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FOREWORD

The Borough of Charnwood lies close to the heart of the East Midlands region, extending over 280 square kilometres (108 square miles) of northern Leicestershire. The City of Leicester abuts the southern boundary of the district while Nottingham and Derby lie some 24km (15 miles) to the north.

The 1991 Census recorded some 142,000 residents. This increased to 153,500 by 2001. The main concentrations of population occur within the County Towns of Loughborough and Shepshed, around the fringes of Leicester, and along the connecting river valleys of the Wreake and Soar. Together these communities form a broad arc of development sweeping north westward from the City boundary through the central area of the Borough.

To the south and west of this more urban corridor lie the uplands of Charnwood Forest where rocky outcrops, heath, woodlands and varied relief combine to form a most attractive landscape in which farming and countryside leisure pursuits continue side by side. The area forms part of the National Forest.

To the north and east, the Borough is characterised by the open rolling countryside of the Leicestershire Wolds which fall gently towards the river valleys affording extensive views over a typically English patchwork quilt of fields and hedgerows.

The Borough enjoys excellent access to the national communications network with the M1 passing through the western quarter of the district supported by the A6 and A46 trunk roads. Loughborough is served by the London/Sheffield main line railway and local commuter services have been re-established as part of the Ivanhoe Line initiative. Finally international travel is facilitated by the expanding East Midlands International Airport which is located within 8km (5 miles) of Loughborough.

Over recent years the local economy has diversified to reduce its previous dependency upon hosiery, knitwear and engineering. While these traditional industries, and the skills they require, survive in no small measure the economic base has broadened with the expansion of the service, warehousing and distribution sectors. Loughborough is acquiring an increasingly important reputation, building upon the centre of excellence provided by its University as a major location for research and development facilities. AstraZeneca and 3M are already established and the town is also the location of the County's first Science Park.

These developments have helped the Borough to avoid the most severe effects of the economic recession experienced elsewhere in Britain. Nevertheless local employment blackspots persist and it is anticipated that traditional employers will continue to shed labour with the adoption of new technologies and the pursuit of greater efficiencies. Clearly, therefore, there is a continuing need to sustain and encourage growth and diversification in the local economy.

The relative economic buoyancy of the Borough together with its well developed communications and pleasant environment has made it popular with both house builders and home buyers, resulting in a youthful population profile. It is evident that these factors will continue to make Charnwood an attractive location for further such development.

The challenge for the Local Plan is to ensure a balanced approach to future development providing the homes, jobs, roads and supporting amenities needed by society within a high quality environment. Current Government advice lays considerable emphasis upon the encouragement of sustainable development and growth. In particular local planning authorities are urged to pursue policies which protect the best aspects of the natural and man made environment for the benefit of future generations.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Statutory Background

- 1.1 The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan has been prepared under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991. Further guidance is provided by the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans) Regulations 1999 (S.I. No: 3280) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 12: Development Plans (December 1999).
- 1.2 The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 now makes mandatory the preparation of a single local plan covering the entire district. The Government had expected to see substantially completed national local plan coverage by 1996.
- 1.3 The Government's commitment to a stronger role for the development plan (ie Structure and Local Plan) is further emphasised by the introduction of Section 54A into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which now requires:
- “Where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”
- 1.4 Once such material consideration is likely to be the extent to which the development plan is relevant, up to date and consistent with Government advice and Regional Planning Guidance.
- In allowing for the admission of other “material considerations” in the determination of planning applications the statute provides for the Council to approve proposals which depart from the development plan provided it is satisfied that there are exceptional and overriding reasons for so doing. In any such event the Council is obliged to advertise the proposal as a departure from the plan affording the opportunity for the Secretary of State to “call in” the application for his decision.
- 1.5 The purpose of the planning system in general is to provide:
- Guidance - to help people to plan the use of their land confidently and sensibly and to help planning authorities to interpret the public interest wisely and consistently;
 - Incentive - to encourage and stimulate necessary development through specific land allocations; and
 - Control - to ensure that development cannot prevail against the public interest and to permit those affected by proposals to have their views considered.
- 1.6 To these ends the preparation of the development plan gives local communities the opportunity to participate in planning in influencing the choices about where development should be accommodated within their area.
- 1.7 This Local Plan, together with the Leicestershire Structure Plan, the Leicestershire Minerals Local Plan and waste planning policies forms the statutory Development Plan for the Borough of Charnwood.
- 1.8 The Structure Plan is prepared by Leicestershire County Council and covers the whole County. Its purpose is to:
- provide the strategic policy framework for planning and development control locally; and
 - ensure that the provision for development is realistic and consistent with national and regional policy.

All reference in this document to the “Structure Plan” relates to the Leicestershire Structure Plan as adopted by the County Council in January 1994.

- 1.9 The Minerals Local Plan is prepared by Leicestershire County Council as Minerals Planning Authority, and sets out policies and proposals for the winning and working of minerals, protection of the environment during extraction and subsequent site restoration. In addition the County Council is required to prepare waste planning policies, either through the preparation of a Waste Local Plan or by inclusion in the Minerals Local Plan.
- 1.10 The Local Plan for Charnwood is prepared by the Borough Council. Its purpose is to provide the detailed framework for the control of development and use of land which should guide most day to day planning decisions. The Local Plan, in general conformity with the Structure Plan, is required to:
- set out the authority's policies for the control of development; and,
 - make proposals for the development and use of land and to allocate land for specific purposes.
- 1.11 Under the provisions of the 1990 Act, local plans are also specifically required to include policies in respect of:
- the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land;
 - the improvement of the physical environment; and,
 - the management of traffic.

Policies on other topics for inclusion remain at the discretion of the local authority with Planning Policy Guidance Notes providing a recommended agenda.

- 1.12 In the preparation of this Local Plan detailed background papers have been produced to investigate thoroughly certain key policy issues. These are published separately as a series of Technical Reports:

Technical Report No.1	:	Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside
Technical Report No.2	:	Local Separation Policy
Technical Report No.3	:	Green Wedges
Technical Report No.4 & 4A	:	Assessment of Potential Development Sites
Technical Report No.5	:	Windfall Housing
Technical Report No.6	:	Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value

- 1.13 This series of Technical Reports was supplemented in August 1995 by a further background paper; "Sustainability and the Impact of Major Development Options". The report provides an iterative appraisal and analysis of all development options considered in the preparation of the Local Plan founded upon the Good Practice Guide for the Environment Appraisal of Development Plans published by the Department of the Environment (November 1993).
- 1.14 Three additional Technical Reports were published to accompany the Proposed Modifications published in May 2001:

Technical Report 7	:	Residential Availability, March 2000
Technical Report 8	:	Assessment of Urban Capacity
Technical Report 9	:	Analysis of Production on Large Sites

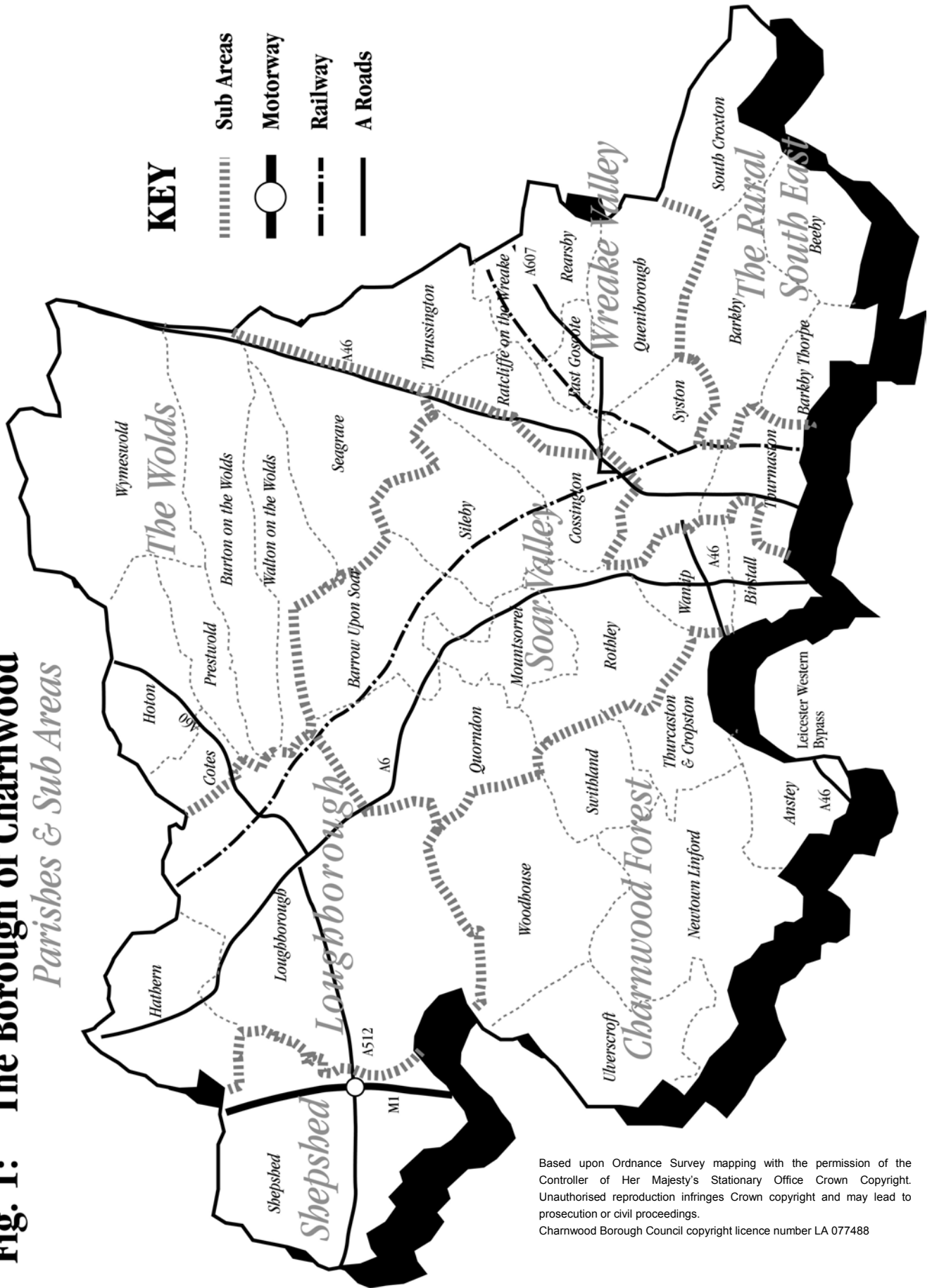
The Plan Period

- 1.15 The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan covers the period 1991 to 2006. However in some instances where policies may relate to a long term development of strategic significance or to the conservation of the natural and built heritage a longer timescale may be appropriate.

The Plan Area

- 1.16 The Borough of Charnwood extends over 280 square kilometres (108 square miles) and has a population of some 153,500. The plan area together with Parish Council Boundaries is shown in Figure 1.

**Fig. 1: The Borough of Charnwood
Parishes & Sub Areas**



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Resources and Implementation

- 1.17 In preparing their plans and policies local planning authorities are required to have regard to the likely availability of resources to ensure that their expectations are realistic and capable of implementation.
- 1.18 Although it is the responsibility of the Borough Council to prepare the Local Plan, its successful implementation will require the support and assistance of various Government agencies, the County Council, other public bodies and utilities, voluntary organisations and, not least, local business interests and the private sector generally. All will be influenced to some degree by national and local economic conditions and the availability of resources.
- 1.19 The national economy, over recent years, has clearly experienced a period of considerable uncertainty and difficulty which has shaken severely public, business and institutional confidence resulting in a more cautious approach to investment decisions. Government policy is directed towards the encouragement of economic recovery but current forecasts suggest any such recovery is likely to be gradual over an extended period of time.
- 1.20 However while having not avoided the effects of the recession, Charnwood has certainly fared better than many other localities. Substantial investment has already taken place in new technology industries, there is a commitment to major improvements in the communications network, the rural economy possesses potential for growth and diversification, housebuilders maintain a keen interest in the Borough and the district enjoys a wealth of natural assets. These factors suggest that Charnwood is likely to attract significant private sector interest as and when economic indicators improve. These assumptions are supported by the factors directing major land allocations towards the Borough through the Structure Plan. However, the Structure Plan does recognise that environmental constraints limit the amount of development which the Local Plan area can accommodate.
- 1.21 Through the use of its planning powers, the Borough Council can encourage and control private initiatives to the advantage of the public interest. Many of the policies in the Local Plan are intended to give clear guidance on how the Council will determine development proposals in particular locations. These determinations, and the support that the Council received when challenged on appeal, will play a major part in the successful implementation of the Plan.
- 1.22 The extent to which the capital spending programmes of the various Government and public bodies will contribute to the implementation of the Local Plan will vary between the agencies concerned. All are however likely to experience continuing restraint while Government policy remains committed to strict controls over public expenditure.
- 1.23 To some extent the amount of resources available for key projects is likely to depend upon the success of the Borough and County Councils in bidding for specific grant allocations from central Government or from the European Commission. Bids have been, and may be expected to be made under the following programmes:
- Single Regeneration Budget;
Derelict Land Programme;
Housing Investment Programme (HIP);
Local Transport Plan (LTP);
Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS);
and
Strategic Programme for Innovation and Technology Transfer (SPRINT) (An E.C. initiative).
- 1.24 These programmes underline the greater emphasis which Government now places upon the role of local authorities as enablers and coordinators rather than providers. The Borough Council may also extend its enabling role through the use of its own land and its influence as a land owner with a power to acquire land compulsorily.

Monitoring and Review

- 1.25 To remain effective in decision making the Local Plan must be up-to-date and consistent with national and regional policies. The Council has always recognised that circumstances will alter over the plan period and committed itself accordingly to a full review of the Plan at regular intervals.
- 1.26 The objectives of this ongoing monitoring and review process will be:
- i) to reappraise the continued relevance of the plan's primary aims;
 - ii) to re-examine the trends and the validity of assumptions underlying the plan's policies;
 - iii) to assess the success of policies in achieving the aims of the plan;
 - iv) to identify significant new issues warranting a policy response; and
 - v) to prepare appropriate amendments when circumstances require.
- 1.27 The preparation of this first Borough of Charnwood Local Plan has proved to be a complex and time consuming exercise. The plan period expires in 2006 affording the adopted plan a lifespan of less than 5 years.
- 1.28 PPG12 - Development Plans advises that local plans should extend over a period of 10 years from their likely adoption date. To ensure continuity in housing land supply a five year plan period represents the minimum desirable.
- 1.29 The need for an early review is heightened by the progress being made towards the preparation of new Regional Planning Guidance with a 20 year time horizon, and a replacement Structure Plan rolling forward strategic policies and proposals until 2016.
- 1.30 In addition overall Government policy has moved progressively towards the closer integration of land use planning and transport policy in its drive towards more sustainable patterns of development and growth. That process, included, in July 1998, the release of a White Paper, "A New Deal for Transport". Among other initiatives, the White Paper introduced a requirement for the preparation of Local Transport Plans which will co-ordinate local transport initiatives, set specific targets, give greater certainty to funding and ensure greater use of traffic management. Local Transport Plans will have an important role to play in informing future land use choices.
- 1.31 Accordingly an early review of this local plan is inevitable and necessary to ensure the maintenance of a relevant and up to date framework, consistent with emerging strategic developments and initiatives for the closer integration of land use and transport. That review will necessarily have to consider all options for meeting future development needs, including those rejected in the preparation of this local plan.
- 1.32 The effective implementation of the policies and proposals of the Local Plan will be closely monitored by reference to existing statistical sources and information bases to inform the review process. The results of monitoring will be published in the form of an Annual Monitoring Statement. It will identify a series of indicators and set targets that will give a clear view on what the plan is trying to achieve and provide a measure against which to judge its effectiveness. Such statements will also include details of progress toward the targets identified. Results will be fed into future reviews of the Plan.
- 1.33 It is not intended that the Local Plan should prejudice the consideration of any future option for development to meet the needs of the plan area. New proposals for development will accordingly be considered in that context. The Local Plan acknowledges, for the purposes of the current plan period the presence around the main urban areas, of various constraints to development deserving of specific policy reference (i.e Green Wedge, Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside, Areas of Local Separation, Historic Parks/Gardens and essential wash land). Clearly the local planning authority faces some difficult choices in reconciling these competing interests in the face of additional development needs.

