account with the development of the Sustainable Urban Extension west of Loughborough.
  - The residential aspect of the scheme will be developed to the Building For Life standard produced by CABI.
  - The proposal will be designed to ensure that the existing character of Loughborough is maintained and enhanced.
  - For non-residential developments within the Sustainable Urban Extension west of Loughborough, the design principles in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Leading In Design' will be taken into account.
  - National planning policy will be respected through the restoration of the existing historic environment and proposals for beneficial re-use of the built heritage. Any change to the character and setting of the historic environment will be designed to ensure the listed buildings and their surroundings are respected, in accordance with national planning policy.

- We support the proposal to encourage a higher standard of design which maximises sustainability benefits. This is essential to create attractive places to live which are sustainable in the longer term and which encourage a civic interest amongst residents
- The section on design does not make the link to tackling climate change which is a priority. Good design needs to refer to how developments work, as well as how they look. There should be a better integration with the section on renewables and low carbon energy generation. It would be helpful therefore to refer to government targets on zero carbon housing by 2016 and non-residential by 2019 in this section as well.
- Redrow Homes recognises the importance of good design. However, one needs to be cautious about what measure or time period may be used to determine traditional local building styles.
- Yes, but the overriding priority must be to provide a pleasant environment to live in. As well as access to services, this should include clean air and freedom from noise pollution. I doubt a residential development close to the M1 motorway can meet that criterion.

**Question 4.30: Any Other Comments on Design?**

*9 respondents: 9 comment, 0 support, 0 object*

There were a range of other comments made which are summarised below:

- Green infrastructure and renewable energy opportunities are key aspects of delivering well-designed high quality opportunities. This must be referred to and recognised.
- Design needs to consider embodied energy in construction materials.
- All new sites should be off mains sewerage or at least have grey water recycling.
- Planning permission should be relaxed for very low impact dwellings and mixed residential/agricultural settlements.
- Emphasis should be on renewable energy/car-free neighbourhoods/building in community facilities/shared gardens/local food production - all described more fully elsewhere
- The 'Building For Life' standard is referred to but the Code for Sustainable Homes can also provide a useful reference point in relation to the design of residential developments.
- Charnwood must ensure that design is to a high and consistent quality, with a mix of both market and affordable housing.
- It is critical for Leicestershire Constabulary that appropriate measures in the design stages are taken to design out crime from the earliest point. To this end, we encourage developers to work towards the Secured By Design standard.
- Delivering good design should also consider how biodiversity enhancements can be achieved in new developments
- The provision of green roofs would also help to minimise flood risk
- Design must be sensitive and appropriate to the surroundings and locality
- Past decisions have not been guided with a vision/framework and the results have been detrimental to the housing stock in the town.

## Section: Affordable Housing

*Question 4.31: Do you agree that we should consider increasing the proportion of affordable homes we require on new housing sites from 30%?*

*26 respondents: 13 comment, 5 support, 8 object*

The majority of respondents neither supported nor objected to this proposal but instead suggested that the proportion of affordable housing required should be justified by clear evidence of need and viability. A large number of respondents suggested the requirement should be informed by the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and that regard should be given to the impact on the viability of sites in the context of the current market and the additional costs of other policy requirements. A summary of other comments are set out below:

- Consideration should be given to a flexible approach as different levels of provision may be viable on different types of sites, for example higher levels may be viable on major greenfield sites and lower levels on smaller brownfield sites.
- Affordable housing from Section 106 agreements are not the only source of affordable housing, consideration should also be given to delivery on public sector land, redevelopment of social housing estates, developments and acquisitions by Registered Social Landlords and rural exception sites. Delivery in locations with a low level of development may require novel delivery approaches.
- It will be important that unduly onerous requirements are not placed on proposals for Sustainable Urban Extensions. The Council should take account of the significant infrastructure requirements associated with these major proposals in terms of their economic viability and the extent of other community benefits.
- There should be flexibility in requirements for Sustainable Urban Extensions, due to the period of time that it will take to build out. The amount of affordable housing required at any particular point in time should be determined by an up to date assessment to ensure a successful and economic scheme.
- The percentage of affordable housing should reflect the overall benefits of enabling development bringing forward a balanced community, as well as need.
- Affordable housing needs should be reflected in the housing allocations, rather than sought out of an ever-increasing quota. An appropriate level should be negotiated based on the housing need within an area, along with the size, type and tenure, subject to the viability of the scheme.
- The requirement should be informed by need and the Settlement Hierarchy.
- The downturn in the economy will increase the demand for affordable housing; however that may require a rebalancing of the mix of dwellings on the large approved development rather than a shift in the long term balance.
- Supply is not in itself necessarily the solution to the problem of individuals and families finding appropriate housing, especially in rural areas. Opportunities for further education, employment, preference for urban living could be more significant factors in determining where individuals locate.
- The proportion required should be increased to meet the clear local need.
- The approach is in accordance with Policy 15 of the draft Regional Plan.
- Concern that 40% may be too high and not achievable in practice.

- It will adversely affect the attraction of developments to people who can afford to live there.
- 30% conforms with national policy;
- 30% seems an appropriate figure. As many people move up the market ladder, this in itself vacates existing affordable homes;
- The draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment was not available at the time and so no increase can be justified;
- With recent falls in house prices, the data on affordable housing may no longer be accurate. Any increase above 30% runs the risk of making development uneconomic; and
- 40% is too great for the scale of development proposed as social problems and sub-cultures are likely to prevail. A smaller volume of social housing is desirable to reduce social exclusion and the poverty cycle.

*Question 4.32: Do you agree that we should consider lowering the threshold for sites that qualify for providing affordable homes?*

*10 respondents: 3 comment, 4 support, 3 object*

There was a fairly equal split between those that agreed that the threshold should be lowered, those that thought it shouldn't and those that felt it should be based on the evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Economic Viability Assessment. A summary of other comments are set out below:

- A maximum threshold of 10 should be set or as low as practicable without impacting on financial viability of the developers.
- The high thresholds for affordable housing have caused the problems we have.
- Reducing the threshold would potentially make sites uneconomic and could frustrate them from coming to the market.

*Question 4.33: Any Other Comments Affordable Housing?*

*15 respondents: 11 comment, 2 support, 2 object*

There were a number of general comments made about the approach to affordable housing. These responses emphasised a range of issues including the need for a robust evidence base, flexibility and a clearer breakdown of requirements, as well concern about the justification and impact of the majority of affordable housing being located in Sustainable Urban Extensions. A summary of these general comments are set out below:

- Affordable housing should be situated in the centre of towns and larger villages, close to a transport hub or railway station.
- It is likely that delivering the Sustainable Urban Extensions will have the biggest impact on affordable housing provision.
- There should be a breakdown between social rented and intermediate homes.
- There is a need to build low impact structures instead of traditional houses based on need. If we build communities instead of individual houses then there is greater opportunity for shared resources and to use locally available materials.
- Experience shows that existing policies are unilaterally subverted and not reflected in planning officers recommendations.

- Given the priority given to land uses such as affordable housing, it is not at all clear in these times of recession who will choose to live in new developments and who will invest to build them.
- As well as affordable housing Service Centres should also benefit from additional employment and market housing to support their role.
- It is crucial that the Core Strategy has sufficient flexibility built into it to accommodate changes in circumstances and that the Council commits to regular updates of its evidence base.
- The focus is on building in disadvantaged areas but the area between Shepshed and Hathern is not disadvantaged so why is development being focused there?
- How will the authority ensure the requirement for affordable housing, single person and retirement dwellings are met in the new developments?
- The changed priority to low cost family housing is going to result in greenfield developments at a time when terraced housing, currently being occupied by students, is likely to become available again. This should be taken into account.
- Need to ensure an urban extension close to the M1 motorway northwest of Loughborough doesn't become a sink estate of low cost housing.

### **Section: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

*Question 4.34: Do you agree with our approach to meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?*

*401 respondents: 2 comment, 6 support, 16 object & 377 Proforma Letters object*

The majority of respondents raised concerns about the approach to meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The comments received are summarised below:

- Sites should not be in locations that would be detrimental to property values or the community.
- Agree there is a long tradition of Romany gypsies, Irish travellers and fairground people travelling around Britain defined by individual and distinctive lifestyles and various occupations. They should choose their particular lifestyle and freedoms.
- Support para 4.111 as this acknowledges the requirement to plan for the need arising in Charnwood.
- Support para 4.112 as this could give the flexibility as required by the Regional Plan to work cross boundary to meet the overall requirement set out in the Regional Plan.
- Strongly support the planned provision of sites, and also support provision of smaller sites better able to integrate with surrounding communities. The advantages of locating transit sites in locations well related to the trunk road network should also be considered.
- It is inappropriate for the Core Strategy to identify specific locations. Deciding locations for sites needs a lot more thought and planning and should be based on assessments of the full range of options.
- As well as site allocations, a criteria-based policy is needed to help identify locations of future sites and to meet unexpected demand.
- The planning process is too slow to meet the Circular 1/2006 aim 'to increase significantly the number of sites with planning permission in order to address under

provision over the next 3-5 years'. The Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment indicates a need for 9 pitches to 2011, and 2 more pitches to 2016. The Core Strategy gives no delivery dates but suggests delay if another Development Plan Document has to be prepared. Annual targets for provision of sites are needed and they should be part of a Local Area Agreement.

- The Core Strategy needs to indicate whether sites will be social rent or owner-occupied and consider other delivery issues (eg the role of S106 agreements).
- The proposed minimum provision appears to fall short of the minimum additional pitch requirements set out in Policy 16 and Appendix 2 of the Draft Regional Plan with Proposed Changes. There is also no reference to working across administrative boundaries to identify land for additional pitch provision.
- It is unclear the decision to locate sites in Sustainable Urban Extensions was guided by consultation with local gypsies and travellers. Without such consultation the Core Strategy must be considered unsound. If necessary, further outreach consultation should take place to ensure sites planned are in the right places, the right size, and the right tenure.
- Provision of Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment requirements should be actioned well ahead of most of the outstanding housing development. What seems logically linked to Sustainable Urban Extension development would delay what the Borough Council see as a current priority.
- Gypsies and traveller sites will lead to thefts, increase in rubbish, and adversely affect property values. Experience at Coalville highlights the antisocial behaviour of travellers and the extra burden sites could put on the police. The presence of travellers may cause a significant increase in petty crime and vandalism, making Sustainable Urban Extensions unattractive places to live.
- Sites for showpeople may be acceptable as they integrate better with local communities.
- The 2007 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment looked at pitch requirements for the periods 2006-2011 and 2011-2016. For Charnwood the assessment identified a need for 9 pitches to meet needs over the first five years and 2 pitches post 2011. This suggests a need for the early release of sites to address shortfalls and a backlog in provision. Proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions are likely to come forward in the medium to long term, post 2011, and will not therefore help meet these more immediate needs.
- Few occupants of social housing are working class employed. About 48% are single mothers with many of the rest unemployed and immigrant families. The inclusion of Gypsy, Traveller & show people sites tries to create a good impression about proposals that will locate disadvantaged families in south east Charnwood. It would be a real tragedy to have such a high concentration of disadvantaged families in one area, with the possibility of them being stuck in a cycle of poverty.
- More appropriate to identify suitable previously developed sites within existing urban areas to meet the identified needs for the period 2006-2011.
- Gypsies and travellers should not be located in the Thurmaston Sustainable Urban Extension as schools and other community facilities will not come on stream for some time. Quorn would be a better location as this is accessible, better served by facilities and close to Charnwood Forest and the M1 Motorway
- Including Gypsy, Traveller & show people sites in a west Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension means it might become a sink estate dominated by social housing.

- The proposed gypsy site west of Loughborough is in a densely populated area and many people would be affected. The less densely populated area east of Loughborough would be more appropriate.
- A site at Wymeswold Airfield could meet all requirements for travellers et al.
- Location of sites needs a lot more thought and planning given the large amount of equipment involved

**Question 4.35: Any Other Comments Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?**

3 respondents: 3 comment, 0 support, 0 object

Other comments are summarised below:

- Close consultation is needed with communities that will be affected by Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites planned as part of Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- A new travellers' site will not be popular and may require new refuge collection methods and additional policing.

**Section: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation**

**Question 4.36: Do you agree with our approach to large-scale renewable energy?**

22 respondents: 8 comment, 13 support, 1 object

Many of the respondents considered that there is too much emphasis on large scale development serving the national grid would have significant affects on the landscape and historic environments and may have an impact on the viability of developments. Local generation schemes should also be considered for major development sites, together with micro-generation. It was considered that this approach is too sweeping in character, and could result in a large number of wind farms across the eastern part of the Borough. The strategy does not have enough emphasis on local schemes serving local needs which could contribute to a sense of community ownership, and therefore care. We should avoiding locking residents into one source of energy.

A summary of other comments are set out below:

- Zero carbon new builds require low embodied energy.
- A mixture of renewable energy sources should be developed as well as alternative energy sources used to create a zero carbon development in the selected Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- The required percentage of energy from decentralised and renewable sources should be higher, at 20%. This required percentage should increase in stages over the Plan period to 2026
- National Farmer's Union asks also for explicit support of small-scale on-farm wind turbines, which meet primarily the farm's needs.
- Any policy seeking a percentage of onsite renewable energy generation in new development incorporate an element of flexibility to allow for circumstances where it will not be viable or suitable to incorporate renewable energy equipment to reduce CO2 emissions by a given percentage. This would be supported by Paragraph 8 of

Planning Policy Statement 22. The absence of any flexibility conflicts with the intentions of Government Guidance within Planning Policy Statement 22 and its companion guide.

*Question 4.37: Do you agree that sustainable urban extensions should be zero-carbon in advance of the building regulations?*

*22 respondents: 10 comment, 9 support, 3 object*

Most respondents agreed provided consideration was given to the viability and deliverability of such schemes without the detriment to other important areas of delivery within the Sustainable Urban Extension. This can be tested through the supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1. Many felt that the Council would have to demonstrate its understanding of the practicality and commercial realism as to how to achieve Code Level 5 and 6 as an essential step towards delivering this standard. It was also felt that the Councils could do more to encourage personal responsibility in energy efficiency and conservation. Greater effort should be afforded to renewable energy at a local scale. Consideration should be given to all new housing, and even if economies of scale are difficult for schemes below 10 dwellings, it should still be possible to achieve some embedded generation. Equally there should be a statement about levels of efficiency that will need to be achieved in all new buildings between now and 2016.

