

CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

MARCH 2023 TO MARCH 2026

MARCH 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Charnwood Local Development Scheme sets out the Borough Council's programme for the preparation and production of the new Charnwood Local Plan, supplementary planning documents and other related documents that support the delivery of planned-for growth across the Borough.
- 1.2. Local plans are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities. They set the development strategy and policies for delivering the vision of the area. Having an up-to-date local plan is important because applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this respect, local plans provide clarity for development proposals and a degree of predictability for the community.
- 1.3. Charnwood Borough Council is committed to maintaining an up-to-date local plan in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework. The programme set out in this Local Development Scheme covers the period from 2023 until 2026. It identifies the stages the Local Plan will go through and the timetable for key activity.

2. Local Plans

- 2.1. The current development plan for Charnwood is made up of the Core Strategy (2015) and the detailed 'saved' policies from the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004)¹. The Core Strategy sets the strategic planning framework for Charnwood for the period 2011-2028.
- 2.2. Whilst the proposals in the Core Strategy provide for the period up to 2028, and the strategic growth sites contained within it will continue beyond 2028, the Council has a duty to maintain an up-to-date local plan. Consequently, the Council is preparing a single Charnwood Local Plan document to replace the Core Strategy and to replace the remaining 'saved' policies from the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan.
- 2.3. The Local Plan also identifies the need to prepare Supplementary Planning Documents to provide guidance on how certain policies should be interpreted and implemented. These are included in this programme.
- 2.4. Progress made on the Charnwood Local Plan is published each year in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report, which provides details on the Borough Council's performance in meeting the objectives set out in this Local Development Scheme.
- 2.5. The planning system uses a raft of technical names for different documents and the status they enjoy. Although every attempt has been made to avoid technical terminology there are occasions where names which have a legislative meaning are used. Where this is the case a glossary of terms is provided at Appendix C to assist the reader. The relationship between different documents is shown in Appendix A.

¹ The minerals and waste local plans prepared by Leicester City and Leicestershire County Councils, and made neighbourhood plans, also form a part of the development plan for Charnwood

3. Programme of work for 2023 - 2026

Local Plan

- 3.1 The Borough Council's immediate priority within the three-year period is to conclude the examination of the new Local Plan; to have it found sound; and subsequently have it adopted.
- 3.2 The emerging new Local Plan builds upon the strategy contained within the Core Strategy, setting out the strategic and detailed policies to deliver the Borough Council's vision for Charnwood up to 2037. It takes account of the commitments for housing, employment, and other developments across Charnwood, including the existing strategic allocations for Sustainable Urban Extensions and the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park. It identifies and allocates further sites in the borough needed to meet the needs of the community, including specific site allocations for development, and designations that reflect special character or that require protection. It also sets out specific planning policies and criteria against which planning applications for the development and use of land and buildings will be considered. The emerging new Local Plan will include a policies map for the whole Borough. Full details of the new Plan, its progress and its process milestones are set out under Appendix B.
- 3.3 The emerging new Local Plan responds to the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan which has been prepared and approved by all ten partner organisations. The Strategic Growth Plan was approved by the Borough Council on 5th November 2018.
- 3.4 Early public consultation was undertaken on the scope of the new Local Plan in 2016, in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. During April 2018 further public consultation was undertaken on the issues and options available for the new plan. This was entitled 'Towards a Local Plan for Charnwood'. A Draft version of the new Local Plan was prepared and consulted upon during November 2019. Subsequently, the Borough Council prepared a Pre-submission version of the Local Plan. This was the subject of public consultation, in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Regulations, during Summer 2022. A copy of the Pre-submission draft Local Plan is available to view on the [Borough Council website](#).
- 3.5 Following the close of the public consultation on the Pre-submission version, the Borough Council formally submitted the draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for the purpose of examination in public on 3 December 2021. The new Local Plan had been scheduled to be examined in public through hearings sessions that were due to place during June-July 2022.