The Local Plan Format

- 1.34 The Local Plan consists of a Written Statement and a Proposals Map. The Written Statement sets out the Local Planning Authority's proposals for development and other use of land within the plan area. Policies and proposals are distinguished by being set in **bold print** and preceded by a reference number. Cross references to other relevant policies appear in *italics* after each policy.
- 1.35 Each policy and proposal is accompanied by a reasoned justification setting out the particular circumstances for its inclusion.
- 1.36 The Proposals Map covers the whole of the administrative area of Charnwood Borough. Inset maps at a larger scale permit greater detail to be more clearly shown in the central urban areas. Policies and Proposals are cross referenced with the Written Statement.
- 1.37 In the event of any contradiction in the Local Plan between the Written Statement and the Proposals Map, the provisions of the Written Statement shall prevail.
- 1.38 All the plan's Policies and Proposals must be considered together before a view can be determined on each particular issue.

Commitments

- 1.39 Where land within the plan area already enjoys the benefit of a planning consent it is recognised as a commitment and represented as such on the Proposals Map in the interests of clarity. Commitments do not constitute proposals of the Local Plan and cannot therefore be the subject of objection. Such commitments are entirely consistent and compatible with the provisions and intentions of the Local Plan and it is fully expected that in the majority of cases commitments will be implemented within the plan period. In those instances where planning consents are permitted to lapse the preferred use for the site will usually be that for which planning permission was originally granted. However where the circumstances relating to a particular site have changed to a material degree the Borough Council may take the opportunity afforded by a lapsed consent to undertake a review of its policies relating to the particular site and, where appropriate, seek to alter formally the provisions of the Local Plan in accordance with statutory procedures.

Existing Local Plans

- 1.40 In accordance with previous Government advice the Borough Council had pursued a programme of settlement or sub-area based statutory local plan preparation focusing upon those areas under greatest pressure for change:
- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Wreake Valley Local Plan | : | adopted September 1985 |
| Shepshed Local Plan | : | adopted April 1987 |
| Soar Valley Local Plan | : | adopted June 1992 |
| Loughborough Local Plan | : | adopted August 1994 |
- 1.41 Both the Soar Valley and Loughborough Local Plans have proceeded to adoption under the interim measures of the current legislation as "saved" plans. The South West Charnwood Villages Local Plan, published as a consultative draft in October 1991 and was not able under the current legislative framework, to be continued similarly. The work undertaken was carried forward, where appropriate, within the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan.
- 1.42 In addition, the County Council prepared the Wanlip Action Area Local Plan to effect the restoration of former sand and gravel workings, adopted in January 1985 and the Hamilton Local Plan, straddling the City Council boundary, adopted in September 1987.

- 1.43 The Council's statutory local plan coverage has been supplemented by a number of additional non statutory policy documents providing supplementary planning guidance:
- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Loughborough Draft Local Plan | : | approved February 1973 |
| Hathern Plan | : | approved September 1973 |
| North Wolds Plan | : | approved May 1979 |
| Seagrave Village Plan | : | approved May 1980 |
| Thurcaston Village Appraisal | : | approved March 1986 |
- 1.44 The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan supersedes all the above previously prepared statutory and non-statutory planning policies for the Borough.

Adjoining Local Plans

- 1.45 In preparing this Local Plan the Borough Council has had regard to existing and emerging local plans prepared for adjoining administrative areas by the following Councils:
- Blaby District;
Harborough District;
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough;
Leicester City;
Melton Borough;
North West Leicestershire District;
Nottinghamshire County; and
Rushcliffe Borough.

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGY

The Strategic Policy Context

- 2.1 The Borough of Charnwood enjoys the advantages of a relatively buoyant local economy, excellent communications, immediate access to the amenities and facilities of adjacent city centres and pleasant rural surroundings. These advantages have played no small part in ensuring, over recent years, the continued popularity of the Borough among both home buyers and house builders, and in attracting investment in new businesses.
- 2.2 It is apparent that changes in the composition of the population and associated life styles will continue to generate a need for additional housing. Similarly the changing pattern of demand for goods and services requires the further diversification and expansion of the local economy to ensure adequate employment opportunities and economic growth. Any such new development must be supported by appropriate infrastructure, facilities and amenities to ensure adequate provision for transport and to sustain a high quality of life for residents.
- 2.3 As the economy emerges from recession the Local Plan has a major role to play in ensuring that suitable land allocations and infrastructure requirements are set in place to meet development needs and assist economic recovery without serious injury to the qualities and characteristics which combine to create the particular environmental advantages of the Borough.
- 2.4 Difficult choices are unavoidable but the Local Plan must provide the context for resolving competing interests and demands through an overall strategy which aims to achieve the most satisfactory use of land and buildings.
- 2.5 In making these difficult choices the local plan is guided and assisted by a strategic policy context provided by National and Regional Planning Guidance and the Leicestershire Structure Plan.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 2.6 National planning policy is set out in Government circulars, Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Mineral Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs).
- 2.7 In September 1990 the Government published a White Paper, "This Common Inheritance", setting out its overall environmental strategy and the basis for sustainable growth and development. This commitment was strengthened by the Government's role as a signatory to "Agenda 21" agreed at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992 requiring all participating governments to prepare a comprehensive programme of action needed throughout the world to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development into the next century. In response to this commitment the Government published in January 1994 "Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy". The Strategy acknowledges the important role of land use planning and refers to policy guidance already in place in PPGs.
- 2.8 Sustainable development seeks to deliver the objective of achieving, now and in the future, economic development to secure higher living standards while protecting and enhancing the environment. PPG 1 paragraph 4 includes the commonly used definition.

"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The Council is committed to the principles of sustainable development.

- 2.9 This commitment is echoed in supporting PPGs. PPG4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms records:

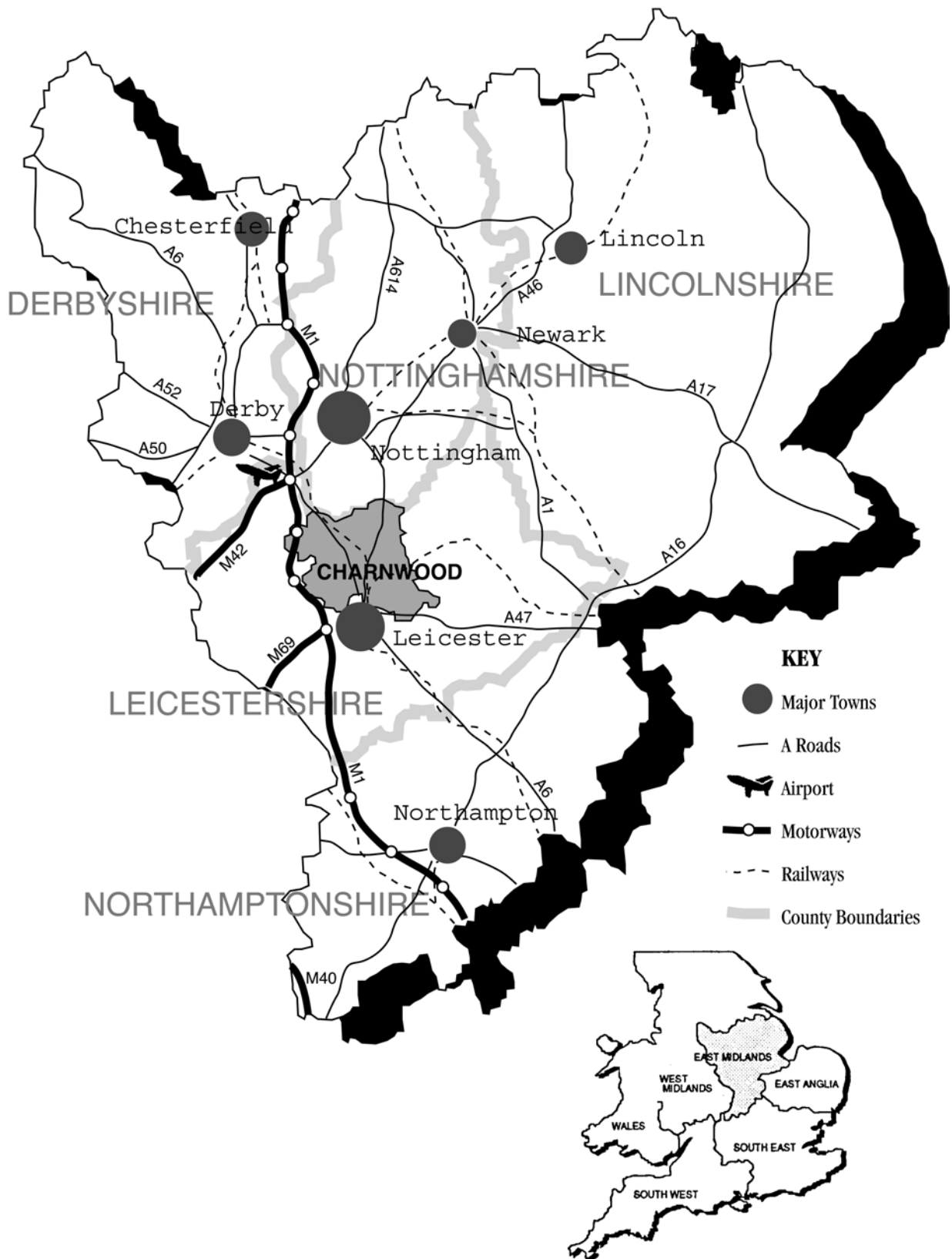
"One of the Government's key aims is to encourage continued economic development in a way which is compatible with its stated environmental objectives. Economic development and a high quality environment have to be pursued together."

- 2.10 PPG13: Transport, further endorses this theme in stating that the key aim of the guidance is to ensure that local authorities carry out their land use policies and transport programmes in ways which help to:
- reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys;
 - encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact, and hence;
 - reduce reliance on the private car.
- 2.11 Where appropriate reference is made to specific aspects of National Planning Policy Guidance in relation to specific policy matters addressed by the local plan.

Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands

- 2.12 In March 1994 the Department of the Environment (East Midlands Region) published RPG 8; Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands. The RPG provides a regional dimension to planning and a framework for the updating of Structure Plans over the period up to the year 2011. The guidance should also be taken into account when formulating local plan policies.
- 2.13 The RPG emphasises the need for sustainable development and requires that all development plans should provide land use policies aimed at achieving four broad objectives;
- a) to meet the basic needs of all the Region's inhabitants;
 - b) to secure and stimulate economic prosperity in all parts of the Region;
 - c) to conserve and where possible to enhance the Region's environment; and
 - d) to maintain a high quality of life throughout the whole Region.
- 2.14 Charnwood lies within the sub area designated "The Derby/Nottingham/Leicester Triangle". The RPG acknowledges in this sub area the advantage of a large labour force, concentration of existing industry, major service centres, the East Midlands Airport, all six of the Region's universities and immediate access to the national road and rail networks (Figure 2).
- 2.15 Accordingly the "triangle" is expected to continue to be attractive to investment, and planning authorities are urged to consider the means necessary to promote the economy of the sub-area and provide suitable opportunities for business to develop. Development plans are therefore required to ensure a ready supply of land for employment and housing including the provision of science and business parks related to existing industrial and research facilities.
- 2.16 The RPG advises local authorities to review their development plans and monitor their effectiveness having regard to a specified list of aims.

Figure 2: Charnwood and the East Midlands Region.



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The Leicestershire Structure Plan

- 2.17 The County Council adopted a replacement Structure Plan for Leicestershire in January 1994, superseding all previous Structure Plan policies. The primary objectives of the Structure Plan are set out in its Strategy Policy 1 which aims to ensure that:
- i) the environment is conserved and where possible enhanced;
 - ii) most new development is located where a realistic choice of transport is or will be made available and which will be maintained or improved;
 - iii) a continuous supply of housing land is released to meet the housing needs of the County;
 - iv) a range of sites is released for employment development including high quality employment sites of County significance for B1 and B2 uses;
 - v) built development in the countryside is minimised and the best and most versatile agricultural land is protected;
 - vi) the re-use of derelict land and use of vacant and underused land and buildings within and adjoining built-up areas is maximised;
 - vii) there is a mix of housing and compatible employment uses in each locality;
 - viii) an overall balance of employment and housing development is achieved across the County;
 - ix) the regeneration of the Priority Areas is pursued;
 - x) the recreational needs of the community are met;
 - xi) the development of the National Forest is successfully pursued.
- 2.18 Specifically in Charnwood the Structure Plan requires land for 8,350 dwellings together with approximately 95 ha (235 acres) for employment purposes to be allocated through the local plan to meet projected development needs over the plan period 1991-2006.
- 2.19 These strategic objectives and requirements and the Structure Plan proposals which flow from them are discussed and expanded in the sections and chapters which follow.

Overall Strategy for Charnwood

2.20 POLICY ST/1

In providing for the development needs of the Borough measures will be taken to:

- i) pursue an overall strategy which generates sustainable patterns of development and remains generally compatible in scale and character with its location and is adequately supported by existing or proposed services, amenities and infrastructure;**
- ii) conserve, protect and enhance those features of the natural, historic and built environment which are particularly valued by the community and encourage patterns of development which minimise the emission of pollutants and promote the conservation of energy;**
- iii) improve the quality of the environment through the achievement of defined standards in the design, layout and landscaping of all new development together with the promotion of selected enhancement schemes in areas of renewal, refurbishment or special attention;**
- iv) promote the beneficial use of all vacant, derelict and underused land;**

- v) identify areas of Green Wedge and other open land necessary to preserve the separate identity of settlements and to ensure that as urban development takes place, undeveloped links to the countryside extending outwards from the urban areas are retained;
- vi) protect the character and appearance of the countryside for its own sake, especially within areas of particularly attractive countryside and other areas of local landscape value;
- vii) ensure that considerable weight is given to the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land, which represents a national resource;
- viii) facilitate the diversification of the rural economy, including the promotion of the National Forest;
- ix) identify sufficient land, in appropriate locations consistent with the Structure Plan, to provide for projected housing needs in the Borough over the period up to 2006 on sites of various size capable of producing the wide range of types and styles which the market requires including elements of rented, shared ownership or low cost housing for those of limited means and access housing specifically designed for the needs of an ageing population;
- x) identify sufficient land, primarily through the retention and extension where appropriate of existing employment areas within the Borough in locations consistent with the Structure Plan to ensure the maintenance, diversification and expansion of investment and employment opportunities in the interests of sustaining a healthy local economy;
- xi) promote an integrated land use and transportation strategy with the aim of enabling the provision of appropriate infrastructure so as to reduce the need for dependence upon the private car and support the viability of existing and proposed public transport services in the interests of encouraging sustainable development and in support of the transport choice strategy;
- xii) support the Government's proposed motorway and trunk road improvements and the Highway Authorities LTP's with a view to securing the implementation within the plan period of particularly those programmed schemes which offer wider benefits through the relief of heavy traffic flows in environmentally sensitive locations;
- xiii) provide for the management of traffic and the extension of traffic calming measures in the interests in particular of pedestrians and cyclists;
- xiv) sustain and enhance the role of Loughborough as the principal centre within the Borough for shopping and allied services;
- xv) maintain the vitality and viability of established town, district and local centres throughout the Borough with additional provision of shops and services to contemporary standards in areas of need;
- xvi) protect and improve urban open spaces for sport, recreation and amenity in accordance with defined standards together with the enablement of new outdoor and indoor facilities for recreation and entertainment in current areas of deficiency and in association with new development;
- xvii) develop and support tourist facilities and attractions appropriate in scale and character to their location for the purposes of diversifying the rural economy and bringing about environmental improvements for the benefit of both residents and visitors to the area;
- xviii) facilitate the provision of the full range of buildings and amenities for education, health, public services, community centres and places of worship necessary for the social and cultural well being of the whole community.