A summary of other comments are set out below:

- No development should take place without the provision of allotments. This will reduce our carbon footprint and will allow access to good food, exercise and will bind communities together
- There was a debate about whether this could add value to Policy 2 of the Regional Plan or whether The Secretary of State would resist any accelerated requirement as was done as part of the Regional Plan Proposed Changes.
- New Growth Point funding will not be sufficient on its own to ensure that the Sustainable Urban Extensions will be exemplar zero carbon developments. They will also need developer funding, Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy and possibly some exchequer funding as well.
- There was some concern that the technology required to achieve Code Level 6 is not currently as advanced and cost efficient as first thought, as suggested in the Calcutt Report (Nov 2007). Achieving Code Level 6 on a mass scale is still unproven, especially in terms of viability. Building costs could rise by up to 60%.
- The Sustainable Urban Extension west of Loughborough provides the opportunity to reduce CO2 omissions compared with more dispersed development where integrated mixed land uses and public transport/cycle/pedestrian movement opportunities are less achievable.
- There is a need to consider the embodied energy of buildings as well as their lifetime emissions. It was suggested that a project be established to build a house only from materials in Charnwood to serve as an education project.
- The threshold of 10 for renewable energy requirements could mean that no sustainable standard homes would be developed in Other Settlements, Small Villages, and Hamlets, where only small-scale development would be permitted.

*Question 4.38 Any Other Comments on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy?*

*16 respondents: 15 comment, 1 support, 0 object*

Respondents also made a range of more general comments about renewable and low carbon energy. A summary of the comments is set out below:

- Paragraph 4.118 regarding the 'potential expansion' of the anaerobic digester at Wanlip, further information is necessary to demonstrate that the expansion of the site is deliverable in terms of flood risk, highway issues and agreement from the owner to develop the site.
- Paragraph 4.122, the Core Strategy does not need to repeat Regional Spatial Strategy policy. Core Strategy policies are required to be locally distinctive, and repeating regional policy would be contrary to Government Policy contained at paragraph 4.32 of Planning Policy Statement 12.
- Any biomass plant or Combined Heat and Power plant which uses waste solely or predominantly as a fuel source would be classified as a waste recovery facility and as such would have to accord with emerging policy provided in the Leicestershire and Leicester Waste Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies which aims to direct facilities of these types to specific areas (see Policy CSI in particular).
- Much of the previous consultation which has taken place has assumed a continued supply of cheaply available fossil fuels. The period covered by Charnwood's Core Development Strategy coincides with the impending "Oil Crunch" and likely local increase in the effects of Climate Change. Due to these twin pressures, we need to radically rethink the planning process to rapidly move to localization. This a process for re-localising the essential components of a community's infrastructure – energy, transport, food, health and housing, such that it can still sustain itself whilst reducing it's carbon footprint. Thus it addresses the twin threats of Peak Oil and Climate Change. Community involvement at all levels is vital to this process with support for people and businesses as they come to terms with the idea of radical societal change.
- The Core Strategy should acknowledge that only new employment premises are likely to benefit to any significant degree from the introduction of low carbon/renewable energy initiatives.
- The promoter of the potential East of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension have stated that an east of Loughborough option would be well located to take advantage of opportunities for biomass, wind energy and hydro-electric generation. The Prestwold Estate is actively pursuing options for renewable energy generation that could support a Sustainable Urban Extension in this area.
- British Waterways support a positive policy towards low carbon energy installations, provided that environmental and amenity criteria are met and that such proposals will not adversely affect navigational safety. The use of canal water for cooling buildings is another alternative for reducing carbon footprints.
- East Midlands Airport recommend that given the approach to large-scale wind energy proposals and the proximity of the Airport to the District, the requirements of Circular 01/99, 'Safeguarding Aerodromes, Technical Sites, and Military Explosives Storage Areas', needs to be considered. Wind Turbines can create certain problems for aviation in terms of their potential for presenting a physical obstacle to air navigation and they can affect signals radiated from and received by aeronautical systems. The rotating blades create electromagnetic disturbance, which can degrade the performance of these systems and cause incorrect information to be received. The amount of interference

depends on the number of wind turbines, a wind turbine's size, the construction materials used, the location, and on the shape of its blades.

- East Midlands Airport took on the responsibility for aerodrome safeguarding in 2003. In order to assist developers, the Airport strongly encourages dialogue prior to planning permission being sought.
- The Council needs to clarify that it is not seeking to apply local standards of sustainable construction (excluding within the Sustainable Urban Extensions) in advance of the programmed application of the Code For Sustainable Homes to be contained within the Building Regulations. There are considerable cost and design implications related to the implementation of the Code For Sustainable Homes that will inevitably take time for developers to incorporate into their activities, and any alterations to the national standard are considered unhelpful.
- Wilson Bowden note that in Paragraph 4.121 of the Core Strategy document states that the University and Council are discussing the feasibility of a decentralised energy network that could be used beyond the boundaries of their campus and the Science Park. It is not clear whether the reference to the Science Park means that which is already exists or that which is proposed but in any case we are keen to hear the details regarding feasibility and whether there are genuine possibilities available.
- Lafarge have highlighted that there will be an increase in need for aggregates to facilitate growth. Therefore, there must be a recognition that Mountsorrel Quarry is well placed to meet this demand.
- The feasibility study is over-simplistic and therefore flawed because it only looks at average wind speed, not other planning considerations. This is potentially misleading future developers into sites that may be unsuitable and away from more suitable sites.
- The proposed selection of suitable sites for on-shore wind development as shown on the map on page 67 has not taken account of the requirements of the European Landscape Convention (2007) without there being a proper landscape character assessment of the areas concerned
- Engage with Parish Councils in the areas identified with potential for wind development to ensure that proper account is taken of landscape character independent of developers.
- The areas which are identified as having potential for renewable energy generation need to be considered further and removed if they conflict with currently adopted planning policy or placed in a separate list of sites with existing planning constraints.

## **Section: Retail and Town Centres**

*Question 4.39: Do you agree with our overall approach to retail and town centres?*

*15 respondents: 7 comment, 7 support, 1 object*

The approach was generally supported however the following points are made below:

- There is a need for adequate retail facilities to be located in sustainable urban extensions in south of the borough
- There is support the general approach in the proposed retail hierarchy and for reviewing District Centre at Thurmaston, but review should include extending the boundary of this District Centre to include the Asda supermarket.

- Core Strategy should support the development of District Centres to support local and elderly residents without access to the car.
- Anstey Parish Council state there should be a ban on fast food outlets
- The Core Strategy would benefit from more commentary on how retailing will be considered outside of Loughborough town centre.
- The policy is too narrowly focussed on retailing, and should be widened out for other issues such as transport, public realm, heritage and improvements for visitors
- Core Strategy should ensure that out of town development is not granted permission
- Farmers market should be expanded to more locations.
- There may be the need to provide evidence to prove that it is feasible to expand Loughborough Town Centre to meet floor space needs up to 2026.
- The designation of Mountsorrel as a District Centre to address retail or regeneration needs would be supported through Planning Policy Statement 6.
- The approach needs to address the short term issue of the need to provide convenience retail floor space which has arisen from the overtrading of existing stores.

*Question 4.40: Do you agree with our approach of focussing new retail floor space towards Loughborough town centre?*

*9 respondents: 2 comment, 7 support, 0 object*

The majority of respondents supported the approach however the following comments were made:

- Should be support for local retailers as opposed to national chains
- Development of a Sustainable Urban Extension to the East of Loughborough would help to unlock the potential to expand the town centre by removing traffic and providing improved public transport.
- Out of town developments would be contrary to the ethos of sustainable communities.
- The established District Centres should be considered as a focus of new retail floor space (per paragraph 4.130), given the recognised capacity stated within the Retail and Town Centres Study (2008)
- The Core Strategy lacks serious approach for brownfield/ waste areas within inner poorer areas of Loughborough, and there is little mention of the town centre masterplan.
- The Core Strategy lacks serious approach for brownfield/waste areas within inner poorer areas of Loughborough, and there is little mention of the town centre masterplan. The student housing policy is destroying inner Loughborough.

*Question 4.41 Any Other Comments on Retail and Town Centres?*

*11 respondents: 6 comment, 1 support, 4 object*

A number of respondents also made some general comments about retail provision and the town centres. These comments are summarised below:

- The current approach of having no restrictions of student housing provision in the town centre excludes potential retail development from town centre and therefore renders retail policy in the Town Centre worthless.

- There is a need to address empty shop units and space above shops, as there is a potential for many homes and unkempt and empty shops to have a negative impact on the town.
- There is a need for specific mention of leisure matters and an over-arching policy to promote and protect existing cultural and community facilities.
- Small scale retail development such as farm shops must remain a valid form of farm diversification
- A policy promoting a safer and attractive evening/night time economy is suggested
- There is question over the need for new retail development when there are existing vacant unit which are an eyesore.
- The Rushes development should be remodelled to provide enclosed main arcade with market stalls.
- The Core Strategy document contradicts the conclusions of the Charnwood Retail and Town Centres Study as it does not address immediate need for new convenience retail floorspace.

### **Section: Infrastructure Provision**

*Question 4.42 Do you agree with the list of things developers should contribute towards?*

*30 respondents: 15 comment, 10 support, 5 object*

The majority of respondents supported the list of things developers should contribute towards and highlighted the need to ensure requirements are in line with government policy and not so onerous that they effect the viability of development. There were also a number of suggestions for additional types of infrastructure that respondents felt developers should contribute towards including places of worship and health facilities. There was also a desire to see the requirements clarified to ensure effective implementation.

A summary of the comments are set out below:

- The approach to developer contributions needs to be in line with Circular 5/2005 which requires that planning obligations are only sought when they are relevant to planning; necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the proposed development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and reasonable in all other respects.
- For Service Centres, more detail of actual allocations would be required to assess any additional education infrastructure that may be required.
- It should be made clear that each application must be considered on its merits based on the type of proposal and existing capacity of existing infrastructure.
- Careful consideration needs to be given to sustainability, feasibility and pooling of contributions to ensure that contributions are delivered in a phased, viable and coordinated way.
- The policy needs to be strengthened, particularly for major developer proposals.
- More detailed reference should be made to Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Need to provide more information about how the Council will secure delivery of contributions including master-planning, pre-applications enquires and/or negotiations.

- Need to provide a clear, consistent, robust and transparent approach to negotiating, securing and implementing developer contributions which accords with the Regional Plan and the Statement for Requirement for Developer Contributions in Leicestershire. It is important that the Council works in partnership with the County Council.
- The Leicester and Leicestershire Growth Infrastructure Assessment should be used to help ensure a joined-up approach which makes the most of funding.
- Infrastructure/service providers should be fully engaged in the process.
- A number of respondents suggested additional types of infrastructure that developers should contribute towards:
  - places of worship, providing dedicated buildings for faith groups to help create a cohesive society and relieve the pressure on health services;
  - health facilities;
  - archaeology, both the aspects covered by Planning Policy Guidance 16 and opportunities for enhancement and interpretation;
  - cultural facilities;
  - local food supply;
  - costs of employing a Community Officer and a Manse for a Minister of Religion from an early stage in the development to help create a sense of belonging and pride for new residents;
  - local parks and green spaces;
  - libraries;
  - facilities to reduce crime e.g. CCTV infrastructure, street lighting, design of public and open spaces involving the Force Architectural Liaison Officer;
  - investment in current police stations or consideration of alternative new Police Station accommodation;
  - hospitals;
  - local health services in planning for the health impacts of fuel poverty and increased levels of depression/fear/anxiety among the vulnerable; and
  - water resources and water quality, strategic river corridors, flood risk, waste reduction and waste management, and minerals.
- The National Forest development planting guidelines should be included in the policy to achieve consistency with other Local Development Frameworks for the Forest area and National Forest Strategy.
- Too many developers have made large profits but placed large burdens on and/or reduced the quality of life of the existing community, there is therefore a good case for developers to meet the total cost of infrastructure requirements.
- In relation to trigger points, it is important that the Council impose discipline upon the developers to ensure facilities are provided when they are needed.
- British Waterways would welcome the opportunity to engage in the preparation of this policy. There are opportunities for waterways to be used in a variety of ways to make acceptable development that would otherwise be unacceptable.
- The recognition of the need to provide new infrastructure to support development is particularly pertinent in terms of safeguarding the Strategic Road Network, and seeking to secure developer contributions to deliver such measures is welcomed by the Highways Agency.

**Question 4.43: Any Other Comments on Infrastructure Provision?**

*12 respondents: 10 comment, 1 support, 1 object*

The responses to this question highlighted the need for an Infrastructure Plan to support the Core Strategy, for key stakeholders to be more closely involved and to be clearer about a range of issues including other forms of funding that are available for infrastructure provision and. A summary of comments are set out below:

- Contrary to Planning Policy Statement 12, the Core Strategy does not set out an infrastructure plan. This should include the infrastructure required to support development, associated costs, sources of funding, the organisation responsible for delivery, timescales, triggers for provision and funding gaps.
- An Infrastructure Plan could provide a basis for consideration of mechanisms through which contributions to the costs of strategic road infrastructure may be apportioned between developers, providing a greater degree of certainty.
- An infrastructure Plan will provide the evidence base required to underpin an effective planning obligation and any other future form of developer contribution such as the Community Infrastructure Levy. A Supplementary Planning Document alone is unlikely to be adequate to persuade developers that such contributions are necessary.
- Not all the improvements to physical, social and green infrastructure will be secured in association with development. Growth Point funding will be required to support the delivery of the ambitious growth. The strategy should set the context for investment decisions by statutory agencies and form the basis for bids for Growth Point funding.
- Core Strategy fails to address the need for a package of transport improvements for Loughborough, highlighted by the County Council, to support future growth.
- This is a very important issue which should be enshrined in the local policy. Experience indicates that such requirements are not taken seriously when officers make recommendations, which raises concern about implementation.
- National Grid wish to be involved in the preparation, alteration, and review of Development Plan Documents that may affect their assets. This includes policies and plans relating to infrastructure, site-specific allocations or land-use policies affecting their interests.
- The wording of the policy should outline that the Council will work with service providers to facilitate their land and building requirements through the development opportunities which contribute to the Sustainable Community Strategy aim of ensuring fair access to services. New development should be assessed against its impact on existing local infrastructure and new provision made where necessary, as part of the development.
- Need a policy that clearly spells out the expectation that development generates pressures and should come with associated infrastructure when it is needed so as not to put an unreasonable burden on local infrastructure and services.
- It is not apparent that the Council intends to have regard to the impact of planning obligations on economic viability when negotiating planning obligations.