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

- 3.7 Charnwood is part of a wider housing market area that covers Leicester City and all the other Leicestershire authorities. This provides the context under which local planning authorities across the area can work together to understand the need for new homes and jobs with the objective of meeting these needs through their local plans in a coordinated way. A Strategic Growth Plan has been prepared which sets out the number of homes and jobs needed and the agreement on their distribution across Leicester and Leicestershire between 2011 and 2050. A Strategic Growth Statement was published in Summer 2016 and a draft plan was the subject of consultation in Spring 2018. Following consultations with residents, businesses, organisations, and other key stakeholders the Growth Plan was approved by all councils at a series of meetings held during November and December 2018.
- 3.8 The relationship between the Charnwood Local Plan and the Strategic Growth Plan is an important one, as the Local Plan takes its lead from the Growth Plan's broader strategy – particularly in terms of the numbers of new homes and jobs required in Charnwood. The development strategy for Charnwood is a key component of the Local Plan and can only be identified and tested now the Strategic Growth Plan has been approved. The Borough Council will continue to be engaged in this strategic work during the period covered by this Local Development Scheme. This includes the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground between the Borough Council and the other Leicestershire councils. The relationship between the Charnwood Local Plan and the Strategic Growth Plan is recognised in the risk assessment in Section 5.
- 3.9 The draft Statement of Common Ground and the associated Housing and Economic Needs Assessment were the subject of a report considered by the Member Advisory Group 27 April 2022. This sought agreement on the content of the Statement, in relation to the approach apportioning unmet need across the County and recommended all local authority partners take the Statement through their governance processes. Following this, the Statement is subsequently passing through the respective governance arrangements of the partner authorities. The Statement was considered and agreed by the Borough Council's Cabinet on 9 June 2022.

Local Plan Programme to Adoption

- 3.10 The Borough Council becoming a signatory of the Statement of Common Ground had a consequential impact upon the Charnwood Local Plan process. The previous Local Development Scheme had envisaged the Local Plan Examination hearing sessions to take place during Summer 2022. However, upon commencement, the Inspectors immediately determined that for procedural reasons it was necessary to pause the Sessions. This was because the Borough Council had during the opening day on 28 June 2022 stated the intention to respond positively to the apportionment of some of Leicester City's unmet housing and employment needs, as per the agreement through the Statement of Common Ground.
- 3.11 The pause in the examination concluded with an additional set of Hearing Sessions during October 2022 to discuss the apportionment of Leicester City's unmet needs and the implications for the Borough's housing and employment needs. The successful conclusion of these additional Sessions allowed for the examination to

resume, with the Hearing Session that had originally been planned for Summer 2022 taking place during February 2023.

3.12 Based on information available to the Borough Council a reasonable timetable for progressing the new Local Plan through to the completion of the examination and on towards adoption is:

- Examination hearing sessions conclude – February 2023
- Publication of Inspectors' Final Report – July 2023
- Adoption – September 2023

3.13 The suggested timeline assumes that the examination hearing sessions are completed successfully within their scheduled dates and that the process subsequently moves toward consultation on modifications without any further impediment. Should that be the case it is reasonable to assume a period of six months between the conclusion of the hearings and adoption.

3.14 Following the successful adoption of the new Local Plan the Borough Council will have an opportunity to reflect upon the outcomes from the examination process in terms of how it proceeds with its plan-making responsibilities across the remainder of the period covered by this Local Development Scheme. It is anticipated that at that point in time there will be further clarity on the scope and nature of the proposed changes to the national planning system.

Supplementary Planning Documents

3.15 The role of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) is to provide guidance on how existing planning policy should be used and interpreted when developing proposals and taking decisions on planning applications. The Core Strategy generated the production of two SPDs, which provided additional guidance on the implementation of its design and housing policies. Following the adoption of new Charnwood Local Plan, it is anticipated that these two SPDs will fall away, as the parent policies contained within the Core Strategy will have been superseded. The new Local Plan includes policies relating to the design of new development. It also incorporates, under an annex, much of the key guidance on how these policies will be implemented through decision-taking. On that basis, it is not currently anticipated that there will be an immediate need for additional supplementary guidance on design matters. Consequently, the Local Development Scheme does plan for this eventuality during its life span. Nevertheless, the Borough Council will closely follow the development of national policy in relation to the preparation of local Design Codes. Current guidance suggests that design codes should either be included within local plans or prepared as SPDs. Regardless of the format, the Borough Council will ensure that, should they become necessary that they are based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area.

3.16 There are two new SPDs identified for preparation and production over the three-year period covered by the Local Development Scheme. These seek to provide additional planning policy guidance firstly on housing and secondly in relation to biodiversity. Both documents are linked and dependent upon parent policies

contained within the emerging new Charnwood Local Plan. Although the Borough Council is initiating their preparation and production during the first year of the new Local Development Scheme, their latter stages, particularly public consultation, will need to take place after the formal adoption of the new Local Plan has taken place. Consequently, those latter stages are anticipated to take place post-September 2023 at the earliest.