2.21 Rational and openly accountable choices concerning land use planning matters require a coordinated, comprehensive and consistent basis for decision making in the form of an overall

strategy. Such a strategy should provide a clear and concise statement of the plan's main aims, objectives and targets.

- 2.22 The strategic context for the preparation of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan has been set out in previous paragraphs. However in framing the strategy for the Local Plan it is also necessary to take into account the requirements of the Acts and local priorities. Having regard to these considerations the Borough Council approved in September 1992 a Brief containing a series of principal aims to guide the preparation of the Local Plan. These aims provide the basis for policy ST/1 above while the principal themes and issues are developed further in subsequent paragraphs.

Sustainable Development and Growth

- 2.23 The concept of sustainable development and growth is a fundamental principle which underlies all current Government planning advice. In essence the objective is to ensure that adequate provision is made to meet development needs in balance with the need to protect the natural and built environment for the benefit of future generations. PPG12 advises local planning authorities, in preparing their local plans, to have regard to not only the traditional environmental concerns but also more recent issues such as the effect of policies upon global warming and the consumption of non renewable resources. PPG1 paragraphs 4 to 7 give more advice for creating a more sustainable pattern of development. The issue of sustainability therefore provides the foundation for the local plan and its practical application is evident in the aims of the strategy.

Conservation of the Environment

- 2.24 Government and strategic planning policies are directed towards the identification, conservation and enhancement of the best and most important aspects of the built and natural environment.
- 2.25 Previous cultures and generations have left to Charnwood a legacy of archaeological remains, ancient monuments, historic landscapes, buildings and structures. Some 960 features are currently listed as being of special historic or architectural interest while most surviving groups of older properties are protected within designated Conservation Area.
- 2.26 Reference to the particular qualities of Charnwood's rural environment appears in a subsequent section however the overall variety of habitats and landforms contribute to a rich natural heritage recognised in 17 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and numerous other designations.
- 2.27 The environment is a life support system and there is growing public awareness of its vulnerability to over exploitation and abuse evidenced by the exhaustion of resources, generation of waste and pollution. An effective land use strategy has a major role to play in confronting and resolving these key issues, although it must to some extent rely for its success upon the support and cooperation of other agencies and policy making bodies.

Development and the Environment

- 2.28 New development will be both necessary and desirable to provide the homes, jobs and other amenities needed. The strategy aims to ensure that all such development makes a positive contribution to the overall quality of the environment. It is particularly important that development should respect and complement adjacent buildings and land uses, although sufficient flexibility must remain for the encouragement of innovative, and original schemes and layouts. New development must aim to provide a safe, comfortable environment, easily accessible to everyone but having particular regard to the needs of the more vulnerable members of the community. The strategy recognises too the importance which must be attached to the appearance and treatment of spaces between and around buildings through effective landscaping.
- 2.29 Development which has already taken place has occasionally failed to meet modern standards of layout and design and in these areas the strategy recognises the need for improvements to upgrade environmental quality.

Vacant and Derelict Land

- 2.30 Pockets of vacant, derelict and underused land occur throughout the Borough, primarily due to the decline of manufacturing, or former mineral workings. Such land represents a waste of resources and detracts from the quality of the environment. The strategy aims to ensure that neglected land is restored to beneficial use. In particular the development of urban derelict land will reduce the need to build on greenfield sites minimising the urbanisation of the countryside.

Green Wedge and Local Separation

- 2.31 Open land provides a contrast and a foil to areas of urban development. Local communities value their separate identities and view with concern additional building which threatens to bring about the coalescence of settlements. These concerns are felt particularly acutely in Charnwood where incremental growth around the margins of Loughborough and Leicester, and around the tightly grouped settlements along the Soar and Wreake Valleys, has already eroded significantly areas of remaining open land between communities. To arrest this trend the Structure Plan requires the definition of, “structurally important areas of open land” (Green Wedges) around Loughborough and Leicester. The role of Green Wedges is to ensure that as urban development proceeds areas of open land are retained to prevent the coalescence of settlements and to preserve linkages to the countryside, together with the encouragement of their positive management. The inner boundaries of Green Wedges will be reviewed through successive Plan reviews and should not be confused with Green Belts, to which a greater degree of permanence attaches. The Structure Plan further allows for the identification of Areas of Local Separation between smaller communities where the other policies of the Plan would not provide sufficient security to prevent development which would lead to an unacceptable reduction in the separation of settlements contributing to a loss of character and identity.

Countryside

- 2.32 The Borough’s countryside is largely the product of interaction between the underlying geology and centuries of farming which have shaped the pattern of fields, lanes, farmsteads, hedgerows and woodlands. Extensive water features have been added with the creation of reservoirs in the upland areas during the 19th Century, and more latterly through reclaimed sand and gravel workings in the broad river valleys. As a result Charnwood enjoys the benefit of substantial areas of attractive countryside which is worthy of protection for its own sake. In addition the Structure Plan acknowledges the Charnwood Forest and south eastern areas of the Borough as being, “particularly attractive” and therefore deserving of additional policy protection to safeguard their landscape value. The strategy aims to reconcile the protection of the countryside with the needs for new development and increasing leisure demands.

Agricultural Land

- 2.33 Government policy, articulated through PPG7, continues to recognise the importance of protecting agricultural land falling within grades 1, 2 and 3a. Considerable weight should be attached to protecting such land from development because of its special importance. The adopted Structure Plan endorses this approach but acknowledges that in some cases the loss of such land will be unavoidable where there are no other suitable sites for the particular purpose intended.

Rural Diversification

- 2.34 Government policy also recognises the shift in priorities brought about by efficient farming practices and changes in agricultural policy. The emphasis has now moved away from agricultural production necessitating the diversification of the rural economy to provide alternative employment opportunities to sustain viable rural communities. However new rural enterprises must remain compatible with the countryside environment and respect parallel policies directed towards the preservation of amenity and protection of best and most versatile agricultural land. The National Forest currently being fostered in the western parts of

the Borough offers the prospect of diversification into recreation and leisure while promoting commercial and amenity woodland.

Housing

- 2.35 The provision of an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing is a key function of the planning system. PPG3 advises that housing schemes should be well related in scale and location to existing development, be integrated with the current pattern of settlement and land uses and take into account the availability of, or need for, public transport. A wide choice of sites, variable in size and distribution is likely to be required to meet the needs and demands of the local housing market.
- 2.36 The strategy also acknowledges the need for affordable housing for those members of the community with insufficient means to compete in the open housing market. In particular the strategy aims to bring forward initiatives and mechanisms to ensure an adequate proportion of affordable new homes for rent, shared ownership or at low cost.
- 2.37 Demographic trends indicate an increasing proportion of disabled people within the community. Projections also indicate an ageing population structure as modern health care delivers greater longevity. However increasing age is often accompanied by infirmity. The strategy aims to provide adequate housing for people with restricted mobility or other special needs to enable them to live with the dignity afforded by maximum independence. This notwithstanding, policies will need to allow for the provision of residential care homes and other forms of institutional accommodation in response to particular needs.

Employment

- 2.38 The Structure Plan aims to ensure the provision of a range of sites for employment development including high quality sites for B1 business uses. It also aims to encourage a mix of housing and compatible employment uses in each locality.
- 2.39 Charnwood's existing employment areas are generally concentrated within a broad band of development extending from the northern suburbs of Leicester along either side of the Soar Valley, including the lower reaches of the Wreake Valley, towards Loughborough and Shepshed. The existing distribution is already well located in relation to the major concentrations of population, the primary road network and the railway system. Environmental constraints are likely to limit the scope for wholly new employment areas and the strategy therefore aims to provide for additional needs through the retention, reuse and expansion of existing economically viable facilities which already benefit from good communications and close links with local labour resources. These locations are likely to provide for the access requirements of the distribution and service sector, the expansion needs of indigenous business and the high quality landscaped sites demanded by the new business/new technology industries.

Transport Choice

- 2.40 Increasing demands are being placed on the road system and Department of Transport 1997 based traffic forecasts estimate a 60% growth in traffic from 1996 to 2031. Such increases could not be accommodated within the urban areas, and elsewhere would require extensive road building. Additional congestion, delay and resource depletion will be unavoidable unless alternative transportation modes are available.
- 2.41 The Structure Plan relies heavily upon its transport choice strategy which attempts to alleviate the pressure on the roads by promoting patterns of development which will facilitate greater use of rail and bus services or encourage cycling and walking. These objectives are entirely consistent with the approach to sustainable development and are supported through the local plan strategy.

Highway Improvements

- 2.42 However successful the transport choice strategy may be in providing an alternative to the private car, it is still envisaged that traffic will continue to grow resulting in further congestion and delay, with associated increased costs to business and commerce, and undesirable environmental impacts upon residential and other sensitive localities. Accordingly the strategy aims to make provision for and encourage the earliest implementation of those schemes which offer, on balance, wider environmental benefits.

Traffic Management

- 2.43 Local Plans must by law include policies for the management of traffic. The overall strategy acknowledges the need to enable efficient traffic movement but also aims to foster a safe, healthy and attractive living environment for the benefit of the more vulnerable road users and the occupiers of adjacent properties. Resources are likely to be directed primarily to those areas where the risk of vehicular conflict with pedestrians, cyclists and local residents is most acute.

Central Loughborough

- 2.44 The Structure Plan aims to sustain and enhance the role of central Loughborough through increased provision for retailing, allied services, offices, and tourism, supported by transport and environmental improvements. PPG6 also emphasises the role of existing centres and development patterns which minimise the need to travel, promote transport choice and help reduce polluting exhaust emissions.
- 2.45 The strategy therefore aims to build upon the existing strengths, commitments and opportunities present in Loughborough town centre to provide an improved service to the community.

Local Shopping

- 2.46 Local shopping facilities, including district centres and village shops, deliver an important service to their surrounding communities. The strategy aims to ensure that they can retain their vitality and viability through the maintenance of an attractive tenant mix and protection from other development which would serve the community less satisfactorily. However where provision is deficient or otherwise inadequate the interests of the community may be better served by new contemporary facilities able to offer wider choice at competitive prices in more convenient, accessible premises. The strategy aims to provide a context for ensuring a distribution of retailing facilities which best meets the needs of the community while enabling the industry to respond and adapt to changing economic and social conditions.

Sport and Recreation

- 2.47 Government guidance (PPG17) recognises the role of sport and recreation as important components of civilised life and seeks to promote wider participation. Projections indicate increasing demand, particularly amongst older groups, for health related amenities while pressure for countryside recreation is also likely to grow. The strategy aims to protect urban recreation space having regard to the community's long term requirements and to ensure additional provision in step with local needs. However the strategy also acknowledges that limits upon spending are likely to restrict the role of the local authority as a direct provider of built facilities in particular, but the Council will continue to exercise its influence and powers to enable the provision of appropriate amenities.

Tourism

- 2.48 Tourism can make a major contribution to the local economy and act as a positive force for environmental protection and enhancement for the benefits of both residents and visitors. The principal assets of the Borough are the Great Central Steam Railway, the Grand Union Canal, the National Forest, the historic towns and villages and the attractive areas of

countryside, particularly Charnwood Forest. Many proposals of the local plan will support the promotion of tourism but there is also a need to ensure that the best and most attractive aspects of the environment are not damaged by excessive pressure.

Community Facilities

- 2.49 A community is represented by more than a collection of houses. To develop and grow it requires a range of meeting places for various social, leisure, cultural and religious purposes along with schools, health centres, clinics and hospitals. The strategy aims to ensure that sufficient land is allocated to permit the provision of such facilities in suitable locations, in accordance with the needs of the community or the requirements of the funding agency.

Sub Area Strategy

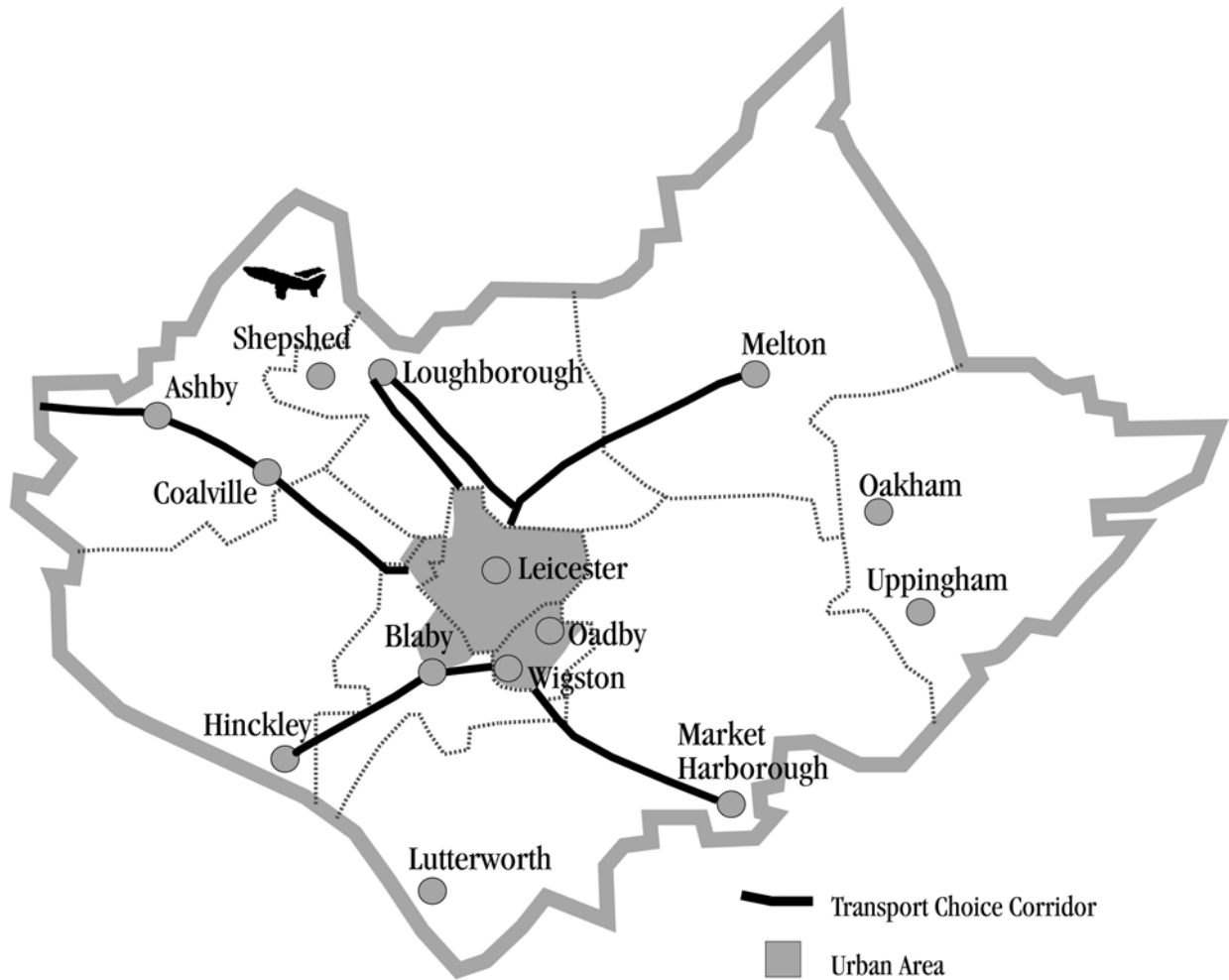
- 2.50 Further to the consideration of representations received upon the Consultation Draft Local Plan the Council undertook a review of its strategy in an attempt to translate the broad aims set out in Policy ST/1, to tackle specific local problems and opportunities. To assist in this exercise a sub area based assessment has been employed.