- Paragraph 4.135 implies that developers will be expected to address existing shortfalls. The principle that planning obligations should not be used to address existing deficiencies is established at paragraph B9 of Circular 05/2005.
- There is a lack of provision made for places of worship and the spiritual welfare of those living in new developments. Faith groups have difficulty in competing with commercial/residential pricing and are included in the general 'community use' category, so are trying to compete with doctors' surgeries and other profit making or centrally funded bodies. Policy should be introduced to allow the use of employment land, if other considerations are met.
- Concerns that there is a plan to remove Shepshed's Fire Station and whether all service providers such as the fire brigade and police have been informed of proposals.

### Section: Introduction

*Question 5.1: Do you agree with the boundaries drawn for each sub areas?*

*18 respondents: 4 comment, 9 support, 5 object*

Almost half of respondents to this question agreed with the boundaries drawn for each sub area whilst almost one-third objected to them. A summary of the comments is set out below:

- The Loughborough/North Charnwood sub area has been defined appropriately. The overall development strategy for Loughborough must have regard to the movement of people for work, retail and leisure. The key opportunities relate to the University and Science Park, and Loughborough's role as a Sub-Regional Centre. Inward investment needs to be maintained to ensure the continuing economic success of Charnwood.
- Defined sub-areas are somewhat mechanistic and do not reflect the more complex relationships between communities. It is unclear how the definition of sub-areas will influence the spatial strategy and decisions on the location of development. The Development Strategy should be in conformity with the Regional Plan which identifies the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Loughborough Sub-Regional Centre as the key urban influences in the Borough. If sub-areas are retained, they should be amended to reflect the more extensive sphere of influence of Loughborough
- The split between north and south Charnwood is a legacy of previous Structure Plan policies which identified the Leicester and Leicestershire Urban Area (settlements adjoining Leicester) and a wider Central Leicestershire Policy Area. This approach has not been taken forward in the Regional Plan and there is therefore no basis in strategic policy for this approach. The Regional Plan identifies the Leicester Principal Urban Area (including Birstall and Thurmaston in Charnwood) and specifies the amount of development to be directed towards the Principal Urban Areas and elsewhere in the Borough focused on Loughborough as the Sub-Regional Centre.
- Support is given to the recognition of the River Soar Valley as a distinct sub-region, which is the focus of service provision for the Wolds, the northern part of the Forest and the River Wreake Valley. More emphasis should be given to the A6 Service Centres, which have the most potential for further development.
- It is not clear why boundaries have been defined for each of the sub-areas.
- There is some inconsistency between the description of the sub-areas and the diagram presented in the Further Consultation Paper. Loughborough and the surrounding area is described as comprising Loughborough, Shepshed, Hathern and the River Soar Valley villages of Barrow upon Soar and Quorn. However the plan shows an area focused on Loughborough and Shepshed. This does not reflect Loughborough's sphere of influence which extends to the River Soar Valley villages including Quorn.
- Anstey should be included within the Charnwood Forest boundaries.
- The boundary dividing north and south Charnwood should be moved so that it doesn't run through Charnwood Forest.
- Contrary to government guidance, the boundary of the Charnwood Edge Sub-Area does not follow any readily identifiable physical features on the ground. It should be amended

to follow the line of the A607 to the west of Syston and the A46 to the north, with the intersection of these boundaries at the Hobby Horse roundabout.

*Question 5.2: Which sub area do you live in and what do you think are the key issues and opportunities?*

*8 respondents: 8 comment, 0 support, 0 object*

Respondents to this question made the following comments:

- Quorn – Key issues are maintaining the village identity as Loughborough encroaches southward from Grange Park along the Epinal Way and vehicle access to Loughborough.
- The Wolds – Key issue is that it is an inappropriate area for any significant housing development for environmental and transport reasons.
- Wreake Valley – Key issue is ensuring vehicular access to facilities in Loughborough.
- Anstey – Key issues are retaining village identity and addressing poor employment provision.
- Normanton on Soar – Key issues are protecting green open spaces, preserving the river's natural environment, provision of leisure facilities, addressing flood risk, and protecting biodiversity.
- South Charnwood – Key issue is the retention of settlement separation.
- Burton on the Wolds – Key issues include the provision of a safe cycle track to Loughborough, wind or other renewable power generation and shopping/post office facilities.
- There is a need for a 'Pets in Need Pet Aid Hospital' in Loughborough.

*Question 5.3: Any Other Comments on the Sub Areas?*

*2 respondents: 2 comment, 0 support, 0 object*

Only one comment was received suggesting that Charnwood must resist attempts by the Boundary Commission for England to include Birstall/Thurmaston in the City of Leicester and that High Leicestershire and the Wolds should be identified as important landscape areas.

## **Section: South Charnwood**

*Question 5.4: Do you have any comments on the proposals for South Charnwood?*

*17 respondents: 12 comment, 2 support, 3 object*

The respondents to this question made a number of general comments in relation to the retail hierarchy, other key influences on this part of the Borough that are not mentioned and the alternative options for major growth in the south of the Borough. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- We support the general approach to the hierarchy of centres within the Borough and agree that these centres should be the main focus for retailing in the future.
- The Thurmaston District Centre has an important role to play in the future of South Charnwood. The existing facility should be consolidated through its extension to include the Asda store, rather than declassified, which would impact on its ability to serve the existing and future residents of Thurmaston.

- South Charnwood is extremely prone to flooding.
- The Council need to consider all the alternative options in the area before concluding that the land East of Thurmaston/North of Hamilton is the most suitable location for the Sustainable Urban Extension. Sites at Birstall and Anstey are incapable of delivering a Sustainable Urban Extension and would cause unacceptable environmental impacts.
- The proposals are good and sound (based upon the premise that the required number of dwellings is correct).
- A higher level of new development should be located within and adjoining the Principal Urban Area. This approach is considered to be in line with Regional Spatial Strategy requirements.
- Settlement separation should be protected in the same way as radial green wedges in order to prevent urban sprawl between Leicester and Loughborough.
- There are opportunities to develop previously developed land which would improve areas of deprivation and support the role of the Service Centres along the River Soar. The viability and deliverability of concentrating new housing and employment development in a single location is questionable. There is insufficient detail about how the strategy will be delivered and none about monitoring. We would support further development elsewhere to ensure that housing targets can be met. Clearer direction is required about the location and extent of further developments. To maximise the opportunities available and provide a contingency a small number of large sites or broad areas of search should be allocated as strategic sites in the Core Strategy.
- The Grand Union Canal should be mentioned in paragraph 5.19.
- There needs to be more recognition of the role that the National Forest will play in adding to the green infrastructure resource in the South Charnwood area.
- We have concerns relating to protecting land between Rothley and (A46) Birstall, to ensure that the separation zone remains intact. This would prevent further urban sprawl along the River Soar Valley.
- The strategy of allocating alternative sites adjoining the Principle Urban Area is the right approach, having the benefits of being within close proximity of existing facilities and services that can be utilised and improved. A broad range of sites must be made available to meet the emerging Regional Plan requirements. The Borough cannot rely entirely on the 5000 unit Sustainable Urban Extension to deliver the housing trajectory.
- The element of the sustainable urban extension centred on Thurmaston raises the possibility of rebalancing Thurmaston as a functional urban area, including the function of the District Centre. This could be a more effective approach than seeking to downgrade a thriving retail centre. Specific reference to public transport connectivity such as a new rail station is strongly supported. The potential to extend urban public transport links into sustainable urban extensions was a major factor in justifying this policy approach in the Regional Plan. It is noted that the transport consultants MVA did not assess the need for the road improvements suggested here by the Highway Authority. Evidence of the need for such improvements will be required to justify the inclusion of such measures in the Core Strategy.
- The description of green wedges at sections 5.21 and 5.22 is confused and contradicts the discussion at Committee when the draft document was considered. Section 5.21 states that there is a deficiency in smaller scale open space provision an in local park provision. Such deficiencies should be remedied through the design of a new

development (and via Section 106 Agreements). Green wedges are not an appropriate way to secure this and should be withdrawn.

## **Section: Sustainable Urban Extension to Leicester**

*Question 5.5: Is there anything else that we should consider in planning for this sustainable urban extension?*

*39 respondents: 13 comment, 0 support, 26 object*

A number of comments were made about other factors that need to be considered in the process of planning for the proposed sustainable urban extension including opportunities for investment in green links and biodiversity improvements and the need to consider cultural facilities, appropriate crime prevention elements and older people's housing needs. Advice was also received about the need for new schools. A summary of comments received are set out below:

- Leicestershire County Council advised that the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension is likely to generate a need for approximately one large and two medium sized primary schools. The County Council would expect the developer to provide sites free of charge within the Sustainable Urban Extension and fund the new schools from Section 106 contributions. The proposed Sustainable Urban Extension is also likely to generate a need for approximately 830 secondary places (including post-16 places). The County Council would expect Section 106 contributions from the developer to enable them to expand nearby schools to accommodate these children.
- The wider benefits of the proposal and the contribution it could make to future development needs, beyond 2026, should be considered. There is a need to take account of the review of the Regional Plan to cover the period to 2031.
- There is an opportunity to deliver biodiversity improvements, especially in habitat connectivity and creation of floodplain wetland along the regional corridor of the River Soar and the local corridor of the Melton Brook. This could contribute significantly to local and regional Biodiversity Action Plan targets.
- There is an opportunity to improve natural green space and provide investment in a green infrastructure link to Watermead Country Park.
- Need to consider improved transport links north and south and across the borough.
- Need more bungalows for senior citizens and to prevent bungalows being knocked down or turned into houses, putting them beyond the budget of most old age pensioners.
- Apart from houses and factories, what cultural facilities are envisaged?
- Due to land shortage, people in all parts of the world have to live in flats, this should be considered to help to solve or ease the problem.
- The provision of 40% social housing is too great for new build on the scale suggested and is likely to lead to social problems.
- Need to do any work designing, planning and building sympathetically to Thurmaston's residents.
- Environment Agency states that proposals must meet the objectives and criteria of relevant environmental legislation, regulations, and policies.

- English Heritage would seek involvement in the development of a master plan for a major development in South Charnwood.
- It will be important to ensure that facilities such as CCTV infrastructure, street lighting, and the design of public and open spaces, are all to a suitable standard.
- Leicestershire Constabulary note that there will need to be a growth in Policing resources to accommodate the proposed development. Two stations provide 24/7 policing services for the area at Loughborough and at Syston. There would therefore need to be increased investment at those two sites or consideration of an alternative new Police Station to replace those buildings. This is especially true north of Leicester, where the continued use of Syston Police Station as the basis for delivery of policing for South Charnwood would no longer be fit for purpose. There is a need to consider seeking developer contributions for this.

In addition to the suggestions above, a number of respondents also used this question to raise concerns about the detailed proposals:

- Concerns about what influence residents have over the process.
- Concerns about what industrial units will be provided as there is no longer any industry left, only pickers, packers and fork lift drivers.
- Concerns that the Park and Ride will bring cars into the area from all regions including Melton Mowbray or Shepshed.
- Concerns that the proposed bypass which will dissect 27 properties from Barkby village.
- The map excludes a road which links Barkby Thorpe Lane and Barkby Lane which would create an obvious rat run from the development to Syston.
- New schooling facilities would need to be built early and not after the housing is completed. We have seen other developments where the schools and shops were the last thing to be built, putting additional pressure on existing facilities for years.
- Will plans for the installation of speed humps along Barkby Thorpe Lane be shelved? Traffic would be too slow with the humps and there are already huge tail backs caused by the shopping centre. It is only a matter of time before there is a serious accident.
- There was a great deal of concern about the proposal for gypsy, traveller and showpeople accommodation. Concerns relate to perceived problems with increased crime, antisocial behaviour and the amount of noise and rubbish and what measures can be put in place to tackle issues when gypsies, travellers and showpeople do not pay council tax. With these perceived issues it will be difficult to establish community relations and there will be a need for imaginative planning and policing.
- Questions are also raised about who will want to buy a house built near sites for gypsies and travellers suggesting it will have an effect on residents' house prices and insurance.
- There were also suggestions that the police and social services are unable to deal with problems arising on travellers sites and concerns that this proposal aimed to drive disadvantaged families into the southern-most corner of the Borough out of the way.

*Question 5.6: Any other comments on the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension to east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton?*

*2 respondents: 0 comment, 1 support, 1 object*

The majority of comments about the proposal are summarised under Question 4.11 as they relate to the proposed location for the development. Two respondents, however, made

detailed comments about the proposals set out in Chapter 5 and these comments are summarised below:

- This is a new town in all but name including a town centre, schools, clinics and provision for industrial areas, opens spaces, and even gypsy and traveller pitches. This proposal to build a town the size of Syston on good farmland that currently separates Barkby and Barkby Thorpe from Thurmaston and the Leicester suburb of Hamilton is opposed.
- Government Office for the East Midlands strongly supports the delivery focus of chapter 5 stating that this is the sort of policy that national guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 12 is looking for in Local Development Frameworks and Core Strategies.

## **Section: North Charnwood**

*Question 5.7: Do you have any comments on the proposals for North Charnwood?*

*25 respondents: 11 comment, 6 support, 8 object*

The respondents to this question made a number of general comments in relation to the Science Park proposals, green infrastructure and the retail provision in the north of the Borough. There were also further comments on the alternative options for major growth in the north of the Borough. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- The town centre is constrained and retail and commercial land should be provided elsewhere in the settlement to encourage investment especially that which has been previously developed.
- Land to the East of Loughborough Sewage Works should be allocated for high quality employment to accompany the specialised offer proposed at the science park.
- The Science Park proposals complement the housing growth that is planned in the area to the north of A512, which offers considerable synergies within the Core Strategy proposals that are uniquely available to the west of Loughborough.
- Compared with other high quality employment areas in the UK, a lower percentage of the land at the Science Park should be given over to landscaping.
- The Science Park is a folly that will despoil green field land and cause congestion.
- West Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension is based on the principal that no significant traffic will arise. It is not clear if the residents will benefit from jobs at the science park.
- The Science Park extension will encroach on land on the fringe of the Charnwood Forest and the last green open space before Shepshed.
- Land at Ashby Road, Shepshed has potential for housing, retail, hotel or leisure development and should not be protected solely for 'B Class' employment uses.
- Emphasis should be placed on securing additional convenience floor space in the shorter term within North Charnwood and the Retail and Town Centres Study recognises significant over-trading, notably at Tesco, Park Road,
- The local centre should be Park Road/Hazel Road recognising the inclusion of the proposed local centre that is part of the outline planning permission for the Grange Park (Middlethorpe) development.
- The Charnwood Forest boundary should be delineated and follow the boundary of the Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside shown in the local plan (2004).