- 3.17 The first of the new SPDs will focus on Housing issues. It will seek to inform and provide guidance to decision-taking in relation to proposals that meet specific aspects of the Borough's housing need. Its full scope will be guided by the Borough Council's corporate priorities and the evolving decision-taking experience. It is anticipated that it will include guidance on housing mix of size and tenure, specialised forms of housing, space standards, and the delivery of new affordable homes. For example, the SPD could consider the introduction and delivery of First Homes and other similar products and how these can be incorporated into the delivery of planned-for growth so that they effectively meet genuine local need.
- 3.18 The Borough's dynamic growth environment, particularly in respect of new residential development proposals, has accelerated the need for the new Housing SPD. Consequently, the Local Development Scheme proposes a timetable that anticipates initial work on the SPD could commence during Spring 2023. This could upon evidence base production and those areas of housing policy that have passed uncontested through the Local Plan examination. This would prepare the way for expanding the scope of work as the Local Plan gains weight as the process progresses towards adoption. Based on the anticipated Local Plan timeline this could provide an opportunity for public consultation during the end of 2023 and formal adoption of the SPD during early 2024.
- 3.19 The proposed new Biodiversity SPD will seek to provide guidance on how the Borough Council will secure compensation for the loss of biodiversity from new development proposals. It will build and expand upon an existing interim guidance document that was adopted to support decision-taking during Summer 2022.
- 3.20 The increasing importance of biodiversity in place-making has generated the need for new guidance that sets out how the Borough Council implements net-gain, and where necessary off-setting through decision-taking. Guidance will initially seek to support Core Strategy Policy CS13 Biodiversity and Geodiversity. Upon adoption of the new Local Plan, it is anticipated that guidance will be updated to support the objectives of proposed Local Plan Policy EV6 Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- 3.21 The introduction of the new Biodiversity SPD will be informed by the enactment of the Environment Act 2021, which is anticipated to come into force from 1 November 2023. The Act is an important milestone for the preparation of the new SPD as it will require mandatory biodiversity net gain, introduce statutory environmental targets, and set out the future of retained EU Law. Nevertheless, preparation of the new Biodiversity SPD could be initiated over the second half of 2023, which would allow for work to accelerate following the enactment of the Act.
- 3.22 A reasonable timetable milestones for progressing the new SPDs are:

Housing SPD

- Initial drafting/ targeted consultation Spring-Summer 2023
- Local Plan adoption September 2023
- Public Consultation Autumn-Winter 2023/ 24
- Adoption Winter-Spring 2024

Biodiversity SPD

- Initial drafting Summer 2023
- Local Plan adoption September 2023
- Environment Act enactment November 2024
- Public Consultation Spring 2024
- Adoption Summer 2024

Statement of Community Involvement

3.22 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how a Council intends to consult and involve the community in the preparation and review of local development documents and in development management decisions. The Charnwood SCI was adopted in January 2021. The latest version of the SCI is informed by experiences gained during the pandemic. These include the potential for hybrid mechanisms for consultation and engagement with residents and communities; such as the optimal use of virtual platforms. The Borough Council will continue to use such experiences to inform how it effectively engages with residents and communities to ensure that such engagement is inclusive and safe.

Neighbourhood Development Plans

3.23 The Localism Act makes provisions for Neighbourhood Development Plans to be prepared. More commonly referred to simply as Neighbourhood Plans, they are a community-led document initiated through a Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum and ultimately adopted by the Council as part of the development plan.

3.24 Several parishes have or are in the process of producing Neighbourhood Plans. The Council provides support to Neighbourhood Forums to help them prepare these plans and will work with Town and Parish Councils and other designated groups to accommodate this work within the existing and emerging policy framework. This Local Development Scheme does not prescribe a timetable for those documents as they are community led by the appropriate Neighbourhood Forum and not Charnwood Borough Council. However, within the period covered by this Local Development Scheme significant work is anticipated for at least two Neighbourhood Plans for Anstey and for Cossington. These plans have the potential to join the Neighbourhood Plans for Barrow upon Soar, Queniborough, Quorn, Rearsby, Rothley, Sileby, The Wolds Villages, Thurcaston and Cropston, Thrussington and Woodhouse as being 'made' by the Council and forming part of the development plan for the relevant parish area.