- 2.51 The sub areas have previously guided local plan preparation in the Borough and have been defined having regard to housing market areas, patterns of journeys to work, community identities and physical characteristics. With minor amendments in recognition of the strategic significance of the transport choice corridors, the sub areas remain relevant to the effective targeting of the local plan policies. The sub areas are shown in Figure 1 and the defined aims for each may be summarised as follows:

- i) **Loughborough**
 - to ensure continuing employment opportunities;
 - to develop and improve the town centre;
 - to reinforce the advantages of concentration;
 - to develop alternatives to the car especially public transport, walking and cycling;
 - to build on the towns advantages for new technology;
 - to tackle inner area problems;
 - to conserve and foster a sense of community supported by appropriate social infrastructure.
- ii) **Shepshed**
 - to improve the town centre;
 - to maintain the good jobs balance;
 - to improve the environment;
 - to promote alternative means of transport;
 - to protect open land;
 - to conserve and foster a sense of community supported by appropriate social infrastructure.
- iii) **Soar Valley (including Birstall)**
 - to improve local facilities;
 - to improve local job opportunities;
 - to develop public transport initiatives, especially along the old A6;
 - to protect open land;
 - to develop cross valley links;
 - to secure environmental improvements;
 - to provide opportunities for the provision of affordable housing;
 - to conserve and foster a sense of community supported by appropriate social infrastructure.
- iv) **Wreake Valley (including Thurmaston)**
 - to maintain/improve local job opportunities;
 - to secure the provision of new stations;
 - to improve the potential of the A607 for buses;
 - to improve Syston/Thurmaston town centres;

- to protect physical separation;
 - to provide opportunities for the provision of affordable housing;
 - to conserve and foster a sense of community supported by appropriate social infrastructure.
- v) **Forest, the Wolds and the rural South East**
- to preserve local jobs;
 - to encourage rural diversification;
 - to protect rural character;
 - to provide for local housing needs;
 - to conserve and foster a sense of community supported by appropriate social infrastructure.
- 2.52 The Structure Plan aims to direct most of the new development needed over the plan period towards the urban area centred on Leicester, the County's main towns and to those settlements capable of offering a realistic choice of transport along specified corridors between the urban areas. It is envisaged that development should normally take place within and at the edges of existing settlements.
- 2.53 Within Charnwood the settlements of Birstall and Thurmaston are specifically defined as being part of the Leicester urban area while Loughborough and Shepshed are identified as the main towns.
- 2.54 The transport choice corridors are based on the principal lines of communication with the capability to provide for attractive, reliable and regular public transport, which radiate outward from Leicester like the spokes of a wheel. (Figure 3). In Charnwood the transport choice corridors are defined as:
- i) the Midland Railway Line between Leicester and Loughborough;
 - ii) the Railway Line from Leicester to Melton Mowbray; and
 - iii) the route of the former A6 between Rothley and Quorn and the A6 between Leicester and Rothley and between Quorn and Loughborough.
- 2.55 Designation as a transport choice corridor does not imply continuous ribbon development along the route but rather identifies the opportunity for concentrating new development, primarily within comfortable walking distance, of a railway halt or bus stop on the corridor. New railway stations have been provided at Barrow upon Soar, Sileby and Syston as part of the "Ivanhoe Line" initiative while, in the longer term stations may be provided at Thurmaston and East Goscote. Regular bus services along the former A6 are already operational while dedicated cycle lanes and paths have also been provided along sections of the route.
- 2.56 The policy acknowledges that should it be necessary to accommodate additional major development outside the specified locations, it should be situated in other corridors offering a realistic choice of transport which will usually require the provision of a dedicated public transport route which penetrates urban areas.
- 2.57 Throughout the remainder of the Borough the Structure Plan envisages that normally only small scale development will be appropriate within and adjoining settlements provided it remains in keeping with their size, form and character. This policy reflects the limited availability of transport choice and restricted level of service provision in the more rural areas of the district.
- 2.58 The Structure Plan also includes provision for the enablement of new settlements without advocating their development. The Explanatory Memorandum advises that it is expected that any such proposals should come forward through the local plan process and remain entirely consistent with the strategy and policies of the Structure Plan. Strategy Policy 6 of the Structure Plan defines the criteria against which new settlement proposals are to be assessed. Criterion (b) relates to the need for the development to be in a location which offers, or will offer realistic choice transport.

**Figure 3: Leicestershire Structure Plan:
Transport Choice Corridors**



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- 2.59 The emphasis of government policy in PPG3 is that if new settlements are to be acceptable they must create the right balance of homes, jobs and services and be in locations that are accessible by good quality public transport services. PPG13 cautions against small new settlements, especially where they are unlikely to be well served by public transport and are unlikely to be capable of being largely self contained.
- 2.60 The government fully expects that all new settlement proposals should either be brought forward through regional planning guidance or the development plan process.

Strategy for the Location of Development in Charnwood

- 2.61 Clearly the availability of or potential for transport choice must be a significant factor in determining the location of new development. However, other factors will need to be taken into account in the justification for the development of particular sites. In all cases there is a need also to ensure that development remains compatible with the wider aims of the local plan directed towards the protection of the environment, provision of safe and efficient highways, conservation of resources and encouragement of satisfactory relationships with existing settlements and other adjacent land uses.
- 2.62 The historical distribution of development in Charnwood has contributed already to a relatively congested settlement pattern as the less constrained development options have been taken. Few sites remain entirely free from established physical or policy constraints and it was evident from the start of the site identification exercise that the preferred options would necessarily be the product of a balanced assessment.
- 2.63 To assist in this process the Council approved in October 1995 the following strategy for development and growth as the basis for the Local Plan's development proposals:
- i) to make provision for necessary development which, on balance, occasions minimum harm to the environment overall, giving due weight to any measures which might compensate or reduce the impact of development;
 - ii) to provide for a distribution of development which reduces the need for car journeys and the distances driven, encourages the use of more energy efficient forms of transport including cycling and walking and exploits the opportunity to secure improved opportunities for efficient and attractive public transport for the benefit of the wider community;
 - iii) to utilise the opportunity to secure through related development, private sector funding for essential public infrastructure, which is directly and reasonably related to that development, the delivery and programming of which would otherwise be uncertain or unachievable, and to address the proven need of different parts of the Borough for affordable housing; and
 - iv) to ensure a balanced distribution of development opportunities throughout the Borough to provide variety and choice broadly in line with market demand and to reinforce and develop those locations which offer the best potential for sustainability.
- 2.64 This strategy is based upon a comprehensive review of national and Structure Plan policy and specific planning issues in Charnwood which concluded that the key aims in locating new development should be:
- i) to make the A6 between Leicester and Rothley and between Quorn and Loughborough, and the former A6 between Rothley and Quorn work as a bus corridor. It is the best opportunity in the Borough for delivering a real choice of public transport with an advantage over the car. It serves 50% of the Borough's population;
 - ii) to concentrate on the most balanced locations in the Borough in terms of jobs, facilities and the potential for alternative forms of transport;
 - iii) to address the need to secure a good homes/jobs balance around the Borough;
 - iv) to exploit the potential for legitimate planning gain through development;

- v) to protect the best of the Borough's open land in terms of agricultural quality, landscape and ecology;
- vi) to develop public transport potential elsewhere in the Borough and to encourage cycling and walking;
- vii) to provide for the needs of affordable housing where they occur throughout the Borough;
- viii) to develop the relationship between the Local Plan strategy and the other areas of Council activity including the cycling strategy, economic development and tourism, housing strategy, town centre promotion, environmental improvements and infrastructure investment.

Limits to Development

2.65 POLICY ST/2

Built development will be confined to allocated sites and other land within the Limits to Development identified on the Proposals Map, subject to the specific exceptions set out in this Plan.

- 2.66 The Limits to Development, identified on the Proposals Map provide clear boundaries to the various settlements and other areas of development in the Borough. They distinguish between areas of development and development potential and areas of restraint. They allow for any new development to be sensibly related to the existing pattern of settlement to ensure that development needs can be met without unwarranted harm to the countryside and other rural interests. The designation of land within the defined Limits to Development does not imply that planning permission will be granted for any particular proposal. Planning applications will still have to be considered on their individual merits having regard to all of the policies of the Local Plan.

Infrastructure

2.67 POLICY ST/3

When granting planning permission for new development which would not be acceptable without reasonably related infrastructure or community facilities, the Borough Council will seek to secure their provision by entering into a legal agreement with the owners, applicants or developers involved and will negotiate accordingly. Developers may be invited to provide and contribute towards:

- i) **the provision of off-site infrastructure to ensure adequate provision for highways, public transport and storm drainage; and/or**
- ii) **the provision of on or off site facilities to secure necessary provision for the social, educational, recreational, sporting and community needs of the development; and/or**
- iii) **the provision of affordable or special needs housing; and/or**
- iv) **the provision of facilities or amenities to offset or mitigate the impact of the development on existing recreation resources, protected habitats and species or recognised heritage sites.**

- 2.68 It is clear that in many areas improvements in provision for highways, public transport other essential infrastructure and community facilities necessary to sustain high standards in the quality of life, have often failed to keep pace with new development. The gap between need and provision has widened as the main providing agencies have had to address competing demands for diminishing resources.

- 2.69 In the face of these trends it is now commonly accepted that the provision of reasonably related infrastructure and community facilities at the expense of the development is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application for development of a substantial nature.

- 2.70 Government policy set out in Circular 1/97 sets out the circumstances in which local planning authorities may enter into negotiations with developers to secure planning obligations (previously known as “planning gain”). Policy ST/3 sets out the type of obligations which the Borough Council will seek to negotiate in relation to new development proposals in situations where planning obligations cannot be overcome by the imposition of a condition.
- 2.71 In conducting negotiations the Borough Council will at all times have regard to the tests of reasonableness set out in the Circular; i.e. that what is being sought must be:
- i) needed to enable the development to go ahead, or, in the case of a financial payment, would meet or contribute towards the cost of providing such facilities in the near future;
 - ii) necessary from a planning point of view and so directly related to the proposed development and to the use of the land after its completion that the development ought not to be permitted without it;
 - iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and
 - iv) reasonable in all other respects.
- 2.72 Applications for new development that would otherwise be acceptable but would give rise to traffic problems to the detriment of highway safety or occasion unacceptable environmental harm will be encouraged to enter into a planning obligation to secure satisfactory improvements to the local road system and/or facilitate improvements to encourage wider use of public transport, cycling and walking.
- 2.73 In the pursuit of measures to give effect to the Structure Plan’s Transport Choice Strategy the Borough Council will encourage developers to contribute towards the improvement of public transport infrastructure (new or improved bus and rail services) cycleways and footpaths, where facilities are required to meet the criteria for transport choice, necessary to serve adequately their development.
- 2.74 Where new developments would overload the capacity of the existing drainage system the applicants will be encouraged to enter into planning obligations to provide additional capacity and or balancing lagoons as necessary. Implementation will be undertaken in accordance with Policies EV/30 and EV/31.
- 2.75 Where a development would generate the need for new educational or community facilities within or near to the site then the applicants will be encouraged to enter into a planning obligation to secure or enable provision of the facilities.
- 2.76 Where open space cannot be provided on site in accordance with the standards set out in Policies RT/3, RT/4 and RT/5 the Borough Council will encourage applicants to enter into a planning obligation to enable the provision of the space required in an alternative location reasonably accessible from the development site.
- 2.77 Policy H/6 provides for the provision of affordable housing as exceptions to normal policy in rural areas. Policy H/4 provides for the negotiation of affordable housing on allocated sites. In granting planning permission for such schemes, applicants will be invited to enter into a planning obligation to ensure that such housing remains available as affordable housing in perpetuity.
- 2.78 Where development, unavoidably, affects adversely areas of recreation land, protected wildlife habitats or species, regionally important geological sites, archaeological sites, listed buildings or conservation areas applicants will be invited to enter into planning obligations to minimise, mitigate or compensate for any loss or injury occasioned.
- 2.79 Policy ST/3 refers to the main circumstances where the Borough Council would be likely to encourage applicants to enter into planning obligations. The list is not intended to be comprehensive and other situations may arise where the Council will seek the use of planning obligations as part of the development control process. Accordingly to avoid delay and confusion prospective developers are recommended to enter into discussions with the local planning authority at an early stage in the development process, and preferably before the acquisition of the land concerned.

- 2.80 Where it is known already what specific planning obligations the Borough Council will seek to negotiate with respect to the developments proposed in this Plan those obligations are set out under the particular allocations concerned.

CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

- 3.1 Charnwood has a richly diverse built and natural environment, much valued by the local population. It incorporates extensive tracts of attractive countryside, most notably the Charnwood Forest area. Many of its villages remain largely unspoilt despite the fact that over the last 30 years the area has accommodated a significant amount of growth in the form of new houses, industry and roads.
- 3.2 Charnwood's accessibility and natural attractions will continue to make it an attractive location for further development over the plan period. The broad strategy of the Plan is to seek to accommodate the need for further development whilst at the same time continuing to conserve and enhance the special environmental character of the area.

National and Strategic Policy

- 3.3 The plan-led planning system places an increased emphasis on environmental concerns and the role the development plan can play in protecting and enhancing the environment. PPG12 confirms that environmental concerns should weigh increasingly in the balance of planning considerations and that development plans should take on board newer environmental concerns, for example relating to energy conservation.
- 3.4 The main thrust of government guidance is to ensure that policies in development plans are grounded in the concept of sustainability - the concern to ensure that adequate provision is made to meet development needs in balance with the need to protect the natural and built environment for the benefit of future generations.
- 3.5 The strategy of the County Council's Structure Plan embodies this new environmental emphasis; one of the plan's key aims is the protection and enhancement of the best of Leicestershire's environment.

The Charnwood Perspective

- 3.6 For the Borough, environmental concerns have been a central feature of its planning policies established in a number of local plans prepared for the Soar Valley, Wreake Valley and Loughborough. The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan seeks to build on this generally successful approach. For the environment the plan aims to:
- i) pursue an overall strategy which ensures that development is sustainable and remains generally compatible in scale and character with its location and is adequately supported by existing or proposed services, amenities and infrastructure;
 - ii) conserve, protect and enhance those features of the natural, historic and built environment which are particularly valued by the community and introduce measures to safeguard against pollution and promote the conservation of energy;
 - iii) improve the quality of the environment through the achievement of defined standards in the design, layout and landscaping of all new development together with the promotion of selected enhancement schemes in areas in need of renewal, refurbishment or special attention;
 - iv) ensure the beneficial use of all vacant, derelict and underused land.
- 3.7 The following policies and proposals for the environment set out in the rest of this chapter address the following objectives:
- i) to preserve and enhance Charnwood's built and natural heritage including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological sites and historic parks and gardens;

- ii) to ensure that new housing development proposed in the plan remains in keeping with its surroundings and creates living environments of character and identity that meets all the specified standards relating to residential amenity;
- iii) to ensure high quality design and landscaping for all new industrial, warehouse, office and commercial buildings;
- iv) to ensure that the display of advertisements is carefully controlled in the interests of local amenity and public safety, and that stricter controls are exercised in areas of special control;
- v) to ensure that new developments take into account the access needs of all sectors of the community and the need to create a safe environment;
- vi) to protect essential open spaces for recreation and amenity from development wherever possible;
- vii) to protect important trees and areas of woodland from development;
- viii) to encourage and initiate landscape improvements in areas of countryside, green wedge and local separation, and achieve sensitively designed urban edges for the Borough's settlements;
- ix) to maintain and improve the quality and quantity of features of scientific and ecological interest, including the protection and creation of new wildlife;
- x) to establish a programme of environmental improvements throughout the Borough;
- xi) to protect the quality and quantity of water resources;
- xii) to minimise the detrimental effects of noise and other nuisances;
- xiii) to promote energy conservation, the wider use of alternative and renewable energy resources and to facilitate more recycling of waste materials;
- xiv) to ensure that new telecommunications developments, including the erection of satellite television dishes are sensitively located so as not to detract from the character and appearance of their immediate locality or the wider area.