- Green wedges should be positioned to protect the natural environment and the range of leisure facilities provided by the river and canal.
- Proposing to build over the Garendon Estate is unacceptable. There are alternative approaches for the use of the green wedge.
- The Grand Union Canal should be mentioned.
- Any new development in Soar Valley villages must respect and enhance their character so as to retain a sense of community. Without community policing problems and quality of life suffer.
- English Heritage objects to development adjacent to Garendon Park and the road link through the Park. Concerns are also raised about the Park's proposed development as a country park.
- Concerns are raised about the proposal to develop the Garendon Park as a Country Park.
- Objections are raised against developing adjacent to the Garendon Park and the road link through the Park.
- The development of the Sustainable Urban Extension west of Loughborough provides the opportunity for and means of restoration of the historic Garendon Park and repair of its listed buildings and monuments, with the considerable added benefit of public access which currently does not exist.
- The restoration of the park will also provide an opportunity to enhance the quality of the area in respect of biodiversity, through a network of wildlife sites, and especially recreation opportunities associated with a new public park.
- This land is precious for its landscape character and is of national importance ecologically and international importance geologically.
- Planners were ill-informed at the exhibition, as they were unaware of the location of the stream in the green corridor and the fact that there was a sewage works near the refuse tip.
- It is already used as a recreational area for most of the county, including the population of Leicester. Massive population growth in the town will put dangerous pressure on the landscape, ecology and geological interests of the area.
- Charnwood forest needs the protection of a buffer zone of green land around it, not development up to and into it.
- Further development will ultimately lead to a coalescence of towns across the midlands. This will increase the social divide between the north and the south of the country and seriously reduce the quality of life for all.
- The proximity of the open countryside is a major factor in the sense of well-being for some people.
- Regional Plan strategy to concentrate development in the three cities has taken away the identity of the communities in this area. Loss of identity like this will reduce the sense of pride of Charnwood people in their home area.
- The location and scale of development planned for Charnwood needs to be considered in connection with the scale and location of development planned for north/west Leicestershire. The cumulative scale of development in both of these areas will adversely affect the transport situation, our living environment and quality of life.
- The need for the scale of development proposed is unclear and it is likely that Loughborough will lose its market town feel as a result.

- The character of Loughborough is already threatened by the scale and extent of the university and insensitive design of buildings allowed in the town.
- The town suffers from gridlock most days. The M1 motorway regularly has problems. An increase in population will make matters worse and improvements in public transport are not likely to help.
- It is not clear why the Science Park Development Plan Document found that Garendon was unsuitable for the science park but is now viewed as acceptable for housing in the Core Strategy.
- Roads across the Charnwood Forest are increasingly used as a rat run to avoid the major routes and more housing to the west of town will exacerbate this situation.
- The developer should provide sites free of charge within the Sustainable Urban Extension for new primary schools and fund their construction from developer contributions. Contributions should be sought to improve nearby secondary schools.
- Greenfield land will be required as there is insufficient brownfield land. This proposal can create a sustainable extension comprising of a mix of land uses and infrastructure.
- The Sustainable Urban Extension will benefit the wider area in particular Shepshed where there is an identified need for regeneration which will be facilitated significantly through the creation of employment opportunities.
- The proposals are sensible but will place pressure on the road network to the north of Loughborough.
- The consideration of alternative options has not been founded on robust transport evidence and the sustainability appraisal is insufficiently robust to provide a comparative assessment.
- Development west of Loughborough will need to include land to the South West and South of Loughborough to provide potential for longer term growth of the town but this will impact on the settlement identity of Shepshed, Hathern and Quorn.
- The West Loughborough option is not well related to Priority Neighbourhoods or the town centre and its services and facilities in comparison to the eastern option.
- It is not clear if the west option offers the best transport solution for the town.

## **Section: Sustainable Urban Extension to Loughborough**

*Question 5.8: Is there anything else that we should consider in planning for this sustainable urban extension west of Loughborough?*

*12 respondents: 8 comment, 2 support, 2 object*

A number of comments were made about other factors that need to be considered in the process of planning for the proposed sustainable urban extension including access to green spaces and biodiversity improvements and the need to consider environmental legislation and the provision of places of worship. Advice was also received about the need for new schools and the promoters of the west of Loughborough proposal provided details of their proposal. A summary of comments received are set out below:

- Leicestershire County Council advised that the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension is likely to generate a need for approximately two medium sized primary schools. The County Council would expect the developer to provide sites free of charge within the development and fund the new schools from Section 106 contributions. The proposed Sustainable Urban Extension is also likely to generate a need for approximately 600

secondary school places (including post-16 places). We would expect Section 106 contributions from the developer to enable us to expand nearby schools in Loughborough.

- The Environment Agency suggests the inclusion of the objective: "Development proposals must meet the objectives and criteria of relevant environmental legislation, regulations, and policies."
- The National Trust is concerned about the potential impact of development close to Garendon Park, especially if this impinges on its wider setting, but do not, object to the general approach to or the location of proposal, subject to this proviso. It is possible that there could be related benefits, including the stated intention to secure public access. However, this will be of more limited benefit if the qualities of the historic park and gardens and their wider setting have been compromised in the meantime. This is a matter that requires a detailed solution based upon a full understanding of this historic asset. It is disappointing that there is not a separate section in the consultation document on the historic importance and features of Garendon Park.
- Reference should be made to improvements to habitat connectivity and to accessible greenspace. There are improved opportunities here to create improved biodiversity links north to south.
- As the proposal will intrude into Garendon Park with a new road, suggest that industrial units be situated around this road adjacent to the M1 motorway. This would at least keep HGVs out of residential areas and close to motorway access points.
- The road link proposed between the A512 and the A6 is supported.
- There is need for places of religious worship. Our church is growing and cannot find anywhere for a new hall in North Charnwood.
- Persimmon and William Davis state in their response that their proposal will include the provision of the following:
  - A community hub adjoining one of the primary schools provided;
  - Early phase of delivery of key new social infrastructure to ensure that a successful community is created, with links to existing residential areas;
  - Two new primary schools, the new residential population will be fully served by this new primary school provision.
  - Affordable housing including a mix of tenure and type of housing.
  - Up to 20ha of strategic employment land that will complement the scale of housing, the needs of Shepshed and Loughborough and Science Park.
  - Significant improvements and additions to the existing road and public transport network, including a link road between the A512 and the A6.
  - Public access to a restored historic Garendon Park, maintenance of green gaps between Loughborough, Shepshed, and Hathern, sustainable urban drainage systems, an appropriate hierarchy and network of play spaces.
  - Include a renewable energy strategy from its inception, with flexibility to take advantage of new technologies.

*Question 5.9: Any other comments on the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension to the west of Loughborough and north of Garendon Park?*

*6 respondents: 3 comment, 0 support, 3 object*

The majority of comments about the proposal are summarised under Question 4.10 as they relate to the proposed location for the development. A number of respondents, however, made detailed comments about the proposals set out in Chapter 5 which are summarised below:

- The proposals are not clear about when building will start, what is the projected timescale of development is and when the bypass option will be discussed and begin.
- Experience shows that these consultations are used to tick boxes, and give the pretence of consulting the public, but there is little or no intention of responding to the feedback.
- We would hope that no further extension Derby Road Industrial Estate is needed with these proposed new employment sites at the Science Park and urban extensions.
- The promoters of the East of Loughborough option highlight that the approach to transportation issues means that the Core Strategy fails to address the need for a package of transport improvements for Loughborough, as highlighted by the County Council, to support future growth.

**Section: Alternative Options for Directions for Growth to the Principal Urban Area of Leicester**

*Alternative Option A – East of Thurmaston/North of Hamilton*

*11 respondents: 4 comment, 2 support, 5 object*

The majority of respondents object to this option citing a range of issues. Traffic and transportation is a significant concern with the exacerbation of existing congestion (particularly around the roads near ASDA), poor air quality and the poor level of public transport were identified as reasons not to promote further development. Concerns are raised about the extent the option will intrude into the countryside, urbanising an attractive area and threatening the open breaks between settlements and agricultural land. flooding and drainage issues were seen as an issue and the capacity of the Thurmaston Dyke in particular. Some respondents doubted the degree of deprivation in the wider area and if the option would result in any real improvement. The provision of a new local centre was likely to make the severance of the community worse amplifying the east/west split in Thurmaston.

A summary of the comments are set out below:

- Pedestrian access to the countryside would significantly decrease from the existing areas of Thurmaston. Local people will have to drive to the countryside to find walks.
- 5,000 houses east of Thurmaston will have a significant traffic impact. A comprehensive road traffic assessment, highlighting proposals for the new road schemes, should be made clear to all surrounding villages.
- To reduce levels of traffic, any road infrastructure should satisfy the objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy that seeks to move away from private cars to more sustainable modes
- Road infrastructure should not erode green spaces between settlements and threaten settlement identity. Local people should be consulted on this issue.
- Development will destroy the existing separation of East Thurmaston from the City and threaten its identity
- The area to the east of Thurmaston is attractive countryside with footpaths and bridleways.
- Question the feasibility to create a link from the development to Watermead Country Park via a green wedge given the scale of development involved
- Development will exacerbate air quality problems in Thurmaston, particularly in Humberstone Lane.
- Public transport is already poor in the area and no details have been provided of the transport measures required to mitigate this proposal
- There is significant traffic congestion at certain times of the day along side ASDA and problems will be exacerbated on Colby Drive/Colby Road/Humberstone Lane.
- Any new housing to the rear of Thurmaston will put even more congestion around the ASDA complex roundabout

- The proposed new local centre will not be accessible to those residents who live to the west of the railway line and A607 and this will amplify east and west Thurmaston - two separate communities will be created as a result.
- The development could affect the capacity of Thurmaston Dyke which could cause drainage or flooding problems
- The proposed employment land is to meet the needs of Leicester and is not therefore going to address the needs of people in south Charnwood.
- Employment land is being released on green field land in Charnwood to enable the City to provide housing.
- Unclear how this development will help the most deprived communities in Charnwood when residents have been told that only a few streets area in Thurmaston are classed as deprived
- The Council should acknowledge a need to release smaller employment sites to complement the overall growth proposals.
- This option will have a significant impact on the historic environment. English Heritage and the county Archaeologist must be involved in the decision making.
- This option has not been properly assessed and should be revised to include land to the north and east of Hamilton.
- This option will lead to further urban sprawl with the destruction of attractive countryside and good agricultural land, extending the City of Leicester

*Alternative Option B – East of Thurmaston/South of Syston*

*5 respondents: 2 comment, 1 support, 2 object*

A small number of people responded to this option. The issues raised are similar in tone to those for option A above and focus on transportation, deprivation and regeneration and impact on the countryside. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- Statements that development could improve skills are unfounded.
- This option has not been correctly assessed as it would have a highly visible impact in the area as the land is higher than surrounding countryside and is easily viewed from nearby villages
- The transport disadvantages to this option have been overplayed. The development will provide new bus services, roads and a rail station is nearby at Syston.
- This option has less of an impact on Green areas and will affect Loughborough transport less, and have less impact on flood risk.
- Any new housing to the rear of Thurmaston will put even more congestion around the ASDA complex roundabout

*Alternative Option C – East of Thurmaston/South of Syston/North of Hamilton*

*3 respondents: 0 comment, 2 support, 1 object*

A very small number of people responded to this option identifying issues related to the use of countryside, transport and flood risk. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- This option has less of an impact on Green areas and will affect Loughborough transport less, and have less impact on flood risk.

- Any new housing to the rear of Thurmaston will put even more congestion around the ASDA complex roundabout

#### *Alternative Option D – North of Birstall*

*7 respondents: 1 comment, 3 support, 3 object*

Respondents to this option were split in their opinion of the impact of development on the settlement identity of Rothley and the prospect of the city adjoining the village. On the one hand there was concern about the loss of separation and the other it was felt that a landscape belt would be sufficient to protect the village. The respondents were able to identify many reasons for not developing in this location including impact on traffic congestion, existing infrastructure and its lower landscape and ecological value than other options. Other respondents cited the similar issues as reasons why the option was preferred. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- This option will not destroy the existing separation of Charnwood Borough villages from the city.
- Challenges the assertion that there is a constraint on the scale of development that could be accommodated in this location due to the proximity of other settlements, when there is such a large land mass between settlements. Principally questionable, when considering that the Thurmaston/Hamilton option proposes to join up two settlements.
- A new landscaped forestry screen could be created to reduce the impact of development on Rothley and protect is separation and identity. Rothley Lodge Commercial Park and Wyevale Garden Centre demonstrate that it's possible to screen developments satisfactorily.
- The option north of Birstall would not adjoin Rothley or Birstall, therefore it would protect the green wedge between settlements.
- This option is no more detached than the Thurmaston/Hamilton proposal as a dual carriageway separates Thurmaston village centre from the proposed 5,000 dwellings.
- It does not present an air quality management problem, being positioned at a far higher level than the Thurmaston/north of Hamilton proposal.
- It would have less impact on Thurmaston, Syston and Barkby in transport terms as there is no evidence that there is a highway solution to the proposed growth east of Thurmaston/north of Hamilton.
- It has the most potential to reduce the need to travel by car, as it has good quality access to alternatives in the form of high-frequency Loughborough-Leicester bus service and national cycle route 6.
- The option offers the possibility of being connected to the nearby Great Central Railway network, which could be a very significant means of transport in the future.
- Already benefits from regular bus services, offering easy access employment, healthcare, retail provision and a range of cultural, media and sports activities in the city centre, Birstall and Loughborough.
- Birstall already has planning consent for a park and ride facility for 1,000 vehicles, which will be completed within the plan period.
- It has excellent access to the A46 and A6 strategic road network and offers easy access to the national motorway network and so would be attractive for investors and innovative companies.