- 3.25 Due to the external community-led nature of neighbourhood plan production, the project management of the Borough Council's involvement can become reactionary, which may introduce risks in relation to available resources. The Borough Council will seek to manage such risks by maintaining good communications with the existing and potential neighbourhood forums to ensure that there is appropriate intelligence on emerging and in-progress neighbourhood plans. Where possible the Borough Council will seek to manage neighbourhood planning processes to minimise conflict with its own plan-making activities.
- 3.26 Whilst the Borough Council has a duty to provide a degree of technical and administrative support to neighbourhood forums, these responsibilities do not normally require the publication of supporting evidence or guidance. However, it is possible that the Borough Council may be called-upon to prepare information that aids forums in their plan-making activities. For example, this may include the publication of indicative housing requirements or information on how localised, neighbourhood level, requirements could be prepared. Where such actions are necessary the Borough Council will ensure that the information is consistent and can be utilised by all forums as part of their plan-making activities.

4. Project Management and Resources

- 4.1. The Local Plan is managed day to day by the Group Leader of the Plans, Policy and Place Making Group under the direction of the Head of Planning and Growth. The Local Development Framework Project Board (LDF Board) provides oversight and is made up of the Chief Executive, the Director Customer Experience, the Cabinet Lead Member for Planning and the Leader of the Council.
- 4.2. The Planning Policy Team provides the bulk of the Council's resource to progress the Local Plan but specialist expertise is drawn from across the Plans, Policies and Place-making Group and elsewhere across the Service when required. The close relationship between the Local Plan and the Council's corporate priorities allows additional support to be drawn from across the Council on specific corporate activities.
- 4.3. Budgetary provision is sought on an annual basis based on the Service Delivery Plan and Local Development Scheme programme. Specific costs relating to the submission of documents and the Examination process are identified in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 4.4. The challenge of delivering growth is recognised. The Council is delivering the Local Development Scheme in a project managed environment, supported by appropriate resources.

5. Risk Assessment




- 5.1. An assessment has been carried out of the factors that could affect the ability of the council to deliver the Local Plan in accordance with the indicated programme. Actions to manage these risks have been identified.




Risk Identified	Likelihood/Impact	Management Action
Programme slippage	<p>Medium/Medium</p> <p>The Council is expected to meet the milestones in the Local Development Scheme. Failure to deliver against the key milestones will be damaging to the reputation of the local planning authority and the absence of up to date planning policies will hamper the realisation of the Council's vision and lead to unplanned developments in the Borough. The deadlines for preparing the Local Plan are very challenging given the emphasis on community engagement and the potential for development industry interest.</p>	<p>The Local Development Framework Project Board will carefully monitor progress and give priority to achieving the key milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme.</p>
Staff resources	<p>Low/High</p> <p>The Planning Policy Team currently has a stable and experienced staff resource. However, staff changes will impact on the production of the Local Plan.</p>	<p>Ensure that sufficient staff resources with the necessary experience and expertise are available for the production of the Local Plan, supplementary planning documents and manage competing work priorities, utilising agency resources as required</p>
Financial resources	<p>Low/High</p> <p>Sufficient financial resources are required to prepare the Local Plan and supplementary planning documents including for consultancy support, consultation and the examination process.</p>	<p>Ensure the Local Development Scheme informs the council's Medium Term Financial Plan.</p>
Competing work priorities	<p>High/Medium</p> <p>The Planning and Regeneration Service is involved in a wide range of spatial policy work. Work to implement the Core Strategy, engage and support the Strategic Growth Plan, Neighbourhood Plans and any major unplanned</p>	<p>The high priority of the Local Plan is recognised and at certain times other work will have to take a much lower priority. Where this is not possible consideration is given to outsourcing work to other local planning authorities or consultants.</p>

Risk Identified	Likelihood/Impact	Management Action
	developments will weigh heavily on staff resources especially with respect to appeals.	
Level of public interest cause delays	Medium/High Public interest in the Local Plan has been high during previous consultations.	Resources are drawn from across the Planning and Regeneration Service at appropriate times to ensure representations are dealt with.
Lack of capacity of statutory agencies to respond and/or engage	Low/High Decisions taken nationally to change the resources of statutory agencies, and their capacity to manage local plan consultations and other work, may cause delays to the programme	The Local Development Scheme provides forward notice of the council's Local Plan programme. Maintain contact with key agencies to minimise prospect of slippage
Change in national policy/legislation	Medium/High Changes to the statutory process or new substantive policy which affects the content and direction of local policy preparation and decisions may cause delays to the programme.	The Council will continue to monitor the evolution of the proposed Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill, which seeks to introduce wide-ranging changes to national planning policy and the planning system. Where opportunities present themselves the Borough Council will engage in consultation and when appropriate lobby Government for changes that will benefit plan-making and decision-taking across the Borough. Where changes are introduced, the Local Development Scheme will be amended accordingly to reflect new processes.
Slippage in strategic evidence/planning or Duty to Cooperate Matters	Medium/High Strategic evidence for homes, jobs and transport will help define the relationship between Charnwood and the wider housing market area and the role of the Charnwood Local Plan. Any delays to this strategic work may cause Duty to Cooperate issues and cause	The Council will be represented in this strategic work and will carefully monitor and give priority to managing any impacts on the key milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme. A Statement of Common Ground is currently being prepared with the other authorities in the

Risk Identified	Likelihood/Impact	Management Action
	delays to the programme.	HMA.