Design

3.8 POLICY EV/1

The Borough Council will seek to ensure a high standard of design in all new developments. Planning permission will be granted for new development which:

- i) respects and enhances the local environment including the scale, location, character, form and function of existing settlements and the open and undeveloped nature of the countryside;**
- ii) is of a design, layout, scale and mass compatible with the locality and any neighbouring buildings and spaces;**
- iii) utilises materials appropriate to the locality;**
- iv) provides positive and attractive built frontages to existing or proposed public spaces including roads, footpaths, waterways and areas of public open space;**
- v) safeguards important viewpoints, landmarks and skylines;**
- vi) uses the landform and existing features in and around the site, such as woodlands, trees, hedges, ponds, important buildings and structures imaginatively as the focus around which the new development is designed;**
- vii) safeguards the amenities of adjoining properties, particularly the privacy and light enjoyed by adjoining residential areas;**

viii) **meets the needs of all groups, including the disabled; and**

ix) **minimises the opportunity for crime to create a safe and secure environment.**

- 3.9 PPG1 confirms that the appearance of proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are material considerations in the determination of planning applications. Good design of buildings and the public spaces they define can make a positive contribution to the environment. The Borough Council will seek to ensure a high standard of design in all new developments. Within areas of distinctive or attractive character, such as Conservation Areas and Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside, new development will be expected to respect and enhance the established urban form or the special character of the surrounding landscape. Where the traditional character of an area has been lost or diminished through inappropriate development or a key landmark site is involved, encouragement will be given to experiment, originality and initiative in the formulation of a design solution capable of achieving positive improvements to the locality. Specific guidance concerning matters of design is contained where appropriate within the relevant chapters. The Borough Council intends to produce local design guides to outline the key defining local characteristics for various parts of the Borough. These will be published as Supplementary Planning Guidance and will provide advice and guidance for applicants on design issues.

Archaeology

- 3.10 Charnwood is an area rich in history and as a result includes a large number of sites where some archaeological interest has been identified. These include scheduled ancient monuments, other sites of national importance and sites of more local interest. Remains include Roman Roads, historic bridges and evidence of early settlements. PPG16 emphasises that archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource which contain irreplaceable information about our past and are part of our sense of national identity - valuable for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and tourism. The Local Plan seeks to ensure that archaeological interests receive full consideration and assessment in the development process.

Nationally Important Archaeological Sites

3.11 POLICY EV/2

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect a scheduled ancient monument or other nationally important archaeological site, or its setting.

- 3.12 PPG16 notes that archaeological remains identified and scheduled as being of national importance should normally be earmarked for preservation. In Charnwood there are currently some 20 Scheduled Ancient Monuments including Bradgate House and Park, Ulverscroft Priory and Hathern Village Cross. These Scheduled Ancient Monuments are shown on the Proposals Map. There may also be other important unscheduled remains which may also merit preservation. The Borough Council will liaise with English Heritage and Leicestershire County Heritage Service to identify those unscheduled but nationally important remains. A list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments is included in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Archaeological Sites of County and Local Significance

3.13 POLICY EV/3

Planning permission for development affecting known archaeological sites of county or local significance, will be granted provided the archaeological interest can be preserved in situ. Where this is not feasible or justifiable, the excavation and recording of the remains under the supervision of a professionally qualified archaeologist prior to development of that part of the site affected by the remains will be required.

- 3.14 For sites registered on the Leicestershire Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) the Borough Council will seek to preserve the archaeological interest in situ. Where it is concluded that preservation in situ is not justified the excavation and recording of the remains will be required. The Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record is maintained by Leicestershire County Heritage Service, and they should be consulted for up to date information on areas of archaeological interest in the Borough. A list of the currently identified sites is included in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance. This Guidance also identifies the location of 'Archaeological Alert Areas' (AAA's). These contain most of the identified sites of archaeological interest in the Borough. They are likely to contain other currently unidentified sites. Where a development proposal is located within an 'AAA' the applicant will be required to arrange for the evaluation of archaeological interest before an application is determined.
- 3.15 Where the Council concludes that the excavation and recording of archaeological remains on a development site is appropriate, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate a legal agreement with the developer, or alternatively conditions will be included in any planning permission, to ensure that excavation and recording of the remains is carried out before development commences.
- 3.16 The potential conflict between the needs of archaeology and development can be significantly reduced if developers discuss their plans for development with the Borough Council at an early stage. Developers should also consult with Leicestershire County Heritage Service who hold the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). If these discussions indicate that a known site of archaeological interest, or an area of archaeological potential may be affected, an archaeological assessment of the proposal will be required as part of the application. Where this assessment indicates that important remains may exist, the Borough Council will require an archaeological field evaluation be undertaken before the application is determined.
- 3.17 In considering applications which affect archaeological sites, the Borough Council will liaise with both English Heritage and Leicestershire County Heritage Service.

Listed Buildings

- 3.18 Part of the character and heritage of an area is its stock of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest. Within Charnwood there are some 760 buildings and 200 structures such as walls and bridges that are listed as being of architectural or historic importance. The Borough Council is keen to ensure that wherever possible listed buildings and structures are retained and that development proposals involving or adjoining listed buildings are sympathetic to their character or setting. The Council operates a grants scheme for various eligible restoration works to Historic Buildings. For advice on the availability of such grants, the Council's Conservation and Design Officer should be consulted.

Alterations or Extensions to Listed Buildings

3.19 POLICY EV/4

Planning permission for alterations or extensions to listed buildings, where required, will only be approved where the work is in keeping with the special architectural or historic interest of the building or its character or setting.

- 3.20 Where proposed alterations to a listed building require planning permission it is important to ensure that they are undertaken sensitively and do not harm the special character of the building or its setting.

The Setting of Listed Buildings

3.21 POLICY EV/5

Planning permission for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused. In granting planning permission for development near to a listed building the Borough Council will impose such conditions as it considers necessary to protect the building's character and setting.

- 3.22 PPG15 emphasises the importance of preserving the setting of listed buildings, and notes that often the setting of building can include land some distance from it. The Borough Council will carefully consider the scale, form, siting and design of proposals close to listed buildings to ensure that their setting is not adversely affected by development proposals.

Change of Use of Listed Buildings

3.23 POLICY EV/6

Applications for the change of use of listed buildings to ensure their continued viability will be approved provided they are in keeping with the character, appearance and historic interest of the building. Applications must include full details of any proposed internal or external alterations to the building so that the effects on its character, appearance and setting can be fully assessed.

- 3.24 Often changes of use may provide the key to the preservation of a listed building. The Borough Council will consider sympathetically proposals which would enable historic buildings to be given a new lease of life.

Demolition of Listed Buildings

3.25 POLICY EV/7

Planning permission for development involving the demolition of the whole or substantially all of a listed building will only be granted where it can be demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction that the condition of the building makes it impracticable to repair, renovate or adapt to a use which would ensure its retention.

- 3.26 PPG15 recognises that the destruction of listed buildings is very seldom necessary. Development proposals requiring planning permission which involve the demolition of the whole or substantially all of a listed building will only be granted where it is established that the building is impracticable to repair, cannot continue in its present use and there is no viable alternative use. Where the demolition of a listed building is proposed listed building consent will also be required.

Buildings of Local Historic or Architectural Interest

3.27 POLICY EV/8

Planning permission for development which would affect a building of local historic or architectural interest or its setting will be granted provided:

- i) the appearance or character of the building and its setting are safeguarded; or
- ii) the development would result in significant local community or environmental benefits.

- 3.28 The Borough Council has undertaken a survey of non-listed buildings of local historic or architectural interest in association with the Loughborough Civic Trust, and these are recorded in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance. These buildings are locally significant because of their architectural, historical or townscape value. Inclusion of buildings on the list does not award any legal protection and they do not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing. Where a building is of local historic or architectural interest, the impact of any development on the character of the building and its setting will be a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.
- 3.29 The local list will be kept under review and buildings may be added to, or deleted from it. Developers and interested parties should contact the Planning Department to ascertain the current status of buildings. Proposals that would adversely affect a building of local historic or architectural interest will need to demonstrate significant local community or environmental benefits which would outweigh the loss or damage to the buildings.

Historic Parks and Gardens

3.30 POLICY EV/9

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect on the character or setting of the parks and gardens of historic or landscape significance as shown on the Proposals Map.

- 3.31 To date three parks and gardens within Charnwood have been identified by English Heritage as areas with significant historic or landscape interest: Bradgate Park; Prestwold Hall; and Garendon Park. In addition part of the gardens to Whatton House in North-West Leicestershire fall within Charnwood. The Plan seeks to protect these areas from unsympathetic development and, where opportunities arise, to encourage the reinstatement of these areas as historic landscapes for public use. Whilst agricultural and informal recreation uses will generally be appropriate within these areas, the introduction or intensification of development for other purposes will be resisted.

Development in Conservation Areas

3.32 POLICY EV/10

In determining planning applications for development in designated conservation areas the Council will preserve or enhance their special character or appearance by:

- i) **refusing permission for development involving the demolition of buildings unless it can be demonstrated that their condition is such that their repair, renovation or adaptation would be impracticable or that their removal or replacement would enhance the appearance or character of the area;**
- ii) **requiring, where development would involve demolition, sufficient details of how the site will be treated, and of any scheme for redevelopment of the site, so that the effect of the proposal on the character of the conservation area can be properly assessed. Conditions may be imposed to ensure redevelopment commences as soon as practicable following demolition;**
- iii) **requiring the retention of materials, features and details of unlisted buildings or structures which contribute to the character of the conservation area;**
- iv) **requiring the height, size, design, roofscape, plot width, visual appearance and materials used in any new development (including alterations and extensions to existing buildings) to respect the character of the surrounding area and make a positive contribution to the general character of the conservation area;**
- v) **requiring sufficient details of any proposal, including changes of use, so that the effect of the proposal on the character of the conservation area, both visually and in terms of any potential noise or other environmental intrusion, can be properly assessed. Detailed proposals may also be required on sensitive sites adjoining a conservation area. Alternatively design briefs will be prepared to guide development in the most sensitive locations;**

- vi) **retaining the historic street pattern, traditional buildings lines, open spaces of special character (including gardens), other spaces of public value, important trees and water features, footways, footpaths and kerblines which contribute to the character of a conservation area; and**
 - vii) **encouraging the redesign or replacement of buildings, structures and features which are visually detrimental to the character of a conservation area.**
- 3.33 Within Charnwood there are currently 30 designated conservation areas covering the majority of the historic centres of the main settlements. This policy establishes detailed criteria against which proposals for development within conservation areas can be fully assessed.
- 3.34 The Borough Council will liaise with the responsible agencies for the provision, retention and reinstatement of traditional paving materials, street furniture, lamp standards, brackets, bollards, railings, boundary walls, and telephone kiosks which help to form the character of a conservation area and extending their use where appropriate.

Enhancement of Conservation Areas

- 3.35 The Borough Council will prepare schemes for the enhancement of conservation areas and will encourage owners to improve their own land and buildings. In the determination of planning applications the Borough Council will have regard to the provisions of the Enhancement Scheme and will expect new development to be in keeping with any such scheme.
- 3.36 The Council intends to bid for a Heritage and Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) for Loughborough town centre to retain and enhance the most important individual properties and groups of buildings. Where appropriate proposals for the review of existing conservation areas, the designation of additional areas and further enhancement schemes will also be prepared.

Article 4 Directions

- 3.37 Permitted development rights allow certain categories of development to be undertaken without the need to obtain planning permission, and they should not be restricted without good reason. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where reliable evidence would indicate that permitted development could, if not carefully controlled, damage interests of acknowledged importance.
- 3.38 Where it is considered that permitted development poses a real threat to the intentions of established planning policy the Borough Council will, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State where necessary, invoke the provisions of Article 4 and 4(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 to restrict permitted development taking place.
- 3.39 There are currently 4 areas covered by Article 4 Directions in the Borough, one covering The Green at Mountsorrel and three relating to individual farmholdings in the Charnwood Forest.
- 3.40 For certain permitted development rights affecting dwellings in conservation areas and some works to listed buildings, the Council may introduce Article 4(2) Directions without the need for the Secretary of State's approval. In these cases proposals would be publicised and the Council would have regard to the views of local people.

Advertisements

3.41 POLICY EV/11

Express consent for the display of advertisements and signs will be approved unless the proposal would be either:

- i) **damaging to local amenities by reason of clutter, scale, siting, design or illumination; or**

- ii) **dangerous to public safety through the introduction of signs likely to create a hazard by distracting or confusing road users.**
- 3.42 Without proper control, advertisements may damage the character of the environment through the introduction of an unsightly clutter of signs unsympathetic to the scale, character and architecture of the locality. In some instances poorly designed and located signs may potentially cause a hazard to public safety by distracting or confusing road users. However, properly located and well designed advertising can add to the colour, interest and vitality of the street scene.
- 3.43 Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992, all advertisements, other than certain excepted categories, require “express consent” before they can be lawfully displayed. The above policy seeks to ensure that advertisements requiring the express consent of the local planning authority are compatible with interests of local amenity and public safety.
- 3.44 The Borough Council will have particular regard to the need to protect and enhance the appearance of the main road entrances to settlements and will use its powers to control existing and proposed advertisements in these locations. Main approaches to settlements by road can play an important part in defining the image of a settlement. In particular unsightly and inappropriate advertising in these locations can have a substantial detrimental effect. Consent to display advertisements along the main road entrances to settlements in the Borough will be restricted to:
- i) single signs of traditional construction denoting the location of public houses, petrol filling stations and other facilities convenient to travellers;
 - ii) advance warning signs (including signs for tourist features) only where they would not be detrimental to public safety and would not result in a proliferation of signs.

Advertisements Above First Floor Level

3.45 POLICY EV/12

Express consent will not be granted for the display of advertisements above the level of first floor window sills where they would be poorly related to the building or surrounding buildings by reason of their scale or design.

- 3.46 Advertisements should wherever possible be restricted to areas at or below first floor level. Signs located above this level can often appear unsightly and incongruous in relation to both the particular building and the surrounding street scene.

Advertisements on Listed Buildings or in Conservation Areas

3.47 POLICY EV/13

Express consent to display advertisements and signs within conservation areas or on or close to a listed building will only be granted where:

- i) **the design, scale and siting of the sign would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area; and/or**
 - ii) **the proposal would not adversely effect the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building or its character or setting.**
- 3.48 The Borough Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas and will apply more rigorous standards over the control of advertisements in these areas. An unnecessary proliferation of poorly designed and inappropriate signs can have a significant detrimental impact on the appearance of listed buildings and conservation areas.

- 3.49 In particular, internally illuminated box fascia signs can often have a damaging effect on the character of conservation areas and will normally be inappropriate on listed buildings. The Borough Council will pay special attention to the likely impact of proposals for illuminated signage within conservation areas or on or close to listed buildings.

Areas of Special Control for Advertisements

- 3.50 Environmentally sensitive areas of the Borough are designated Areas of Special Control for Advertisements; these include most Conservation Areas and rural areas outside the main settlements. In these areas more stringent standards apply in respect of the size of advertisements limiting the scope for deemed consent. In determining applications for express consent in these areas the Council will be particularly concerned to ensure that advertisements remain compatible with the character and quality of the surrounding rural, or historic environment.