- The option has potential to tackle social exclusion because of its proximity to Birstall.
- This option has better access to Watermead Country Park than the Thurmaston/Hamilton proposal.
- It already benefits from a nearby leisure centre - Soar Valley Leisure Centre.
- There are no significant flooding issues as it's located in Flood Zone 1.
- It will not give rise to any significant harm to historic or archaeological interests.
- The options has the opportunity to be better designed to reduce the impact on the landscape and townscape character, particularly in comparison to the recently built hotel, garage, fast food outlet and soon to be built fire station at the A46/A6 junction.
- This is a greenfield site the same as the Thurmaston/Hamilton location.
- Even though this would involve the loss of Grade II agricultural land it is currently being used for non-agricultural purposes, for example, the commercial display and sale of garden sheds and conservatories.
- The land is serviced by gas, electrical, telephone, water, drainage and sewage infrastructure.
- Provides an opportunity to remedy existing deficiencies in open space provision funded by developer contributions under towards Planning Obligations.
- The option presents the opportunity to protect the Biodiversity Action Plan species, which in this area are associated with the woodland landscape along the Rothley Brook, after a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Plan identifies the detailed requirements.
- There are no nationally protected species in this location
- It would provide affordable housing, new community facilities including schools.
- The option would be able to support and deliver a far greater range of services and facilities than the Thurmaston/Hamilton option.
- Development could affect the setting of listed buildings at Rothley including the Grade I Rothley Court Hotel and Chapel and the listed buildings in the Town Green area. It is possible any impact could be mitigated through masterplanning.
- Concerned about Birstall being incorporated into the City
- Concerned about the increased traffic that will be caused through Birstall and the additional pollution, especially as the Park and Ride scheme has been delayed
- A great number of houses have already been built north of Birstall and created parking problems for the existing older residents in the vicinity of the new mini Tesco (which in itself has also caused parking problems). This requires more parking in the area
- The A6 roundabout at the junction with the A46 is now very congested due to the new housing, a petrol station and motel already being built, further development will increase this congestion.
- There is insufficient infrastructure in place to cope with the scale of development proposed and further development will adversely affect existing residents.

*Alternative Option E – North of Glenfield/South of Anstey*

*9 respondents: 2 comment, 3 support, 4 object*

A small number of people commented on this option raising a range of concerns. There was particular concern about the impact of this scale of development on the village of Anstey and surrounding countryside and its ability to support this level of development was questioned in

terms of social and physical infrastructure, particularly in light of the development that is proposed in neighbouring authorities. Some respondents commented that development at Anstey would not be an extension to the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the A46 was seen as the natural limit in this location. There was a concern that allowing the Principal Urban Area to cross the A46 would affect the ability to create a cohesive community due to the severance created by the road, the existing green wedge and the existing flood risk area. There is concern about the traffic implications of growth on particular routes

A summary of the comments are set out below:

- Anstey is a relatively small community in a semi-rural surrounding which offers a quality of life unique to such smaller communities. Development of this scale would completely destroy this and change Anstey into a small town.
- There is an important green wedge between Anstey and the City which provides an isolating green corridor between Anstey and the city of Leicester.
- This option would cause traffic and this will exacerbate the use of Bradgate Road as a route run as it seeks to access J22 of the M1 motorway and beyond. This will be made much worse in summer as traffic seeks to get to Bradgate Park.
- Local infrastructure cannot cope with the prospect of doubling the population of Anstey.
- The option will lead to the loss of valuable/productive farmland. This country simply cannot go on losing such productive land in this manner.
- It is not clear why so many houses are required given that so many remain vacant across the country.
- The cumulative impacts of the development proposals within Blaby District and this location need to be taken into account.
- There is a group of Grade II listed buildings at the Green in Anstey that are located adjacent to the area, so there would be potential setting issues, as well as impacts on settlement/townscape character. It might be possible to mitigate these impacts through sensitive design as part of a master planning process for the site.
- This option has less of a green area impact, affect Loughborough transport less, and have less impact on flood risk
- The A46 is a significant barrier to the northern growth of the City, Thurgate and Birstall and to create a Sustainable Urban Extension in this area would require the continuation of development beyond this barrier up to Anstey. The A46, green wedge and flood zone would sub-divide the new community.
- This option would threaten the ambition to protect the green wedge to the north of Glenfield within Blaby District and its entry into the City.
- Anstey is not currently within the Leicester Principal Urban Area (as defined in the Regional Plan) and an Sustainable Urban Extension to Anstey would not be well-related to Leicester.
- There is doubt whether a development north of Glenfield and south of the A46 would be of sufficient scale to support self-sufficiency or important community facilities such as a primary school. These facilities are required because most local services are beyond reasonable walking distance and cut off by significant barriers of the A50, A46 and A5630.
- Housing development south of the A46 at Glenfield would place a burden on local social infrastructure and have detrimental impacts on traffic around the Glenfield area

- The amount of land available for development is limited because of flood risk associated with Rothley Brook.
- The land south of the A46 could be brought forward as a smaller urban extension to Glenfield because:
  - Landowners are ready to sell land to the south of the A46 for development
  - Development is sustainable in this location because it is possible to walk or cycle to nearby services and facilities, it is not in the floodplain, near listed buildings or wildlife sites and a smaller part has already been urbanised.
  - Highway and other infrastructure can be provided
  - It will not adversely impact on green wedge or landscape character and the identity and separation of Anstey will be preserved.
- The proposal would be beyond a reasonable walking distance and in any case would be bordered by the A50 and A46 which are major barriers to development and therefore it is unlikely that future residents would access services and facilities from settlements in Hinckley & Bosworth.
- The Rothley Brook and green wedge form a natural boundary between the Sustainable Urban Extension and settlements in Hinckley & Bosworth thereby impeding any possibility of coalescence.
- Loughborough lies at the extremity of the Borough and is hemmed in by the river, canal and railway. A new bridge over the river, etc would enable expansion to the east. Many cities have rivers running through them. A possible location is somewhere between Stanford and Zouch. The shortest option is from the end of the main road running through the Bishop Meadow trading estate to Bowley's Bridge on the other side accessing land in Rushcliffe. With the bridge in place infrastructure costs would be progressive as development grew. Another opportunity would be to use the way-leave of the old Great Central Railway as a cycleway to Loughborough station.

### **Section: Alternative Options for Directions for Growth to the Sub-Regional Centre of Loughborough/Shepshed**

*Alternative Option A: South of Loughborough*  
 10 respondents: 2 comment, 3 support, 5 object

The responses indicate that this option has less environmental impact than others and is easier to mitigate. However, there are concerns about the loss of separation between Quorn and Loughborough and the coalescence of Woodthorpe with Loughborough. A summary of the comments is set out below:

- The site appears to satisfy the basic requirements for development and is worth further investigation.
- The negative aspects of the option are much less pronounced than those of other options and are easier to mitigate.
- There are two Grade II listed buildings in this area. Development would have a significant impact on the settlement character/identity of Woodthorpe, where one of the listed buildings is located. It might be possible to mitigate these impacts through sensitive design as part of a master planning process for the site.
- Development in this area will have less landscape impact than other options as it does not impact on the Charnwood Forest or River Soar corridor.

- Good agricultural land will be lost and there may be an effect on the Outwoods area.
- The Council's Habitat and Species Survey suggests there is little of ecological value in this location. There are no protected landscapes or historic environments and the nearest forested area to the south of the site (Mucklin Wood) is 1.15km away.
- Developing the site would allow the creation of new wildlife corridors to mitigate any impacts between the Charnwood forest and the urban fringe.
- The option does not negatively impact on Charnwood Forest and development can help to enhance and protect the Forest.
- A link road from the A512 towards Quorn will present traffic problems.
- The option is well-served by frequent public transport and is likely to make the least negative impact on the road network than other options.
- Development that does not extend to the south of the A6 Loughborough Road or west of the railway line would have minimal impact on Quorn and Woodthorpe is simply a group of properties on the periphery of the Loughborough urban area.
- There are no flooding issues and surface water run off can be managed through SUDS.
- Whilst this option is not physically close to the jobs at the university or north east employment areas, it is well-served by public transport.
- This site will provide an opportunity to bring a more even distribution of jobs around Loughborough and will be accessible to residents in priority neighbourhoods and attractive to inward investors.
- Quorn has had enough housing. The school and health centre will struggle to cope with more children and patients and there will be more cars and pollution in the village.
- Woodthorpe forms a psychologically important barrier between the Loughborough and Quorn and the loss of the barrier would be a potential stepping stone to linking Loughborough to Quorn.

#### *Alternative Option B – South West of Loughborough*

*417 respondents: 2 comment, 2 support, 413 object*

The vast majority of respondents object to this option. There are significant concerns particularly in relation to the significant landscape and visual impact within the Charnwood Forest area of particularly attractive countryside, the transport impact in particular significant traffic impact on inadequate roads and poor provision for sustainable modes, harm to the separate identity of Loughborough, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves, ecological impact in the area adjoining the Outwoods Site of Special Scientific Interest and on the woods themselves, possible flood risk and drainage impact in an area already prone to flooding, inadequacy of services and facilities to support the development, lack of job opportunities in Loughborough and damage to a major and very popular recreational area based on footpaths and bridleways connecting the town to the Outwoods.

There are strong views put forward that this very sensitive edge of the Loughborough urban area should not be developed. Other locations within and around Loughborough in particular brown field sites would have less impact on the environment, particularly in terms of landscape and ecological impact. Provision of more student accommodation on campus could release thousands of houses in the town back onto the market. Some of the other proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions reviewed in the Core Strategy would also perform better against planning and

technical criteria. South West Loughborough does not provide a sound alternative to any other options and therefore should not proceed.

A few respondents support or do not object to this option because it would provide housing a resource more valuable than a view and because the town would benefit from a ring road linking radial routes with the M1 motorway allowing release of land for development, stimulating the local economy.

Some respondents suggested that if development were to proceed footpaths and cycleways would need to be segregated from roads and located within green landscaped strips to make them safer and more attractive; roads should be designed to restrict through traffic in housing areas; there would need to be a range of affordable housing; and the ecology of Outwoods must be protected from light and noise pollution and trampling by visitors.

Those that objected to any proposal to develop in this location raised the following issues:

*Planning Policy*

- Regional Plan guides growth in the region establishing housing and employment targets. Housing figures for Charnwood have been reduced from 19,300 to 15,800 dwellings. Less housing needs to be apportioned within the rest of the District and mainly at Loughborough – 9,200 new homes down from 12,500. The allocation of 2 Sustainable Urban Extensions as suggested by the site promoter would mean over supply of land and over concentration of housing on the west edge of Loughborough. There is little need to allocate this option either on its own or as an additional Sustainable Urban Extension. In any case it does not perform better than the officers' preferred option.
- The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan policies seeking protection of the landscape and important open spaces being saved are still a material consideration. The area of land affected by this proposal is identified as an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside (Policy CT/7) that should be protected for its own sake. Whilst this policy may be subject to review its importance is not diminished.
- This proposal should not be allowed to benefit a developer at the expense of an area of beauty, biodiversity and unique usefulness to all the citizens of Charnwood and beyond.
- Any contributions for road improvements or a new school would be short term gains against a long term loss that could never be recovered.
- Demand for homes must be balanced with a sympathetic approach to locations and local constituents.
- It seems odd that a farmer wishing to build a property on his own land would find it very difficult on land designated agricultural, but a property developer can purchase agricultural land and seek to build a small village on the outskirts of the town.
- A proposed small housing development off Bramcote Road was dismissed at Public Inquiry despite vigorous representations from local building firms, on grounds that the land formed a natural foreground to the view of the Outwoods, and should not be developed for housing until every other possibility in the area had been exhausted.
- If 3000 dwellings are allowed it will only be a matter of another 15-20 years before it is extended together with a bypass. The current local plan was the subject of consultation over many months and has already rejected a potential road through this area. It is not right to replace this with housing of this scale and impact at the last minute.

### *Need for housing and alternative locations*

- Building thousands more homes on such a lovely area would devalue existing properties. The concepts of 'need' and 'investment' seemed to be confused when it comes to housing. There is certainly no need for a single extra house of the quality that would be built in the Outwoods area. The price of quality/executive houses reflects profit potential and has nothing to do with real demand.
- This area is not convenient for families due to a lack of essential amenities. The town needs good affordable housing for lower income families. There are far too many executive houses and student flats and this imbalance needs to be remedied in future developments. There are better locations to provide a more sustainable mixed community based on affordability.
- There is no need for 3,000 new houses. Population is declining and the recent influx of migration has reversed. The Council has in the past far too easily used the excuse the University and students are "good" for the town, bringing in income. The proliferation of student flats on and off campus means perhaps 2,000 -3,000 small terraced houses will return to the market for private buyers. There is enough housing already or soon to be empty to cater for growth. If the Council charged Council Tax to landlords properties would return to the market.
- The Council should compulsorily purchase undeveloped derelict/brownfield sites for housing. There are a number of substantial brown field sites in Loughborough (e.g. near the Midland Mainline Railway station, the Grand Central Station, the old hospital site, town centre sites, east Loughborough sites) and other settlements currently unused and unsightly. There is a lot of employment land that is not in accessible and serviceable locations, which was used for different uses than the requirements of today. These sites are now redundant.
- Developing derelict and brownfield sites would rejuvenate the town, be close to amenities and reduce the need for car travel. Only once these options have been pursued should greenfield development be considered. Smaller developments around the town would have a more balanced impact on the town and its infrastructure and would not require extra roads. Dispersed traffic would not cause such problems.
- Planning should seek to reduce population size.
- Rather than provide a dormitory town for Leicester, Derby and Nottingham, with everybody using the M1 motorway to go to work there housing should be directed to the Three Cities.
- All new and existing properties must be sold before more are built. Given the economic downturn the housing market cannot support 3000 new dwellings. Existing houses for sale in the local area are not selling. As an example the Grange Park housing estate is being constructed at a "trickle". This highlights the current lack of need for properties of the sort which this development intends to provide. Further the Government indicated that the (Pennbury) New Town south of Leicester is 'no longer needed in the current credit crunch environment'.
- The Council's own preferred option has more merit than South West Loughborough being chosen following months of review and assessment of the likely impacts as set out in the draft Core Strategy. Other more appropriate locations for growth around Loughborough than this SW option that would not have as significant impact are to the east of the town, south of Loughborough (with a road structure in place and good access to Leicester and surrounding villages), along Derby Road and west of Shepshed towards Ashby.

- Even though this is a large tract of land, there is not enough room to build this number of houses. They would have to be small and built very close together, forming an early slum area.