6. Programme Chart

	2023												2024												2025											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Charnwood Local Development Documents																																				
New Local Plan																																				

- KEY:**
- Hearing Sessions 
 - Inspector's Report Published 
 - Adoption 

Appendix A: Charnwood Local Plan and Supporting Documents



Appendix B: Local Plan Profile

Overview	
Title	Charnwood Local Plan
Role and content	<p>Sets out the strategic policies to deliver the Council's vision for Charnwood up to 2037 within the strategic framework set by the Strategic Growth Plan 2011 - 2050</p> <p>Addresses the spatial implications of strategies prepared by other key bodies including the Strategic Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire to be prepared jointly by the local authorities for the area.</p> <p>Identifies land use sites needed to meet development needs to 2037.</p> <p>Sets out specific criteria against which planning applications will be considered.</p> <p>Provides land use designations for the protection and management of natural resources.</p> <p>Includes a proposals map on ordnance survey base to identify specific policies and proposals for development or use of land.</p>
Coverage	Borough wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	In accordance with legislation, case law and national planning policies.

Timetable	
Start	April 2016
Scoping and Issues (Regulation 18 ²)	July/August 2016
Draft plan consultation	November 2019
Publication (Pre-Submission Consultation) (Regulation 19)	July 2021
Submission (Regulation 22)	December 2021
Examination hearings (Regulations 23 and 24)	February 2023 (final sessions)
Adoption and publication of the DPD (Regulation 26)	September 2023

² In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Management arrangements	
Organisational Lead	Head of Planning and Regeneration Services
Lead Officer	Group Leader Plans, Policies and Place-making
Management Arrangements	LDF Project Board; Cabinet and Full Council; Growth Advisory Group
Resources required	Charnwood Senior & Core Leadership Team; Planning and Regeneration Service; Housing Service; Neighbourhood Services; Open Space and Waste Service; Leisure and Culture Service; Finance and Property Services; Strategic Support Service; Leicestershire County Council including Highway Authority and Education Authority; Leicester City Council including Highway Authority and Education Authority.
Community and Stakeholder involvement	Parish and Town Councils, partner organisations, and others as identified in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Monitoring and review	Authority Monitoring Report

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) (formerly the Annual Monitoring Report)	An annual document that reports the progress made on plan preparation compared to the Local Development Scheme and the delivery of local plan policies including housing and employment delivery.
Core Strategy	A statutory planning document setting out the spatial vision and strategy for the Borough including key policies, proposals and strategic allocations to deliver the vision.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	Statutory documents prepared by the local planning authority with rigorous community involvement and consultation. They are subject to an examination in public by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.
Development Plan	Any adopted Development Plan Documents make up the Development Plan. Under the Planning Acts the Development Plan is the primary consideration in deciding planning applications.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	A binder of documents that provide the planning policies for the area.
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	A document that outlines the Council's three-year programme for preparing the Local Development Framework.
Local Plan	The plan for the development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.
Neighbourhood Development Plan	The Regulatory title for a planning document which may be initiated and prepared by Parish and Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums.

	Following robust consultation, independent examination and a local referendum they become 'made' (essentially adopted) by the Council as part of the statutory development plan. They are generally referred to as Neighbourhood Plans and must be prepared in general conformity with the Local Plan.
Spatial planning	A more comprehensive approach to town planning than simple 'land-use' planning, it coordinates the development and use of land with other policies and programmes to benefit places and how they function.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	A document outlining the approach of the authority to involving the community in preparing planning policy and considering significant planning applications.
Strategic Growth Plan	A non-statutory planning document that sets out the spatial planning framework for Leicester and Leicestershire.
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	Documents that provide guidance on how to use and interpret planning policies when developing proposals or taking decisions.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	An appraisal of the social, economic and environmental implications of a strategy, policies and proposals. Will ensure that proposals contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
Sustainable development	Meeting our own needs without prejudicing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.