Advertisement Hoardings

3.51 POLICY EV/14

Express consent for the display of advertisement hoardings or posters will not be approved outside the limits to development, within smaller villages or in primarily residential areas.

In commercial and industrial areas, proposals for advertisement hoardings will be approved where the hoarding:

- i) is in keeping with the scale, form and character of the building onto which it will be placed or surrounding buildings, and**
- ii) would not, by virtue of its size or siting, be seen as an overdominant feature in the streetscene.**

- 3.52 Advertisement hoardings, because of their size and character, can have a significant impact on the character of an area. They will only be approved where they do not harm the character or appearance of the area or where as an interim measure they would be the only practical means of screening an unsightly building or area of land. Such advertising will usually be out of place in the countryside and many of the smaller villages in Charnwood.

Projecting Signs

3.53 POLICY EV/15

Express consent for projecting box signs will only be approved where the sign:

- i) by reason of its size, bulk and method of illumination (if any) is in keeping with the character and appearance of the frontage onto which it would be placed and the wider streetscene;**
- ii) would not result in an impression of clutter in the streetscene bearing in mind the presence of existing projecting signs in the locality.**

- 3.54 By their nature projecting signs can be particularly obtrusive in the street scene, especially where they are too large or bulky for the frontage onto which they are placed. Too many projecting signs in one location can also make the street scene appear cluttered. In considering proposals for projecting signs the Borough Council will take particular care to ensure that they are visually in keeping with the locality and do not give the impression of clutter.

Access for People with Disabilities

3.55 POLICY EV/16

Planning permission will not be granted for new buildings intended to be open to the public or to be used for employment or education unless the design and layout provides suitable access to and into the building for people with disabilities. Proposals for the change of use, alteration or extension of existing buildings for these purposes will also be required to provide for access by people with disabilities where reasonable and practical.

(See also in particular Policy TR/21)

3.56 The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the relevant sections of the Disabled Persons Act 1981 incorporated into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, require developers of specified types of buildings to provide suitable means of access, parking and toilet facilities to meet the needs of people with disabilities. The types of buildings to which the Act applies are buildings open to the public, places of employment and educational establishments.

3.57 The provisions of the Acts are largely enforced through Part M of the Building Regulations in so far as new development is concerned. PPG1 indicates that local planning authorities should take into account access issues in development plans and in determining planning applications. For new developments, or changes of use or alteration of existing buildings where there will be public access, the Borough Council will seek to ensure that through the design and layout, easy access to the building is provided for people with disabilities. The Borough Council will be flexible in its approach to access issues taking into account the circumstances of each case. Measures designed to assist people with disabilities will improve access for everyone, not least the elderly and infirm and people with young children.

Safety in New Development

3.58 POLICY EV/17

In the determination of planning applications the Borough Council will have regard to the need to make provision in the design and layout of new development for the purposes of creating a safer environment, particularly for women, children and the elderly.

(See also in particular Policy H/16)

3.59 PPG1 makes it clear that crime prevention is one of a number of social considerations to which regard must be given in development plans. The main source of Government advice on crime prevention is contained in Circular 5/94 "Planning Out Crime". Through appropriate design, layout and landscaping of new development the opportunity for and the fear of crime can be substantially reduced.

Open Spaces of Special Character

3.60 POLICY EV/18

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of important areas of open land retained in public or private ownership which contribute to the character of a settlement either individually or as part of a wider network of open space.

3.61 A central feature of the plan's sustainable strategy lies in ensuring that the "green" character of the Borough's settlements is safeguarded and enhanced and not lost to "town cramming". PPG17 emphasises the important contribution open space, both public and private, makes to the quality of urban life.

3.62 The character of settlements is a function of the interrelationship between buildings and the spaces they define. Very often, open spaces make a vital contribution to a settlement's character. Important areas of open land can include:

- spaces of historic importance within conservation areas or adjoining listed buildings;
 - spaces important in the streetscene;
 - spaces creating a feeling of spaciousness within an area;
 - spaces that provide a link to the countryside or provide a transition between the settlement and the countryside beyond;
 - private garden land which is an important feature in the streetscene or forms part of the transition between the settlement and the countryside.
- 3.63 Open spaces of special character are shown on the Proposals Map. Other areas of open land, including recreation land defined under Policy RT/7, and allotments defined under Policy RT/15, can often be important for their amenity as well as recreational value. For development proposals affecting these areas, the Borough Council will also consider whether the land functions as an open space of special character. There may also be circumstances where open land within a settlement that is not identified as an open space of special character on the Proposals Map is proposed for development. In these situations the Borough Council will, in determining the proposal, consider whether the land functions as an open space of special character to which this policy should apply.

Tree Preservation Orders

- 3.64 Part of Charnwood's special character is its wooded landscaped - its most recognisable feature being the popular Charnwood Forest area. It is important that the existing stock of trees and areas of woodland are safeguarded where possible from the impact of new development. The Borough Council will make tree preservation orders to protect those trees, groups of trees or woodlands which make a significant contribution to the amenities of any area. In the determination of planning applications the Borough Council will take into account the need to protect where possible trees from felling, lopping, topping, pruning, changes to ground levels, root severance or soil compaction. Wherever possible services should not be run under tree crowns or through existing or proposed landscape areas in order to avoid damage to root systems.

Ancient Woodland

3.65 POLICY EV/19

The Borough Council will refuse development proposals which would result in the loss of, or damage to, areas of ancient woodland, directly or indirectly by felling, lopping, topping, pruning, changes to ground levels, root severance or soil compaction. Improved management of existing woodland will be encouraged wherever possible.

- 3.66 About half of Leicestershire's woodland is ancient woodland and this is largely located in the Charnwood Forest area. The Council is particularly concerned to ensure that these areas of ancient woodland are protected from loss or damage. Areas of Ancient Woodland are listed in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Landscaping in New Development

3.67 POLICY EV/20

Planning permission for new development will be granted where a high standard of appropriate landscaping is provided to the satisfaction of the Borough Council. Where a detailed landscaping scheme is submitted at the full planning application stage or in any reserved matters it should:

- i) **accurately identify planting areas and include details of plant species, their size and density, soil preparation and the location of existing and proposed services;**

- ii) **clearly identify existing trees and hedgerows to be retained as part of the development and the measures proposed to safeguard these features during development;**
 - iii) **include details of structural planting and any proposed earth modelling on the periphery of the site, particularly where it adjoins areas of countryside, Green Wedge, local separation, Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside, open space, principal transport corridors or areas where the physical separation of land uses requires reinforcement. In these sensitive locations provision should be made for the use of common locally native species. For within site landscaped areas, the use of common locally native species will be sought unless there is no such species suitable to fulfil the landscaping purpose required;**
 - iv) **specify planting to break up the outline of large buildings;**
 - v) **detail planting proposed for car parking and servicing areas;**
 - vi) **provide full details of proposals for future maintenance.**
- 3.68 Without careful and sensitive landscaping new developments, however well designed, can present unacceptably intrusive features and fail to integrate successfully with their surroundings. High quality landscaping is particularly vital for sites on the edge of settlements or those adjoining significant green spaces or green links within settlements.
- 3.69 PPG1 recognises that landscaping is an integral part of good design. Where landscaping issues are considered at an early stage in the design process, the resulting quality and attractiveness of the development can be greatly improved. Landscaping not only brings visual benefits but can also provide shelter from the wind and thereby reduce heat loss and provide energy savings. It can also provide important wildlife habitats. Detailed landscaping schemes will be expected for all new large housing, employment, commercial and recreational developments. For smaller scale developments in sensitive locations, proposed landscaping may also be an important consideration.
- 3.70 Specific landscaping requirements for allocated sites are detailed in the site specific policies contained in the Population and Housing and Employment and Business chapters of the Plan.

Sites of National Ecological or Geological Importance

3.71 POLICY EV/21

Planning permission will not be granted for development which could adversely affect National Nature Reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), proposed or designated for their ecological interest, unless an overriding national need can be shown which exceeds the level of importance for nature conservation and there is no alternative solution or other site suitable for that particular purpose.

For Sites of Special Scientific Interest proposed or designated for their geological interest, planning permission will not be granted for development which could have an adverse affect unless an overriding national need can be shown which exceeds the level of importance for nature conservation or a suitable substitute site of at least equal value can be proposed.

- 3.72 Charnwood contains a wide variety of wildlife habitats which reflect its varying geology, from the high land of the Charnwood Forest to the floodplains of the River Soar and Wreake. There are a large number of sites of ecological/geological importance in the Borough including a number of SSSI's, the majority concentrated in the Charnwood Forest Area.
- 3.73 The 1990 White Paper "This Common Inheritance" spelt out the Government's commitment to sustainable development and in particular to conserving the natural heritage for the benefit of future generations. PPG9 outlines the Government's objectives for nature conservation and the framework for safeguarding the natural heritage under domestic and international law.

- 3.74 The key national importance of SSSIs means that development proposals likely to affect them must be considered carefully. Development proposals having an adverse effect on these sites will not be permitted unless an overriding national need can be established. The policy will be applied to all currently designated SSSI's identified on the Proposals Map and to all subsequent designations.

Sites of Regional, County and District Level Ecological or Geological Importance

3.75 POLICY EV/22

Planning permission will not be granted for development which could adversely affect County and District level sites of ecological interest or Local Nature Reserves unless an overriding strategic need can be shown which exceeds the level of importance for nature conservation.

For Regionally Important Geological Sites and County and District level geological sites, planning permission will not be granted for development which could have an adverse affect unless an overriding strategic need can be shown which exceeds the level of importance for nature conservation or a suitable substitute site of at least equal value can be proposed.

- 3.76 The list of ecological and geological sites prepared by the County Council's Heritage Service identifies over one hundred and fifty sites of county or district level ecological or geological interest. It is important that these important sites are protected from adverse development wherever possible. Development which would affect a regional, county or district level ecological or geological site will only be granted where there is a strategic need for the development sufficient to outweigh the importance of the site for nature conservation. The sites concerned are identified on the Proposals Map and listed in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Sites of Parish Level Ecological or Geological Importance

3.77 POLICY EV/23

Planning permission for development in and around parish level ecological and/or geological sites will not be granted unless measures are included to protect or compensate for valuable habitats or features damaged or destroyed during the development.

- 3.78 The Borough's natural heritage is not confined to the various statutorily designated sites, but is found throughout the countryside and the built up areas.
- 3.79 Often ecological sites of parish level importance can be of great value to local communities particularly where opportunities for direct contact with nature are limited. These areas can also form an important element of wider wildlife corridors. For these parish level sites the Borough Council will, through a combination of protection and compensatory provision, seek to ensure that the overall stock is not diminished.

Landscape Features Important for Nature Conservation

3.80 POLICY EV/24

Planning permission for development which would affect a feature of the landscape of major importance for wild flora and fauna will be not be granted unless:

- i) the feature is safeguarded and retained within the development;**
- ii) its function as a linear and continuous corridor or stepping stone for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange is not diminished; and**
- iii) a scheme for the management of the nature conservation interest is prepared.**

- 3.81 PPG9 notes that in combination with statutory and non-statutory sites, countryside features providing wildlife corridors or links are an important part a network necessary to maintain nature conservation interests. The Habitats Directive requires Member states to encourage the management of features of the landscape important for wild flora and fauna. These features can include river and brook corridors, field boundary systems, roadside verges, ponds and small woods. Many will be designated sites of nature conservation interest. However, it is important that other non-designated sites that are important as links or stepping stones are safeguarded.
- 3.82 Where proposals would be likely to affect a landscape feature which functions as an important link or stepping stone, the Borough Council will seek to ensure that it is incorporated in the development, and may look to negotiate a legal agreement with the developer, or alternatively conditions will be included in any planning permission, to secure the appropriate management of the nature conservation interest.

Development and Features of Nature Conservation Interest

3.83 POLICY EV/25

Proposals for new development will be expected to include measures to conserve existing features of nature conservation interest and to include proposals for the creation of new habitats where appropriate.

- 3.84 Planning applications for new development likely to affect designated sites or landscape features of major importance for nature conservation will be expected to include:
- i) an accurate site survey of all existing natural features showing what is to be removed and what is to be retained;
 - ii) an assessment of the likely impact on features of nature conservation interest including landscape features of major importance for wild flora and fauna because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as stepping stones;
 - iii) any changes to ground levels and existing land drainage patterns including the location, size and extent of any temporary mounds of soil or topsoil;
 - iv) the location of existing or proposed services;
 - v) proposals to protect, enhance and manage existing habitats and areas of geological interest to be retained, including safeguarding measures during construction on site;
 - vi) proposals for new habitat creation to compensate for any loss or damage to nature conservation features.
- 3.85 The Borough Council is keen to ensure that full advantage is taken of the opportunities to create new wildlife habitats in all new developments and provide substitute areas of geological interest where necessary. Coupled with the careful protection of existing sites this should ensure that the stock of ecological and geological sites is maintained over the plan period. Where proposals could potentially affect existing sites of interest full details of the development will be required to ensure that the ecological and geological interest of the site and its possible role as part of a wider wildlife corridor is safeguarded as far as possible. The Council will consider the use of conditions or obligations to minimise disturbance to existing sites and provide new habitats or substitute sites were necessary.
- 3.86 In considering development proposals affecting all ecological and geological sites the Borough Council will have regard to the advice of English Nature, the County Council's Heritage Service and the Charnwood Wildlife Project. A list of Parish level ecological and geological sites is included in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance. As these designations change as new sites are identified advice should always be sought on the current up to date situation.

Management Agreements

- 3.87 Apart from specific proposals to change the use of land, valuable habitats can also be damaged by inappropriate management. In certain instances the Borough Council may seek to enter into agreements with landowners in order to protect features of conservation interest through its powers under Section 39 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Nature Reserves

- 3.88 Under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the Borough Council has the powers to set up and manage Local Nature Reserves. The Borough Council's Environmental Charter includes a commitment to recognise and protect areas important for wildlife conservation using these powers. Local Nature Reserves can provide local people easy access to the natural environment whilst helping to protect locally important sites for wildlife. The Borough Council will identify and manage Local Nature Reserves to include examples of a wide range of habitat types within the Borough.

Species Protection

3.89 POLICY EV/26

The Borough Council will not grant planning permission for a development that would have an adverse effect upon any site supporting badgers, bats and all other species protected by schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, or Annex IV to the EC Habitats Directive unless measures are included in the proposal to protect the species and minimise any disturbance during development, or to provide for its transfer to an alternative site of equal value.

- 3.90 The Wildlife and Countryside Protection Act 1981 places restrictions on the killing, taking, keeping and sale of wild birds and their eggs, and other animals and plants listed in the Act. Other animals, including badgers and bats, are protected under separate legislation. Under the EC Habitats Directive, certain animal and plant species are also afforded protection. The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994 implement the Directives' requirements for species listed in Annex IV. The Borough Council will seek to ensure that sites supporting protected species are safeguarded from development. Where development is permitted, the Borough Council will either impose conditions or seek to negotiate a legal agreement with the developer to secure the protection of the affected species. The possibility of transfer to an alternative site will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Prospective developers of sites which may support species are advised to contact English Nature regarding their obligations in this respect.

Wildlife Strategy

- 3.91 The Charnwood Wildlife Strategy was produced in 1991 by the Charnwood Wildlife Project, a joint venture between Leicestershire and Rutland Trust for Nature Conservation and Charnwood Borough Council, supported by UK2000 and private sponsors. The Strategy seeks to protect important wildlife habitats, provide a more conducive environment in which common plants and animals can flourish and generate a more caring attitude towards wildlife. Many of the policies of the strategy overlap with policies of this plan aimed at safeguarding ecological sites; species protection; protecting green spaces and green corridors; promoting the creation of new habitats wherever possible. The Borough Council will have regard to the policies of the Charnwood Wildlife Strategy in so far as they have land-use implications in relation to proposals for development affecting sites which include areas of ecological interest.