*Environmental Impact - Settlement Identity*

- The area that the proposal covers is a defining part of Loughborough's character – the approach to the Outwoods and the tranquillity of the Outwoods are very much a part of Loughborough. The dominating effect of the proposed development becomes clear when the boundaries are mapped onto a suitably scaled Ordnance Survey map rather than Google Earth. It becomes clear that the development is not integrated into the town but is a massive standalone housing estate to be developed with no regard to Loughborough, its environs and access to the M1 motorway.
- The development is totally inappropriate in scale and character contributing to eventual creation of an urban monolith with Shepshed, helped by a science park near junction 21 of the M1 motorway. Developments off Nanapantan Road and Grange Park have taken away enough green belt on this side of town so please don't ruin the peace and tranquillity of this beautiful area by building another large housing estate.
- Loughborough, Shepshed and surrounding villages benefit from separate character and identity. Over recent years some green belt areas have been built on and Loughborough has expanded rapidly to encroach on surrounding villages. This proposal would advance the loss of separate identity of Quorn, Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves by removing the green wedge between them.
- It is essential such green areas are retained if Loughborough is not to be swallowed up by an unremitting East Midlands suburban sprawl from South Leicester to North Nottingham. Urbanisation damages the attractiveness of the area to live in and the sense of distinct local community life that currently exists.
- Charnwood Forest should be designated as a National Park
- The following consultees place the proposed development area within the Regional Park boundary: Friends of Charnwood Forest, Garendon Park and Countryside Protection Group, Hathern Parish Council, British Geological Survey, Leicestershire and Rutland Ramblers Association, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, Open Spaces Society, Shepshed Countryside Protection Group Shepshed Town Council and Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society.
- Attention is drawn to the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment which states that the Charnwood Forest landscape is of high quality and one of the main reasons for designation as a Regional Park. It also states that the nature and special quality of the Charnwood Forest landscape means the objectives are likely to be similar to those of National Parks and AONBs. A focus on landscape protection and the promotion of quiet enjoyment of the area, as opposed to regeneration and improvement is likely to be most appropriate to Charnwood Forest. By including some urban fringe landscapes and all of the Charnwood Forest villages within the Regional Park boundary, the landscape surrounding the urban areas becomes just as valuable as that of the rural areas. This means the quality of the urban fringe landscape, often under considerable pressure with housing targets, is carefully considered in planning decisions.
- The sketch proposal as submitted would also destroy the integrity of the Outwoods Trail.
- A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment carried out in accordance with current industry guidelines would probably conclude that the Landscape Character Area as well

as the proposed development site have high sensitivity to change. Also the Site of Special Scientific Interest, the Beacon Hill Scheduled Monument and the Grade II listed buildings all have high sensitivity to change.

- The significance of visual impacts on properties all around the south western edge of Loughborough would be major. Properties affected include those on (but not limited to) the following roads Craven Close, Hill Top, Beacon Road, Outwoods Road, Springfield Close, Tiverton Road, Ledbury Road, Bramcote Road, Moat Road, Valley Road, Bradgate Road, Priory Road, The Widdon, Cricket Lane and Nanpantan Road. Also there would be major landscape and visual impacts to Outwoods Farm, Pocket Gate Farm, Brook Road Farm and Hangingstone Farm.
- In addition to these potential receptors the proposed development would have a major visual impact upon the Rainbows Hospice and those in adjoining properties.
- Views of the proposed development would not only be local. One of the most significant views is that from the A60 south west of Hoton for those travelling towards Loughborough. At this point the south western rural fringe, the Outwoods and the Charnwood Forest Hills provide a truly defining backdrop to the town.
- All those who will seek to determine the outcome of this representation should walk the Outwoods Trail as many do every day of the week and then take the path along the eastern fringe of the Outwoods and look out across the farmland towards Loughborough. They should then ask themselves whether it is morally right to consider destroying what is one of Loughborough's major and defining assets for the sake of short term imperatives thus depriving future generations of what many today value so highly.

#### *Landscape and Ecology*

- The landscape south west of Loughborough is very important, a beauty spot with fields between the urban edge and the Outwoods Site of Special Scientific Interest providing the setting/ gateway for the Outwoods ridge and visa versa, the setting for Loughborough in this location. Any erosion of this, either physically or visually, would be significantly detrimental to landscape character. There is nowhere else to compare with this area for miles around. It is a landscape with its own identity.
- The fact that the promoters refer to the 'Out Woods' shows they do not know the area.
- It is absolutely vital to preserve the one kilometre of open countryside, from the edge of the Outwoods to the start of the built environment, to maintain the natural harmony between town and countryside that currently exists. The beauty of the woods is enhanced by fact that they are located on hills that provide magnificent vistas across the River Soar Valley. Eminent 'large-scale' landscape architects should be asked to provide independent opinion re the potential destruction of this natural beautiful heritage.
- Leicestershire County Council have provisionally designated this land as part of the proposed Charnwood Forest Park reflecting its value for leisure and recreation locally. Semi-urbanisation would reduce opportunities considerably contrary to objectives for enhancement. Just because land is only locally protected it does not reduce its importance nor does the fact a boundary hasn't been formally identified yet make development acceptable.
- Development below the 85m contour line would not preserve views of the Outwoods and the landscape impact would be much greater than suggested. The land rises up from the existing built edge and whilst some views will be preserved most views will be significantly affected. Landscape impact is about the views of the Outwoods and the setting of the town and the importance of surrounding countryside to this. Land between

the Outwoods and the urban Edge forms a rural setting to the town and such gaps and settings have been afforded weight by Local Plan inspectors as reasons to prevent development occurring. For example at Buntingford, (East Herts District Council) land was not even locally designated. The simple rural nature of the landscape and its recreational use was sufficient to warrant its protection.

- The South West Loughborough area has recognised landscape value, policy protection and is a very valuable recreational resource with many footpaths traversing up to the Outwoods Ridge. The landscape and visual impact of developing 3000 homes, regardless of keeping to the 85m contour line will be particularly damaging and cause irreversible loss of this historic landscape.
- The present residential area is in harmony with the landscape but this development would be out of scale with the locality.
- Loughborough and its surrounding area is truly fortunate in having such an exceptional area of unspoilt country - an area of outstanding natural beauty, an oasis of tranquillity, Charnwood's crown jewel - on its doorstep to provide residents with an accessible alternative to the urban background within which most live and work. This is the gateway to the Outwoods and onwards to the Beacon. Families, children, even people who are not so active, patients at the Rainbows Hospice can enjoy peace and wonderful views in a special place. There is nowhere else to compare with this area for miles around. Many visitors from far afield come to the Outwoods/ Bradgate area for the glorious panoramic views.
- The best legacy for future generations is to leave such places of beauty unspoilt for them to enjoy. To build even on or near them would shatter the peace offered to humans and wildlife alike.
- Part of The Outwoods Sites of Special Scientific Interest defence is remoteness, not difficult to get to but requires a bit of effort to get there. Hundreds more people tramping around would do immense harm. Local Policy EV26 [now covered by national policy Planning Policy Statement 9 paragraph 10] stated clearly that planning permission would not be granted for development which could adversely affect National Nature reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest, The Outwoods and Beacon Hill distinguish the town from other conurbations in the East Midlands. The development risks turning unique countryside into urban parkland of much less merit.
- This is the most ecologically important countryside in the Loughborough area with extensive flora and fauna and protected species. Affected would be a substantial range of birdlife (including yellowhammers, linnets, Grasshopper Warbler, Crossbill, Spotted Flycatcher, sparrows, Willow Tit, Marsh Tit, song thrush, grey partridge, goldfinches, waxwings, long-tailed tits, kestrels, sparrowhawks, herons, skylarks, buzzards), bats, foxes, badgers, slow worms, bumble bees, Great Crested Newts and lizards. The Wood Brook is home to indigenous species of crayfish. The Outwoods contain native English bluebells under threat from cross pollination by imported Spanish varieties and are a renowned area for fungi. New species are regularly discovered. The richness and diversity would be destroyed by proximity to development.
- Fields and hedgerows act as wildlife corridors, from the woods, via fields, bigger gardens in Beacon, Outwoods and Pantain Roads to wooded areas of the Holt & Mountfields School and into the town's parks The proposed development will block that movement.
- As well as species identified in the Phase I habitat survey as in need of further survey work (bats; reptiles; amphibians; white clawed crayfish; and badgers) assessment is

needed of the impact on breeding birds. Development could devastate breeding and general habitat for a wide range of species.

- Even with the proposed 60ha conservation buffer there would be an unacceptable impact on ecology. Given proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest and ancient woodland the buffer should be much greater. Whilst the buffer in most places is greater than 100m in places development will be only 40-50 m away from the edge of the Outwoods Site of Special Scientific Interest. No development, including any access road should be built in this location.
- Improvements needed to Snells Nook Lane and Break Back Lane would harm the Outwoods and involve loss of trees.
- The ecological interest would be harmed by proximity to development and people treating the woods without due consideration: noise, pets, the blocking of rabbit and badger runs, nettles and other nitrogen-loving plants from dumping of lawnmower cuttings, etc.
- The very small buffer left for protection of the Outwoods will not stop encroachment of urban sprawl up to them. The Outwoods and Jubilee Woods are within the boundary of the National Forest. The development would mean the loss of the Outwoods as a feature of the town turning them rather into the 'Backwoods'.
- The area is of great geological importance. It has some of the earth's most ancient rocks and one of the country's few great beacons. The area is known to contain running sand.
- Current residents would face the "double whammy". of losing proximity to outstanding countryside and a dramatic fall in the value of property.
- Farmland (The Greensward) covered by the application is of good quality, Grade 2 which is needed for food production. If Greenfield land is needed other, less good land should be considered.
- Litter is already a problem on Woodhouse Lane, between the Priory and the Car Park. With so much housing, the paths through and on the other side of the Woods would be spoilt.
- Too many places around Loughborough have already been lost to housing.
- Whilst some development along Nanpantan Road is not undesirable these plans for essentially a large village/small town are totally inappropriate.
- The "Conservation Buffer" would be destroyed if a South West Loughborough bypass were provided. Noise from traffic would completely destroy the character of this important landscape, its wildlife and amenity value.
- Onerous conditions planning conditions on the appearance of existing developments have not reduced the visual impact in views from 'Old John' and the Forest. The visual impact of 3000 dwellings between the town and Outwoods would be substantial.
- There would be significant noise pollution due to the unique acoustics of the area. Construction will generate disruptive noise pollution over several years. The hills and valleys create unique acoustics, meaning any development will have a disproportionate, very significant increase in noise pollution affecting wildlife too.
- Loughborough being in a valley 'attracts' air pollution, especially during cold winter nights. Increased pollution could increase illnesses such as asthma etc. People driving to the Outwoods or using a bypass would add pollution.
- Building houses in this area would cause light pollution in an area with current low levels

### *Historic and built environment*

- Loughborough over time has lost its identity to some awful developments such as The Wharf, The Rushes, the Great Central Railway. With this development Loughborough will essentially become a bland, university/ dormitory town full of high density housing and executive estates for the local cities. Whilst the core architecture has been undermined to compromise its natural beauty in this way will be a tragedy.
- This area is one of great interest to local historians as it is in the centre of what was once Loughborough Park - a middle-ages deer hunting park. Hedge dating shows many of them are believed to be at least 800 years old. It would be a travesty to build on any more of the old hunting park. Between the Outwoods and Half Way House there is copse of trees within which there is a spring which is one of the major sources of the Wood Brook. The stream "appears" at Moat House. The proposed development will have an adverse impact upon Moat Farm and Beaumanor Hall.
- The development will harm the historic value of Moat Farm, Beaumanor Hall etc.
- Every time I walk through the kissing gate I am faced by the bench with John Sismey's inscription; it would be a travesty for what he stood for to change the scenery that bench looks at.
- There are a number of Grade II listed buildings, three of which appear to be within the area, so setting would be an issue.
- The proposed development would significantly impact upon the setting of the Grade II listed buildings. Moat Farm is a Leicestershire Moated Site which is sensitive to hydrological change. The impacts of the proposed development upon the integrity of the moat at Moat Farm could be significant in terms of both water quality and quantity.

### *Sustainability and Climate Change issues*

- There is nothing 'sustainable' about this development. Building using energy intensive non-sustainable products such as concrete cannot be carbon neutral. There is nothing sustainable about covering farmland with buildings and tarmac. In the longer-term the development will bring more traffic and pollution also not sustainable.
- This proposal is contradictory in that it proposes the construction of 3,000 houses on top of the preferred option of 3,500 houses west of Loughborough. There is no proposal within the defined timescale for such an overall scale of growth. This suggests that each site would dilute the sustainability of the other and invalidate the promoter's own proposals for transport, education, social and other infrastructure.
- The proposal considers zero carbon homes to be unviable and only considers Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) level 4 to be appropriate. As this site would not score any points under CSH for enhancing ecology it would be difficult to achieve CSH6; however this must be the target for medium and long term development proposals. Registered Social Landlords will be delivering CSH4 by 2011 and therefore any Sustainable Urban Extension must be CSH6 in the medium term. This proposal would not be able to deliver the sustainability agenda.
- Building a large number of houses will add to disastrous climate change. It will reduce the number of trees that could be grown to reduce CO2 in the atmosphere. Keeping this five square miles full of bushes, trees and fields, means oxygen is released.
- The area will be spoiled and the carbon footprint of thousands of people will increase as they will have to drive to find a tranquil area in which to walk or run.

- Recent studies show new buildings as responsible for up to 10% of the UK's CO2 output. And that doesn't take into account the additional output of 3000 new homes.
- The size of the Outwoods should be increased to provide a stronger carbon sink that would absorb more of the traffic emissions from the existing, busy town. The Woodland Trust will plant new woodland for free if landowners come forward with parcels of land.
- In today's climate of imminent oil shortages and global warming our Council should be looking for a sustainable way of living for the area. Building on prime agricultural land will not help us to do this.

#### *Infrastructure - Flooding*

- There are potential flooding issues both on the site and further down stream in the town. Parts of Bramcote Road, Tiverton Road, Valley Road, The Widon, Cricket Lane have flooding problems already. It is understood two drainage ditches/brooks cross the northern section of the site converging into one culvert running through/underneath Loughborough. One of the problems is that the water cannot escape quickly enough into the small brook which runs across the open spaces in Bramcote Road and behind Moat Road and ends up in the Woodbrook. Increased run off could lead to flooding in the town or beyond. The Environment Agency are yet to be convinced that there are no flood risk issues with the development of the site and further survey work and modelling will be required.
- The Flood Risk Assessment's recognition of saturated soils and localised ponding confirms local anecdotal evidence that during winter the fields do flood after heavy rainfall and that the clayey soils are not suited to infiltration mitigation. Being classified as 'relatively impermeable'. Development may require substantial drainage mitigation to ensure greenfield runoff.
- There are also concerns about overland flows and surface flooding. An estimated max of 60% of the site (or c 60Ha) will become impermeable. Given the steep sloping nature of the majority of the site overland heavy rainfall flows could give surface flooding for lower lying properties (existing and new). Further analysis of this matter must be undertaken before the Council can make an informed judgement.
- The developer should be required to consider sustainable urban drainage techniques (SUDS). This could include underground offline storage/balancing tanks, swales, permeable pavements and rainwater harvesting, amongst other techniques.
- Nationally we are experiencing an increase in flash floods meaning that we need to be very thoughtful and cautious of the wider impact when choosing new sites for development and the nature of that development.
- Underground springs in the elevated farm land behind The Widon and Cricket Lane housing areas could possibly explain why the water table is so high in this area. Heavy rainfall regularly filled up drainage ditches resulting in overflows into the back gardens of some properties. If this development went ahead the capacity for rainfall to drain naturally would be significantly reduced and would pose a much higher risk of flood damage to existing houses.
- There is no record of flooding in the area as it is an area of sloping ground between 65m and 95m contours. Additional runoff will probably not affect residents in the new development but could put areas such as Forest Road adjacent to the Wood Brook at much higher risk of flooding. The mitigation would be substantial reinforcement of the storm sewer.

### *Other services*

- Developers promise the earth but in reality do not always deliver and local authorities have to pick up the tab for curing subsequent problems.
- Loughborough is growing too quickly for the infrastructure and services. Policing, emergency, doctors, dentists and other services are stretched to their financial limits. Covering this area will harm provision in the rest of the town.
- There is no Hospital in the town, and the Leicester City hospitals are already at full stretch without a huge expansion such as this.
- Currently Fairmeadows and surrounding residential area have no shops, the nearest being the bottom of Valley Road or Tesco on Park Road. There is currently no doctor's surgery in walking distance of this area. There are too few community facilities in this part of town. It is only recently that a post box has been provided in Haddon Way.
- Whilst there is provision for a Primary School provision for older children is more complex. Woodbrook Vale High School is full to capacity in its current Year 7 and next years intake is also at capacity. This has a knock on effect for the next level of education at the Community College.
- The area between Loughborough and Shepshed currently supports a declining school population whilst the area south west of Loughborough contains a booming school population. This development would create an unmanageable burden on the educational infrastructure.
- Development will bring more waste to an already over populated area that could mean higher Council Tax bills.
- Minor electrical supply dips are relatively common in this area with 5-10 occurrences during the winter months. The proposal does not address the provision of adequate electricity or gas infrastructure.
- Supplying drainage and sewerage for large such a number of additional houses, is a concern. The sewerage system in the area is loaded to capacity and cannot serve more properties. Considerable civil works would be required to extend and upgrade the existing largely rural system including at least one Sewage Pumping Station. All of these are going to require massive upgrades, which will have a knock-on effect throughout the whole of the East Midlands, and could cause years of severe local disruption.
- There are building restrictions along water and gas pipelines across this area.
- The developers should give an assessment of the social impact of their proposals.

### *Transport*

- Assuming an average peak hour trip rate per house of 0.6 trips per house equates to 1200 vehicles using access points at peak hours. Whilst trip rates can be reduced by the availability of facilities on site and public transport 20 vehicles per minute (10 vehicles per junction per minute) could leave the site creating a very congested road network, even with mitigation from bus services, better pedestrian and cycle links etc.
- A trip rate of 0.6 is too low compared with current levels. As an example Bailey Close generates 1.2 traffic movements / hour at peak time.
- The two proposed main access points off Nanpantan Road would be c350 - 400 metres apart. Whilst 2000 dwellings off two junctions onto one road are technically possible the proximity of the accesses makes this unrealistic and raises significant capacity issues. The situation could be made worse by the design of the main accesses. The proposed

shop/retail unit close to one of these access points would further exacerbate traffic impacts and safety issues.

- Potentially more serious could be the use of 5 secondary accesses by the bulk of the housing area as easier routes. A lot of cars could use narrow estate roads not designed to accommodate them. As an example access via Lark Rise/Spindle Road and Newstead Way would turn quiet residential roads into "rat runs" through residential areas with implications for road safety. The Spindle Road/ Fairmeadows Way junction with poor sight lines for pedestrians and drivers would become a major intersection.
- There are concerns that a "main road" shown in the indicative proposals to terminate in the Pignut Spinney Local Wildlife Site would create a new, but hugely impracticable, access through this site onto Moat Road.
- There would be significant traffic impacts of as many as 8000 vehicles on roads that are hugely congested particularly at peak times, and when there is an incident on the M1 motorway:
  - Epinal Way is very busy at peak times with no further capacity. All roads leading to the University and town centre are congested at peak times.
  - Nanpantan Road, Forest Road, Beacon Road, Fairmeadows Way would be more congested. Beacon Rd with Primary and Special Needs schools is very busy.
  - Tesco's store on Park Road will be the nearest supermarket for the proposed development and traffic is likely to cause congestion at many junctions in the area.
  - Breakback/Woodhouse Lane is already a dangerous 'rat run' for people bypassing Loughborough to reach M1 motorway and industrial estates at the other side of town.
  - Snells Nook Lane is a small country lane that cannot take more traffic. Typical journey times to M1 motorway, junction 23 have doubled in the past 10 years.
  - The A512 is already too congested
  - Valley Road is traffic calmed and unfit to access a major new development.
  - Hazel Road and Grasmere Road have the addition of Haddon Road/Fairmeadows developments and local schools with 20mph speed limits.
- A southern distributor road between A6 and M1 motorway would be needed funded by the developers perhaps jointly with developers of the science park.
- Insufficient justification is provided and the traffic figures are vague. The Council should not judge the appropriateness of this site for 3000 homes until further modelling work and assessments are undertaken.
- Objectors expect the Borough Council's study of transport implications of various Sustainable Urban Extensions around Loughborough to demonstrate development south west of Loughborough would not be appropriate even if mitigation measures could be put in place.
- Loughborough Town Centre is east of the centre of population. This development will move it to the extreme east causing unnecessarily long journeys.
- The estate could be prone to "rat running." This might be reduced by traffic calming which is environmentally unfriendly adding to CO2 emissions. If the estate had no through route traffic would use Haddon Way, Laurel Road and Fairmeadows Way which would be catastrophic.

- Local bus services and facilities will need enhancing, particularly capacity at town centre bus stops. Buses would struggle to negotiate narrow roads with many parked cars.
- An integrated tram system would facilitate travel.
- Access to the rail station is difficult. Peak hour car journey time is c25 minutes due to large tail backs at Epinal Way/Forest Road and A60/ring road junctions. Going by bus is unrealistic as there is no direct bus service and the station has inadequate parking. Cycling is dangerous, with almost no dedicated routes.
- There are currently limited facilities for residents to walk or cycle into town. Very few people currently walk or cycle even from closer-to-town areas around Valley Road, and this is unlikely to change. Cycle paths are inadequate and pedestrian users of shared paths are at risk.
- People are wedded to their cars and will only change travel habits when change is to their advantage. Grange Park has moved a lot of middle class people out of town and they rely on cars adding to heavy traffic. Holywell School has a catchment area from which pupils and parents could easily walk. In practice, there are a large number of cars at the school at opening and closing times which create congestion and have at times required the intervention of Community Support Officers and School staff to minimise inconvenience and danger to pupils. More generally while a small number of new residents would be employed in Loughborough, most would travel to Leicester, Derby or Nottingham. Most people would drive to get quickly to their destination
- Over recent years accidents have become common both on the Ash Roundabout and the roads leading up to it and a dual carriage way also coming onto it would make this problem much worse.
- Development located away from the southern and south-western fringes of Loughborough would be more likely to discourage less sustainable car-commuting towards Leicester.
- There will be increased noise pollution, traffic, air quality and road safety locally.
- With this development recreational walking would be less attractive and people would drive to Outwoods car park (which would need to be enlarged) and other destinations.
- A south west bypass would not be acceptable. Modification to Epinal Way and changing the way it is used particularly through the University area is the much cheaper key

#### *Recreation and Tourism*

- Many people enjoy this area regularly playing in the fields and using the footpaths for adventurous trips to the woods, to walk dogs and let young children enjoy the experience. The staff and students of Welbeck College use the footpaths from Brooke Lane, through Halfway House to Woodbrook Vale High School almost every day in term and for cross-country running
- There are two footpaths and one bridleway that cross the site but one of the paths would disappear at the edge of the new development. The path in question leading up to a swing gate, is heavily used by local residents. Its loss would deprive many people of access to the Outwoods because other paths are considerably longer.
- The proposed access routes (as many as 13 routes) into the adjoining residential areas would seriously damage the environmental, ecological and recreational benefits of this Green Wedge.
- Loughborough has flourished due in part to the success of the university, which has been assimilated into our town, set in beautiful countryside. Access to wonderful countryside

for training is a strong attraction for elite athletes notably Paula Ratcliffe and Charnwood Athletics Club women's cross country team currently the best in the country. The beauty of the surroundings provides extra inspiration to succeed.

- This very special area promotes health and fitness, social cohesion and sense of wellbeing – and all without costing a penny or harming the planet. To risk losing such a valuable asset would force more people into cars and deny the next generation the pleasures people now have the privilege to enjoy.
- In challenging economic times it is really important that 'low cost' recreational and leisure resources are protected for human benefit but to protect biodiversity. The Outwoods are available to everyone of any class or culture.
- There are currently ample access routes between the town and the Forest and to claim that this development is necessary to enhance access is disingenuous.
- The proposal runs counter to efforts by Charnwood Borough Council to increase tourism and encourage walking, cycling, horse riding and other recreational activities in areas extremely well-suited to these pursuits. More people should be encouraged to come to the area to see the outstanding natural beauty.
- The area should be part of a large nature reserve or park with the Outwoods and Beacon Hill at its core as at Stratford-upon-Avon. When a nature reserve was threatened by large-scale housing development on its periphery the local council bought the land and made the whole area a well-managed and accessible resource for local people.
- The Nanpantan sports playing fields would be overloaded undermining recent development as a wider community resource.
- Tourism literature frequently includes images of Loughborough taken from Beacon Hill across the countryside in question with the town beyond.

#### *Economic Impact*

- Damaging the uniqueness of the Outwoods will not help attract investment to Loughborough.
- There is little prospect of increase in large scale employment in Charnwood. Much of the East Midlands' large scale employment is concentrated in conurbations. Even in recent boom years Loughborough has not attracted employers of large numbers of people on a permanent basis. In fact former major employers e.g. Brush have contracted. It is difficult to see where additional employment will come from to support the new residents. The only jobs increase is likely to be in the lower quartile of income not making the town any richer as it will reduce the average earnings per household. If jobs are located elsewhere then the housing should be located in those places.
- Even if new jobs can be created it is doubtful that many of these will be for Loughborough people, there may be potential for a small convoy of cleaners and porters, perhaps, but there are already numerous unemployed scientists.
- Spreading towns and villages outwards only takes businesses and money away from town centres and contributes to their decline; not their growth.
- The proximity of deprived areas and being able to benefit them seems something of a red herring as the proposed development is self-contained with its own schools and shops.
- Charnwood Museum is a key attraction in the town centre attracting a huge amount of visitors and records the wildlife in this area. Visitors would no longer be able to see the records of natural science in this area and lose visitors.

- The town centre is slowly dying as a shopping centre. Two new shopping areas on the edge of town could only cause further damage.

*Other considerations*

- The Council's own preferred option is evidence based and has more merit having been tested in the public domain. Nanpantan Grange was only introduced during the last period of consultation and is based on assumptions and lacks sound evidence. It is not a sound alternative to any of the potential Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- Deliverability is questionable as the prospective developers may have pulled out of their option agreement. In the current economic climate other developers may be unwilling or unable to develop it in the plan period.

Those that supported this option or did not raise any objection made the following comments:

- This development would provide much needed housing for our children and grandchildren, a resource more valuable than a view.
- The most effective form of development in the north Charnwood area is for a sustainable urban expansion of Loughborough. This would bring economies of scale and benefits with regard to infrastructure, transport, access to services, community facilities and minimising disturbance of the surrounding countryside.
- Controlled and regulated housing will lead this country out of its current downturn. Loughborough is rapidly in decline. Shops and businesses are failing. The town would benefit from a ring road linking A6 to A60 to A512 back to A6 (through the fields adjacent Outwoods) with the M1 motorway. This would allow release of land for development, creating massive opportunities for investment in industry, business and housing stimulating the local economy and increasing work opportunities and improved housing.
- There are currently ample access routes between the town and the Forest and to claim that this development is necessary to enhance access is disingenuous.
- Footpaths and cycleways should be completely divorced from roads and located within green landscaped strips or zones to make them safer and more attractive to use. The road network should be designed to restrict through traffic in housing areas although a "screened local feeder ring road" without housing could be an option.
- There needs to be a range of affordable housing from single person units to units for young families and perhaps older people, preferably mixing socio-economic groups so there are no large clusters of any one type.
- If the South West Loughborough option goes ahead development the ecology of Outwoods must be protected from light pollution, noise pollution and potentially much more trampling by visitors.

The promoters of a sustainable urban extension south west of Loughborough, Smith Stuart Reynolds (SSR), raised the following issues with the Sustainability Appraisal.

- The Sustainability Appraisal has been used as a basis for the Council's conclusions; but this contains a number of inaccuracies. Several key criteria are inaccurately assessed, including biodiversity and landscape and access to deprived areas. These criteria are particularly important because they translate directly into advantages and disadvantages within the tables that accompany the Sustainability Appraisal Summary in Appendix A of the Core Strategy:

- Biodiversity: The boundary of the Charnwood Forest area is yet to be designated. No evidence has been put forward within the Appraisal to justify the 'significantly negative' score. It is acknowledged that the site is adjacent to an Site of Special Scientific Interest but the proposals include a conservation buffer to Outwoods in recognition of this. We therefore recommend a reassessed score of 'neutral'.
- Landscape: SSR's Preliminary Landscape Analysis and Development Strategy indicate that the Landscape falls into three categories and is not as sensitive as has been suggested by the Sustainability Appraisal. The criteria should be reassessed to recommend a score of 'neutral'.
- Access to deprived communities: The distance from the priority neighbourhoods to the centre of SSR's site is 1.25km. In contrast, for the West Loughborough option the distances are 2.2km from the neighbourhood to the centre of the northern section, and the same distance from the southern section of the option.
- The biodiversity, landscape, and proximity to deprived area criteria should not be listed as disadvantages. of a South west option.