Improvements to the Built Environment

- 3.92 The Borough Council will encourage and, where appropriate, initiate a programme of environmental improvements to upgrade and enhance the built up areas within Charnwood. Measures will include hard and soft landscaping, tree establishment, traffic calming, the treatment of untidy sites and the rationalisation of advertising.
- 3.93 A programme of action will be established focusing on the following priority areas:
- i) Loughborough Town Centre, the main approaches to the town by road and rail and the Grand Union Canal;
 - ii) the centres of the larger villages including Shepshed, Birstall, Thurmaston, Syston and Barrow upon Soar;
 - iii) boundaries of main employment areas, particularly where they adjoin residential areas, public open space, or the open countryside;
 - iv) areas of derelict and degraded land and buildings;
 - v) Conservation areas;
 - vi) areas of Victorian terraced housing and post-war Council housing.
- 3.94 Within the main built up areas in the Borough environmental improvements will focus on Loughborough town centre and the centres of the larger villages. Existing schemes, for example the "Conservation Area Partnership Scheme" for Mountsorrel and Quorn, have already resulted in a range of environmental improvements. The scheme for pedestrianisation in Loughborough Town Centre has secured significant environmental improvements to the shopping environment in the town. The Borough Council intends to establish a programme of environmental action where environmental improvements will be pursued in partnership with landowners and other interested parties.

Improvements to the Natural Environment

- 3.95 Outside the Limits to Development measures to improve the natural environment will be encouraged and initiated including:
- i) the removal of derelict buildings where they are detrimental to the attractive rural character of the area;
 - ii) the reclamation of derelict land for agriculture, tree planting, nature conservation or appropriate recreation uses;
 - iii) improvements to existing footpaths and bridleways;
 - iv) tree planting, particularly within the National Forest;
 - v) enhancement of existing and the creation of new wildlife habitats.
- 3.96 For the Borough's natural environment, the National Forest Strategy will encourage a series of environmental improvements in the western part of the Borough. Elsewhere the emphasis will be on the treatment of eyesores including the removal of derelict buildings and the reclamation of areas of derelict land along with further tree planting and the enhancement and the creation of new wildlife habitats. In preparing improvement schemes the Borough Council will consult with the Charnwood Wildlife Project and other local interest groups as appropriate.

Protection of Floodplains

3.97 POLICY EV/27

In the floodplain areas identified on the Proposals Map, planning permission will not be granted for development likely to increase flood risk unless there is an overriding need for the development, and adequate protection and mitigation measures to compensate for any impact are clearly identified, agreed by the local planning authority and implemented by the developer prior to development.

- 3.98 Historically some limited development has taken place within the floodplains of the Rivers Soar and Wreake and consequently some properties are at risk from flooding. Any further development within floodplain areas which would increase the risk of flooding on the site or elsewhere will be resisted. Development can increase flood risk by obstructing flood flows or by reducing the amount of land available for flood water storage. Where it is decided that there is an overriding need for the development, appropriate flood protection and mitigation measures will be required to compensate for the impact of development. Areas at risk from flooding are identified by the Environment Agency and are shown on the Proposals Map. The Agency is in the process of updating maps of floodplain areas which will be constantly reviewed if better flood data becomes available. To ensure that planning decisions are based on accurate and up to date information on flood issues, the Borough Council will consult with the Environment Agency on the possible impact of development proposed in or adjoining areas likely to be at risk from flooding and the suitability of any flood protection or mitigation measures proposed.

Design of Flood Alleviation Measures

3.99 POLICY EV/28

Where planning permission is required for works related to flood alleviation, consent will be granted provided the measures:

- i) **are of a design and scale likely to conserve the ecological and scenic value of the river valleys; and**
- ii) **are appropriate in scale and use of materials to the site and its surroundings; and**
- iii) **would not increase flood risk elsewhere.**

- 3.100 The River Soar Flood Alleviation Scheme has been taken as far as Quorn and has successfully reduced the risk of flooding. The Borough Council is concerned to ensure that any further flood alleviation measures are designed to be compatible in scale and use of materials with the ecological and scenic value of the river valleys and do not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Borough Council will consult the Environment Agency with regards to the design of flood alleviation schemes.

Access to Watercourses for Maintenance

3.101 POLICY EV/29

Planning permission will not be granted for development within 8 metres of the top of the bank or within 8 metres of the landward toe of a flood bank or other flood defence on all main rivers and other watercourses which would obstruct access for future maintenance.

- 3.102 Circular 30/92 emphasises that local planning authorities should restrict development that would either increase the risk of flooding or would interfere with the ability of relevant bodies to carry out flood control works and maintenance. This policy aims to ensure that maintenance access to watercourses is safeguarded.

Surface Water Run-Off

3.103 POLICY EV/30

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in an increased flood risk or have an unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment in areas downstream due to additional surface water run-off unless appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures are included as part of the development and agreed by the local planning authority.

- 3.104 New development, redevelopment and changes of use can all potentially alter the pattern of surface water run-off. Where new built development occurs, the quantity and rate of run-off from more impermeable surfaces like roads and car parks can increase significantly. Whilst the effects may not be immediately apparent they can have a dramatic effect downstream and may cause the capacity of watercourses to be exceeded at times of flood risk, increase pollution, silt deposition and damage watercourse habitats. These effects can often be at some considerable distance from the actual development. New developments will only be permitted where suitable measures to mitigate all the adverse impacts of surface water run-off are included as part of the development. The Borough Council will consult with the Environment Agency on the possible impact of development on surface water run-off and any alleviation and mitigation measures proposed.

Sewage Disposal Capacity

3.105 POLICY EV/31

Where existing sewage disposal facilities are at capacity planning permission for new development will not be granted unless it is phased to commence in accordance with a programme for the improvement or extension of those facilities. In such circumstances permission will be conditioned to ensure that the development is not occupied until the required improvements are operational.

- 3.106 Ensuring the quality of natural resources such as water are safeguarded is at the core of planning for sustainability. Considerable effort at national level is being directed towards the prevention of pollution of rivers and watercourses. In preparing the local plan the implications of the proposed housing and industrial allocations for service provision have been carefully assessed, particularly in relation to the likely environmental implications. Where windfall or other development sites not specifically allocated in the plan come forward which could lead to the overloading of treatment works, it is likely that Severn Trent Water Ltd., under the terms of the Water Act 1989, will request that development is phased over a mutually acceptable timescale to allow for the implementation of any necessary works. Where new facilities are required the Council will, in consultation with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water Ltd, investigate the possible provision of sustainable sewage management systems.

Guidance for Septic Tanks

3.107 POLICY EV/32

Planning permission will not be granted for new development serviced by independent sewage treatment facilities where main drainage facilities are reasonably accessible.

- 3.108 Where main drainage facilities exist it will be reasonable to require new development to feed into them to ensure the long term maintenance of sewage disposal facilities.

Ground Water Protection

3.109 POLICY EV/33

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would be likely to result in the pollution of groundwater or surface water resources.

- 3.110 Groundwater reserves are a valuable source of supply to the public, agriculture and industry and also sustain base flows in the rivers. The water quality of inland watercourses is also an important area of concern. As the decontamination of polluted groundwater is a difficult and expensive process, it is desirable to reduce the risk of pollution rather than deal with its consequences. The publication of the Environment Agency "Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater" gives further guidance on the acceptability of development in relation to groundwater protection. The Borough Council will consult with the Environment Agency on proposals likely to adversely affect the quality of groundwater or surface water resources.

Nuisance from Sewage Works and Agriculture

3.111 POLICY EV/34

Planning permission will not be granted for development in the vicinity of sewage treatment works, livestock units, slurry tanks or lagoons unless it is demonstrated that the level of smells and other potential nuisance from these operations would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities enjoyed by future occupants of the development.

- 3.112 Part of a sustainable development strategy involves ensuring that as far as possible incompatible uses are not juxtaposed. Because of the smell and other nuisances generated by sewage works and certain agricultural activities, it will not normally represent good planning to locate new development in close proximity to these uses. The Borough Council will consult with Severn Trent Water Ltd in relation to development proposals close to sewage treatment works. Certain established agricultural activities can also be a potential source of nuisance. For development proposals involving dwellings or buildings occupied by people within 400 metres of an established livestock unit, slurry tank or lagoon, the Borough Council will carefully consider any potential risk of nuisance to future occupants.

Development Close to Landfill Disposal Sites and Contaminated Land

3.113 POLICY EV/35

Planning permission will not be granted for built development either on or in the vicinity of former landfill sites or other contaminated land unless it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council that the site is safe and there will not be significant problems associated with:

- i) the generation of methane or other gases;**
- ii) ground instability;**
- iii) pollution of ground and surface water resources; or**
- iv) other contamination.**

- 3.114 There are a number of filled and active landfill disposal sites located in the Borough. In view of the potential landfill gas hazards associated with refuse sites it is essential any built development is located having regard to the implications of proximity to a landfill site and that adequate protection measures are incorporated in development schemes. The Borough Council will consult with the Environment Agency on the implications of development proposals in relation to landfill sites.

Site Assessments for Landfill Disposal Sites and Contaminated Land

3.115 POLICY EV/36

Where it is suspected that a development could potentially involve or be affected by contaminated land, conditions will be attached to any consent and/or legal agreements sought to ensure that the approved development does not commence until a site assessment has been carried out and the development incorporates any remedial or safeguarding measures required by the assessment.

- 3.116 Apart from the known landfill sites there may be other sites with potential instability and contamination problems. Where some contamination is suspected the Borough Council will normally grant consent subject to conditions to ensure that full site investigations are carried out.

Recycling

- 3.117 It is well proven that recycling makes good economic as well as environmental sense. It is a government priority to encourage the re-use or recycling of materials which would otherwise be thrown away, and the recovery of energy from waste which cannot be recycled. There are already over thirty recycling facilities across the Borough for glass, cans, paper and textiles. In August 1995 a new bottle bank system was introduced which will bring a bottle bank within easy reach of every home in the Borough. Under the scheme, towns and larger villages will have improved permanent sites and most smaller communities will be visited by a mobile unit. In parts of the Borough a recycling collect scheme has also been introduced with recyclable materials being collected on a fortnightly basis as part of the normal household refuse collection service. The Borough Council is committed to improving the range and quality of recycling facilities in the Borough. Policy CA/10 requires the provision of recycling facilities in new local centres proposed in the Plan.

Telecommunication Structures

3.118 POLICY EV/37

Applications for the erection of telecommunications masts and ancillary structures which require planning permission will be approved provided:

- i) **the applicant can demonstrate that the possibility of mast sharing or erecting the equipment on existing buildings, masts or other structures has been ruled out on technical grounds following detailed investigation;**
- ii) **the type of mast, its scale, mass, design, colour and materials, and its siting does not have an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the landscape or the built environment or nature conservation interests.**

In considering such applications the Local Planning Authority will take account of the special siting, technical and operational requirements of the equipment, the significance of the proposal as part of a national network, and whether the proposal meets ICNIRP guidelines on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields.

- 3.119 In accordance with PPG8, the Borough council is keen to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems. However, telecommunication antennas, if poorly sited can be particularly intrusive. This policy seeks to ensure that the proliferation of masts is avoided and that when required their location is strictly controlled. The Council will require applicants for telecommunications developments to confirm in writing what steps they have taken to investigate the potential for mast sharing or using other existing structures.

- 3.120 Health considerations in relation to telecommunications structures can be a material consideration in determining applications for telecommunications structures. The Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones under the chairmanship of Sir William Steward reported on the concerns about health effects from the use of mobile phones, base stations and transmitters in May 2000. They recommended a precautionary approach to the consideration of the health implications arising from telecommunications development. The Council will require applicants for telecommunications development to confirm in writing that all areas to which the public would have access will have radiation levels which fall within the ICNIRP guidelines.

Satellite Television Dishes

3.121 POLICY EV/38

Proposals for satellite dishes which require planning permission will be acceptable provided the dish:

- i) by reason of its size, colour, appearance and siting would not have a significant impact on the appearance of the building;**
- ii) would not be visually intrusive or damaging to the wider streetscene;**
- iii) would not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring properties;**
- iv) would not lead to a clutter of dishes which collectively would detract from the character and appearance of the locality.**

- 3.122 Satellite television dishes are becoming an increasingly common feature on residential and commercial properties throughout the Borough. Unfortunately in some instances, whether because of poor siting or choice of dish, they can be particularly unsightly and incongruous features on a building. This policy seeks to ensure that satellite television dishes are sensitively positioned so as to respect both the buildings on which they are placed and the wider streetscene.

- 3.123 Whilst for the majority of householders, planning permission will not normally be required for the erection of a satellite dish, it is a condition of installing a dish that it must be sited to minimise the impact on the external appearance of the building. In certain circumstances the Borough Council may require the repositioning of dishes it considers to be poorly sited. The Council will look closely at dishes erected under permitted development rights on the front elevations of terraced properties where the visual impact of the dish can be particularly damaging. Dishes may be particularly intrusive if poorly position on terraced properties.

- 3.124 Further details on the siting of satellite television antennas can be found in the DoE Booklet, "A Householders Planning Guide for the Installation of Satellite Television Dishes".

Development and Pollution

3.125 POLICY EV/39

Planning permission will not be granted for new development which:

- i) because of its nature or operation, would be likely to result in a serious risk to the health or general amenities of nearby residents, the public generally or the natural environment; or,**
- ii) involves residential or other development sensitive to pollution which would be likely to suffer poor environmental amenity due to excessive noise, disturbance, dust, smoke or other polluting effects arising from existing development nearby.**

Planning permission will only be granted in these instances where appropriate measures to overcome the potential pollution problems are proposed and implemented to the satisfaction of the local planning authority.

- 3.126 PPG23 emphasises that the planning system has an important role to play in determining the location of development which may give rise to pollution and also in controlling other development proposed close to potential sources of pollution. The Borough Council is concerned to ensure that conflicts between potentially polluting activities and other land uses is minimised. Certain developments can have a potential impact on health, the natural environment or general amenity through releases to water, land or air, or because of noise, dust, vibration, light or heat. Where proposals involve potentially polluting activities, or would be located close to potential pollution sources, satisfactory measures to overcome any problems should be included in the proposals. The Borough Council will, where appropriate, consider the use of conditions or seek to enter into planning obligations to control pollution aspects of development.

Light Pollution

3.127 POLICY EV/40

Planning permission for lighting installations, or for development requiring or likely to require external lighting, will only be granted where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that:

- i) the lighting scheme proposed is the minimum needed for security or working purposes;**
- ii) potential pollution from glare and spillage is minimised, particularly to residential areas, areas of nature conservation and locations in the open countryside or on the edge of existing settlements;**
- iii) the lighting proposed would not cause a distraction to drivers using nearby highways;**
- iv) the visual impact of proposed lighting installations and structures on the character of the surroundings is minimised.**

- 3.128 There is increasing concern about light pollution from external light sources. Where external lighting can be controlled the Council will be concerned to ensure that excessive glare and light spillage are avoided and that the visual impact of lighting structures is minimised through appropriate design and landscaping measures. This can be achieved through careful control of both the amount and detailed design of external lighting. The Council will pay particular attention to proposals in sensitive locations in the open countryside or on the edge of existing settlements. In considering proposals involving external lighting, the Borough Council will have regard to guidance provided in the report "Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Better Practice" commissioned by the ODPM.