### *Alternative Option C – West of Loughborough*

*9 respondents: 1 comment, 6 support, 2 object*

Of the small number of respondents who commented the majority supported this option and this is reflected in the nature of the comments which tend to focus on how any impact can be mitigated. The proximity to existing jobs, services and facilities, the desire to avoid development in the Charnwood Forest, to minimise impact on biodiversity and the potential for public access of the Garendon Park and Garden are all cited as advantages. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- This location is already subject to urban influences and is at saturation point. Further development would upset the quality of life of current residents and ecology.
- This development would make the most of existing services; would be the most cost effective and viable development and would enhance the employment, transport and leisure facilities to the West of Loughborough and Shepshed.
- This is the most appropriate option in light of the evidence
- Measures must be drawn up with partners to protect the biodiversity network as the option has potential to impact on Oakley Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest and other wildlife sites nearby.
- Whilst the Garendon Park/Estate is important locally it offers very little public benefit. housing development and community uses would actually benefit the local community
- There should be no detrimental visitor pressure on the statutory and non-statutory sites in the Borough.
- This option avoids merging Loughborough with the Charnwood Forest and will prevent the town spreading eastwards. A development east would swamp Cotes and join the villages of Stanford and Prestwold with Loughborough.
- The M1 Motorway creates a natural barrier between the West of Loughborough site and Shepshed.
- The new housing would also be reasonably near to existing employment opportunities, thus reducing commuter traffic.

- This option would have an impact on biodiversity, but this impact is much less than that arising from an option at Cotes.
- The approach taken to assessing this option is flawed and therefore unsound because:
  - it does not take account of the transport implications identified by the County Council or adequately address the differences between this work and that of MVA Consultancy.
  - There is no justification in the Regional Plan to appraise a site of 4875 dwellings. The plan should assess the specific proposals put forward by promoters
  - The sustainability appraisal appraised development options and transport infrastructure separately and the benefits associated with a developments ability to support the delivery of key transport infrastructure have not been recognised.
  - The sustainability appraisal considered a west of Loughborough option of 4,875 dwellings when what is proposed is 3,500 dwellings on a similar area.
- An alternative sustainability appraisal has been submitted by the promoters of the East Loughborough development option (Appendix A option E) which suggests that a development to the East of Loughborough is the most sustainable.

#### *Alternative Option D – West of Shepshed*

*5 respondents: 1 comment, 2 support, 2 object*

A small number of respondents expressed their views on this location although these tended to come from those objecting or commenting on the option. There was no overall consensus. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- This option has the least impact on biodiversity interest.
- There are no nationally designated monuments within this area, although there is a scheduled monument to the southwest, so setting may be an issue with respect to this site.
- This is totally inappropriate in terms of agricultural land being lost and would have a detrimental effect upon the landscape.
- Traffic problems would be very severe indeed.
- Land in William Davis's ownership should not be included as part of this option as it is fundamentally different in character and can be developed in association with employment land to the east of Shepshed to create a sustainable development solution.

#### *Alternative Option E – East of Loughborough*

*36 respondents: 0 comment, 26 support, 10 object*

The majority of respondents to this option supported this as a location for growth because of the provision of significant transport infrastructure (including an Eastern Distributor Road) that it is suggested will provide relief to Loughborough, it will be located in close proximity to the town centre, employment areas and the East Loughborough Priority Neighbourhood, and provide a range of community infrastructure including a district park and provide wider biodiversity benefits.

There is a concern, however, that developing in this location would adversely impact on the setting and identity of Wolds villages and would be divorced from the main urban area of Loughborough lying beyond the Soar River valley (which is renowned for flooding) in an unsustainable location. Other concerns were about the loss of agricultural land, the impact on historic landscapes, estates and the Cotes deserted medieval village, the impact of traffic on Wolds villages and the ability to fund and provide the necessary infrastructure.

A summary of the comments are set out below:

- Significant ecological benefits can be secured along with wider areas of green infrastructure. Biodiversity interests can be accommodated within proposed open space and landscaping framework. Proposals for a Riverside Park and nature reserve have been developed with Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust.
- This option would have less impact on settlement identity than a west Loughborough Option, which will seriously erode the green wedge between Loughborough, Shepshed and Hathern.
- The proposed development would provide a partial Eastern Distributor Road linking Epinal Way with the A60 without impinging on the Big Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- The majority of built development is proposed outside of the floodplain in flood zone 1. The sequential and exceptions tests for the partial Eastern Distributor Road demonstrate there are no preferable routes available for this essential infrastructure and it would deliver wider sustainability benefits for the town.
- This option would be the closest of all to the town centre, rail station and deprived communities in East Loughborough. It would support the council's regeneration objectives through the provision of accessible education, recreational, employment facilities and affordable housing. It would provide traffic relief and environmental benefits to the town centre.
- The distance from centres of employment/leisure facilities does not support the government's sustainable development agenda. The potential for walking/cycling to either work or leisure pursuits in Loughborough would be severely limited.
- The proposed development at Cotes would not have a direct impact on Prestwold Historic Park and Garden or Stanford Hall and their setting.
- The proposed development would provide areas of open space around the Cotes deserted medieval village to safeguard its setting.
- A package of transport measures including an Eastern Distributor Road provides the best transport solution for the future growth of Loughborough. The development east of Loughborough would assist with the delivery of key elements of this transport package.
- This option is capable of expansion to accommodate the requirements for longer term growth.
- The development of this option would desecrate countryside typical of the Pleistocene glaciated morphology of the East Midlands and would impact on the historical area around the ruins of Old Cotes Hall.
- The curving medieval embankment of the River Soar flood plain would lose much of its historical attraction.
- The transport solution proposed by Davidsons will make it difficult for people from Burton on the Wolds to drive into Loughborough. A flyover crossing the Eastern

Distributor Road should be required to prevent an impediment to traffic flow into the town.

- A bypass of Burton on the Wolds will be required to reduce congestion through the village
- An Eastern Distributor Road will inevitably lead to more traffic travelling along the B676 towards Burton on the Wolds which will be a heavy burden upon the village. If proposals go ahead Burton on the Wolds should be bypassed.
- This area already floods and the option will alter the water table and increase the risk of flooding
- The road infrastructure is not capable of supporting this scale of growth and flooding will make it worse leading to increased traffic on alternative routes and pollution
- Traffic congestion will increase the carbon footprint
- There is inadequate means to deal with sewage
- Agricultural land will be lost
- The option will impact on historical landscapes, within which are an ancient burial site and battle field and the hamlet of Cotes.
- This option would provide much needed road infrastructure for the Wolds villages and provide the best means to tackle traffic congestion in Loughborough
- This will ease the congestion around Junction 23 of the M1 motorway.
- It is flat land and easy to develop.
- This will provide easy access to the railway station, which is sited to the east of Loughborough. The station is likely to be upgraded in the future with better access and parking facilities. There will also be easy access to the railway station at Ratcliffe Power Station.
- This option would make Loughborough more balanced on the eastern side around the railway station and river.
- The river corridor should be seen as an opportunity around which urban activity can thrive. Development could fund the enhancement of the river valley ecology
- Whilst this option is the most expensive to mitigate, it is better to invest in high quality environments than to go for the cheapest option
- The option will realise a country park in an area that is currently underused and unattractive, adding value to the town
- There are concerns about building on the flood plain in the light of the potential for increased flooding caused by global warming.
- Flooding can be addressed by high quality design to attract residents to the water environment.
- The development would be of sufficient critical mass to address the infrastructure concerns
- The existing identity of Cotes and Stanford could inform the new development
- Development of this area would be within open countryside and require road access to cross the river valley and floodplain
- The East Midlands Regional Plan's recommendation is to concentrate any development around urban areas, rather than establishing new development in previously undeveloped countryside. Cotes is remote from the employment and leisure facilities afforded by Loughborough, which is meant to be the focus for services and facilities.

- The development option is remote from existing services and facilities in Loughborough and it is less likely residents will walk and cycle.
- Development in this area would increase the severe problems of HGV traffic through Wolds' villages and require a major development of the transport infrastructure to overcome these difficulties. The already overburdened A60 into Loughborough would require major improvements involving major technical difficulties to satisfy the Environment Agency.
- New road infrastructure would have a negative effect on the environmental
- The opportunity to regenerate the western side of Loughborough and Shepshed would be lost
- It is unclear whether the scale of development proposed could realise the necessary road and community infrastructure required.
- The Wolds villages have separate rural identities that would be lost along with wildlife and countryside if development east of Loughborough were to go ahead.
- There has already been a significant number of houses built in the Wolds over the last four years which has led to an increase in traffic congestion.
- Flooding in the River Soar valley leads to increased traffic through Cotes as it tries to find alternative routes to Loughborough.
- This option would be developed on good farmland which is folly given the increasing food shortages.
- The promoter of an East Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension expressed support for this option stating:
  - The Council has not assessed the proposal submitted to the Council by Davidsons in March 2008. An assessment has been undertaken by Davidsons using the Council's sustainability Appraisal and supported by nine specific pieces of evidence.
  - The proposed development will not affect Big Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest. The indicative masterplan shows how biodiversity interest can be accommodated within proposed open space and landscaping and how significant ecological benefit and green infrastructure can be secured. The proposed riverside park has been developed in consultation with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.
  - The landscape impact of the proposal can be mitigated through a landscaping and open space strategy. There will be less impact on settlement identity than the west Loughborough option as this would erode the green wedge.
  - The proposed Sustainable Urban Extension is outside of the floodplain. There are no sequentially preferable routes for the partial route of the Eastern Distributor Road proposed, which will also provide wider benefit for the town.
  - The proposal will support the regeneration of Loughborough, and the East Loughborough Priority Neighbourhood in particular, through the provision of accessible educational, recreational and employment facilities along with affordable housing and new highway infrastructure, public transport and walking & cycling routes.
  - The proposal will not directly affect the Prestwold Historic Park and Garden and areas of open space are proposed around the abandoned Cotes Medieval village to protect its setting.

- The East Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension will provide the best solution for the future growth of Loughborough and assist with the delivery of the Eastern Distributor Road.
- Future growth is deliverable to the east of Loughborough at Cotes and the proposal by Davidsons is capable of expansion.

*Alternative Option F – East of Loughborough on or around Wymeswold Airfield*

*55 respondents: 2 comment, 43 support, 10 object*

Majority of respondents supporting this location say that in their opinion the land at Wymeswold is a brownfield site and it makes more sense to make best use of this type of land before developing greenfield land. Opportunities to create a high quality new community that takes its lead from the unique identity of the rural settlements in the area and the provision of new and improved facilities for Wolds's villages are also cited as reasons for developing the area. The County Council's view that an Eastern Distributor Road is required to ease traffic congestion in Loughborough is also seen as a good reason to develop at Wymeswold airfield. Opponents to the location cite the impact on the settlement identity of Wolds's villages, the value of environmental and historic assets and the difficulty of getting road infrastructure across the river valley. A summary of the comments are set out below:

- The option would provide good links to Loughborough, Nottingham and Leicester as this is where most people commute to. The need for a river crossing is perhaps less important.
- It is a brownfield sites, is relatively flat and does not use greenfield land, like other options and therefore threaten agricultural production.
- The argument that road infrastructure serving Wymeswold will have an impact on the countryside is flawed as any major development option (bar Birstall) will require major roads.
- Loughborough has been allowed to sprawl for too long and it is time to concentrate on another location to prevent the countryside around the town being consumed. Wymeswold is previously developed and presents a fresh opportunity.
- Opportunity to create a new high quality community to the east rather than cramming development between Shepshed and Loughborough
- This option would realise a new community and enable sustainable transport links to be created from the outset.
- The East Midlands Regional Plan's recommendation is to concentrate any development around urban areas like Loughborough, rather than establishing new development in previously undeveloped countryside.
- The distance from centres of employment/leisure facilities does not support the government's sustainable development agenda. The potential for walking/cycling to either work or leisure pursuits in Loughborough would be severely limited
- The development option is remote from existing services and facilities in Loughborough and it is less likely residents will walk and cycle.
- Development in this area would increase the severe problems of HGV traffic through Wolds' villages and require a major development of the transport infrastructure to overcome these difficulties. The already overburdened A60 into Loughborough would require major improvements involving major technical difficulties to satisfy the Environment Agency.

- The option is remote from the M1 motorway
- New roads to the airfield would have a negative effect on the environment
- It is well served by the A46, which is capable of accommodating increased traffic flows and is close to the railway station.
- New road infrastructure would have a negative effect on the environment
- A development of this size would in effect merge the villages of Hoton, Wymeswold and Burton on the Wolds, losing the individual identity of the Wolds villages.
- The opportunity to regenerate the western side of Loughborough and Shepshed would be lost.
- It is unclear whether the scale of development proposed could realise the necessary road and community infrastructure required.
- It is unclear if Wymeswold airfield is a brownfield site. It is used for sporting and recreational uses and should be protected under Planning Policy Guidance 17.
- The Wolds villages have separate rural identities that would be lost, along with the wildlife and countryside, if development east of Loughborough were to go ahead.
- Hoton is a conservation village full of grade two listed properties. Its identity and setting should be protected. Development of Sustainable Urban Extensions should not be allowed in this area.
- Wymeswold contains nationally important ecological and historical sites which need to be protected and supported not destroyed
- Development of Wymeswold airfield could make better use of a defunct site and would help surrounding communities by providing shops, services and affordable housing
- It should be possible to construct a flood free road to Wymeswold.
- Allocating Wymeswold airfield is likely to attract developer interest.
- There have already been a significant number of houses built in the Wolds over the last four years which has led to an increase in traffic congestion.
- Flooding in the River Soar valley leads to increased traffic through Cotes as it tries to find alternative routes to Loughborough.
- This option would be developed on good farmland which is folly given the increasing food shortages
- Please take notice of The Village Design Statement and Parish Plan
- There should be an Investigation of the potential to extract minerals from under Wymeswold airfield and villages
- Sewers and water pipes should be investigated
- Any development should take into account water run-off from more hard surfaces as this could be the cause of flooding.