Renewable Energy

3.129 POLICY EV/41

Planning permission will be granted for development for renewable energy schemes provided:

- i) the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the locality;**
- ii) there would be no adverse impact on adjoining land-uses or residential amenity;**
- iii) features of natural, cultural, historical and archaeological interests would be safeguarded;**
- iv) the proposal would not result in unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic on minor roads.**

- 3.130 It is Government policy to stimulate the exploitation and development of renewable energy resources whenever they have prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable. PPG22 emphasises the careful balance that needs to be struck in harnessing the potential of renewable energy resources whilst at the same time safeguarding the character of the countryside. Renewable energy sources offer the prospect of increasing the diversity and security of energy supplies and reducing harmful emissions to the environment. Sources of renewable energy can include energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly, for example from the sun, wind or rainfall. Combustible or digestible industrial, agricultural and domestic waste are also potential sources of renewable energy.
- 3.131 The Borough Council is keen to support the development of renewable energy initiatives in the Borough where they are environmentally acceptable. Opportunities within the Borough can include initiatives related to agriculture and forestry, the combustion of methane gas from landfill sites and the development of wind power. Whilst opportunities may arise in the National Forest area, such as energy forestry, any proposals will be considered on their merits in line with the policies of this plan. In terms of the recovery of landfill gas energy, a scheme at the Mountsorrel Landfill site has been awarded a contract under the Non-Fossil Fuels Obligation. There may also be opportunities at Allsopps Lane Tip in association with the development of the site as an ecology park.
- 3.132 In considering applications for renewable energy developments, the Borough Council will take account of the local and wider benefits the proposal may bring and the fact that renewable energy resources can usually only be developed where they occur.

Wind Power

3.133 POLICY EV/42

Planning permission for wind farms and individual wind turbines will be granted provided:

- i) **the Council is satisfied that the wind regime on the proposed site is capable of successfully supporting the generation of wind power;**
- ii) **the proposed development is sensitively located in relation to the existing landform and landscape features so that its visual impact, particularly to wider views, is minimised;**
- iii) **the proposal does not have an unacceptable impact on the special landscape character of areas of particularly attractive countryside or local landscape value;**
- iv) **there would be no detrimental impact on sites of special scientific interest, other areas of nature conservation interest, scheduled ancient monuments or other archaeological sites as a result of the development;**
- v) **the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on surrounding properties due to noise nuisance, shadow flicker or electromagnetic interference;**
- vi) **the structure is located at least one and a half times its height with the blade extended away from any public highway, footpath or bridleway;**
- vii) **the proposal would not involve the erection of overhead power line to connect it to the national grid which would detract from the qualities and character of the landscape.**

- 3.134 So far commercial interest has mainly focused on the potential for wind power generation. However the technically most favourable sites are often areas of special landscape character or are important ecologically. This is the case in Charnwood. Whilst there is clearly the potential for wind power generation in the District, the best locations are likely to be on the high land in the Charnwood Forest or the Wolds. The development of wind power sites in the Forest would conflict with long established policies seeking to protect this area's special landscape character. In the Wolds, because of the sweeping open character of the landscape, wind power developments would be difficult to assimilate successfully.
- 3.135 This policy establishes the general criteria against which proposals for wind power generation in Charnwood can be assessed to ensure that the potential for wind power generation is realised without unacceptable environmental impacts. Key considerations associated with proposals for wind turbines will be their visual impact and any potential noise impact. Other potential effects that will need to be considered include turbine safety, shadow flicker and electromagnetic interference. Applications for the development of windfarms and individual turbines will be required to demonstrate that the wind regime on the proposed site has been properly assessed and is capable of supporting the generation of wind power. Full details of the number, size, design, colour and general location of the machine(s) along with details of the location and appearance of any ancillary buildings and structures, and photomontages to indicate the likely impact of the proposal on major viewpoints will also be required.
- 3.136 Full details of the likely noise impact of the proposal should also be provided particularly in relation to any impact on nearby noise sensitive developments. The Borough Council may also seek to negotiate a legal agreement with applicants to ensure that any interference to television or microwave signals resulting from the proposal is abated.

Percent for Art

3.137 POLICY EV/43

The Borough Council will seek to negotiate the provision of works of public art in places which can readily be seen by the public as an integral part of the design of major developments.

- 3.138 In an attempt to encourage permanent works of art in new development the Arts Council has initiated the 'Percent for Art' Scheme. The scheme seeks to encourage developers in both the public and private sectors to allocate a percentage of any contract sum for commissioning new works of art by artists and craftsmen. Ideally at least one percent of the contract might be directed towards works of art but the total may vary depending on the size and scale of the project.
- 3.139 The Borough Council supports the Percent for Art initiative and through the Policy will encourage the voluntary provision of public works of art by negotiation with prospective developers. The Borough Council will separately pursue the preparation of a Public Arts Strategy for Charnwood.

CHAPTER 4: POPULATION AND HOUSING

Introduction

- 4.1 The Borough has the highest population of any district in the County outside the City of Leicester. As one of the fastest growing areas of the County it has experienced a population growth of over 40% in the last 30 years.
- 4.2 Housing is the principal land-use in the built up areas. In 1991 the dwelling stock consisted of about 57,000 dwellings. Of these about one-third were located in Loughborough, the main urban area, and over half were located in Shepshed and other settlements alongside the Soar and Wreake river valleys. Less than 10% of the total were located in the extensive rural areas of the Charnwood Forest, the Wolds and the rural South East. This distribution reflects the pattern of growth in recent times. In the areas which have undergone significant growth the individual character and identity of settlements and their surroundings have faced continuing pressure to accommodate change. It is important that the amenities and character of existing and planned residential areas are safeguarded and enhanced.
- 4.3 There are spread across the Borough pockets of older housing lacking in modern amenities and located in areas themselves in need of enhancement. Such housing areas are most evident in Loughborough. In recent years the Borough Council has endeavoured to improve the condition of the dwelling stock and the quality of residential environments in the most disadvantaged areas. There remain opportunities for further improvements.
- 4.4 Many people in the Borough are unable to afford to buy or to rent accommodation. There are also other people with particular needs not adequately provided for in the general housing market; the frail elderly, the mentally and physically impaired, gypsies and travellers, and students. Trends in household formation indicate a continuing rise in smaller households, particularly those containing one person. The needs of these various groups merit consideration in the preparation of this Plan.

Government Guidance

- 4.5 PPG3 'Housing (March 2000) provides the guiding principles for considering housing within the planning system. It sets out the key Government objective that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. The PPG indicates that local planning authorities should plan to meet the needs of the whole community, including those in need of affordable or special needs housing, and provide wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing. Regional Planning Guidance (RPG8) highlights a substantial need for additional affordable housing in the East Midlands which should be redressed at the local level in the light of local housing needs surveys. PPG3 also advises local planning authorities to avoid developments which make inefficient use of land (less than 30 dwellings per hectare), promotes the re-use of previously developed land within urban areas in preference to the development of greenfield sites, and encourages the creation of more sustainable patterns of development. The importance of good design in new housing is emphasised along with the need to promote more sustainable patterns of development by concentrating most additional housing within urban areas, maximizing the re-use of previously developed land, assessing the capacity of urban areas to accommodate more housing, and adopting a sequential approach to the allocation of housing land. This should start with previously developed land and buildings within urban areas, then urban extensions and finally new development around nodes in good public transport corridors. The PPG suggests that planned extensions to existing urban areas are likely to prove the most sustainable option after sites within urban areas. On new settlements the guidance suggests that in the right location and with the right concept, they can make a contribution, but that they will infrequently be a viable option due to their scale and the time required to develop them.

The Leicestershire Structure Plan

- 4.6 The Structure Plan requires the provision of approximately 8350 dwellings over the period 1991-2006 in Charnwood. The Plan requires that the majority of new development should be focused on settlements adjoining the City of Leicester (in Charnwood these are Birstall and Thurmaston), Loughborough, Shepshed and settlements in the three transport choice corridors (the Midland Railway Line and the A6 between Loughborough and Leicester, and the railway line between Melton Mowbray and Leicester). The densities of development, and the type of housing provided should reflect the increasing needs of households requiring smaller dwellings.

The Charnwood Perspective

- 4.7 A picture of population and trends is provided by information from the 2001 Census. It highlights matters of relevance to housing issues.
- 4.8 Between 1991 and 2001 the Borough's population grew by around 5% to about 153,400 people. Over the same period the County's population grew by about 6%.
- 4.9 This overall change masks variations for different age groups. The increase in elderly people is the largest of any age group. By 2001 19% of the Borough's population were over 60 years of age. These figures confirm the greater representation in the overall population profile of the elderly who may be expected to generate a greater need for sheltered housing and homes offering differing degrees of care.
- 4.10 Over three quarters of households are recorded as living in owner-occupied accommodation. About 9.5% rent from the local authority and about 2.5% rent from a housing association.
- 4.11 The Census indicates that over 27% of households were single person. The surge in single person households reflects ageing of the population, rising divorce rates, and changes in lifestyles with people choosing to live alone. Only 0.4% of households lacked the basic amenities of a bath/shower and toilet. Car ownership has increased to the extent that less than 19% of households had no car, whilst nearly 36% had 2 or more cars. Charnwood has the largest population of ethnic minority groups in Leicestershire representing 8% (12,267) of the population. Figures indicate that about 15% of residents have a limiting long term illness.

Aims and Objectives

- 4.12 For housing the Local Plan provides a policy framework which meets the following overall aim:
- “To identify sufficient land, in appropriate locations consistent with the Structure Plan to provide for projected housing needs in the Borough over the period up to 2006 on sites capable of producing the wide range of types and styles which the market requires including elements of rented, shared ownership or low cost housing for those of limited means and access housing specifically designed for the needs of an ageing population.”
- 4.13 The policies and proposals address the following objectives with regard to housing issues:-
- i) to accommodate the presently unallocated element of strategic housing requirements by a combination of new land releases and allowance for unidentified (windfall) sites;
 - ii) to encourage sustainable developments in terms of environmental and resource conservation and integration with transport policy;
 - iii) to secure the implementation of new housing areas served by the appropriate level of infrastructure, services and facilities;
 - iv) to allow for affordable accommodation to meet proven local needs in locations acceptable in planning terms to serve towns and villages;
 - v) to allow for particular needs, in appropriate locations, of the frail elderly, the mentally and physically impaired, students, travelling people and gypsies in appropriate locations;

- vi) to achieve within available resources improvements in the condition of properties lacking in modern amenities and housing areas which merit environmental enhancement;
- vii) to maintain and enhance the character and standards of amenity within primarily residential areas.

New Housing Provision

- 4.14 The Structure Plan requires about 8,350 dwellings to be constructed in Charnwood between 1991 and 2006. This level of provision acknowledges that environmental constraints limit the ability of the Borough to meet its projected natural population increase. Provision is made for 1,500 dwellings, which would have been needed to meet natural increase requirements within Charnwood, to be accommodated in other Districts.
- 4.15 A substantial proportion of the overall requirement of 8,350 dwellings was already provided for as follows:

	DWELLINGS
Strategic Housing Requirement 1991 to 2006	8,350
<u>Less</u>	
Completions 1991 to March 2003	6,034
Balance to be found	2,316
Expected completions on small sites (less than 0.4ha) (3 x 65)	195
Expected completions on committed large sites	1,570
Additional urban capacity	100
Therefore the Plan needs to provide	451

- 4.16 Since 1991 some 6,034 dwellings have been completed on a variety of sites throughout the Borough. A realistic assessment of the likely contribution from large site commitments suggests that this source will provide a further 1,570 dwellings up to 2006. In identifying sites to meet housing requirements, PPG3 requires local planning authorities to make an allowance for windfalls. These are previously developed sites, large or small, which unexpectedly become available. Structure Plan Housing Policy 4 indicates that an allowance should be made for unidentified sites when making provision for housing requirements so that the need to release further greenfield sites is minimised.
- 4.17 The Council has made an allowance for the contribution from small sites of less than 10 dwellings. Based on an assessment of past trends and future potential an allowance of 65 dwellings per year on small sites for the remainder of the Plan period is made.
- 4.18 A review of urban capacity has also been undertaken in relation to sites in excess of 10 dwellings. This has taken account of planning applications awaiting determination on a range of brownfield sites. The assessment of housing land supply allows for an additional urban capacity of 100 dwellings to be built in the remainder of the plan period.
- 4.19 After taking account of these various factors there remains an outstanding balance of approximately 451 dwellings to be found. This requirement is met through the allocation of a range of previously developed and greenfield sites.

New Housing Allocations on Previously Developed Land

4.20 POLICY H/1

The previously developed sites listed below as identified on the Proposals Map, are allocated for new housing development provided layout, density, design, landscaping, access and parking details are in accordance with other policies of the Plan:

		Net Residential Area		Approx No of Dwellings to 2006	Net Density Approx	
		Ha	Acres		Ha	Acres
H/1(a)	Land off Nottingham Road, Barrow upon Soar	1.0	2.5	30	30	12
H/1(b)	Land at Empress Road, Loughborough	0.6	1.5	30	50	20
H/1(c)	Former Factory Churchside/ Forest Street, Shepshed	1.0	2.4	40	40	16
	TOTAL	2.6	6.4	100	38	15

(See also in particular Policies ST/3, EV/1, EV/8, EV/17, EV/20, EV/36, H/4, H/7, H/16, TR/5, TR/18, RT/3, RT/4, RT/5, RT/6, RT/11, RT/12)

- 4.21 PPG3 encourages local planning authorities to make more efficient use of land by maximising the re-use of previously developed land, assessing the capacity of urban areas to accommodate more housing, and adopting a sequential approach to the allocation of land for housing. In identifying additional land to meet strategic housing requirements the Council has sought to maximise the potential for development on previously developed land and buildings. Technical report 8 details the urban capacity study which has been undertaken to identify the scope for development on such sites.
- 4.22 Where sites identified in the study are available and considered capable of development within the Plan period they have been allocated and are identified on the Proposals Map. There will also be the potential for further unidentified windfall sites to come forward in the remainder of the Plan period. The urban capacity study has helped to inform an assessment of additional potential from this source and this is outlined in paragraph 4.18 above.
- 4.23 The allocated sites are varied in their size, type and location. In total they will provide some 100 dwellings. Development proposals for the sites will need to accord with other policies in the Plan dealing with design, layout and density of development, access and parking. Because of the urban location of a number of sites, there is the potential for high density developments, particularly where sites are located close to existing town or district centres. The policy assumes higher density development for sites in these locations.
- 4.24 Because of the former uses associated with some of the sites, there may be potential contamination problems that would need to be assessed. In line with Policy EV/36 where it is suspected that contaminated land could be involved, conditions will be attached to any planning consent or a legal agreement sought to ensure that full site investigations are carried out prior to development.
- 4.25 Where a need for improved infrastructure or community facilities, including education, is identified in association with a development, reasonably related contributions may be sought from the developer in line with Policy ST/3. These could include improvements to public transport, and walking and cycling facilities where a need is identified.
- 4.26 In considering proposals for the development of these sites, the Council will apply the recreational space standards specified in Policies RT/3 to RT/5. Where a need for additional provision is identified but cannot be provided on site, a contribution towards the improvement of nearby sport and recreation or open space facilities may be sought.
- 4.27 Many of the allocated sites are in locations where there is an identified need for affordable housing provision and are well located to help to address that need. For these sites in areas of need, meeting the size thresholds set out in Circular 6/98 Planning and Affordable Housing, an element of affordable housing provision will be sought. Policy H/4 sets targets for the provision of an element of affordable housing on allocated sites. For the smaller sites, whilst a specific element of affordable housing provision cannot be sought, there is the potential for these sites, by virtue of their location, to provide smaller units of open market housing that may help to meet an element of affordable housing needs.

- 4.28 After allowing for additional windfall potential and specific allocations on previously development land, there remains a need to allocate greenfield sites to meet the strategic housing requirement.
- 4.29 Through the specific allocations on previously developed land set out in this policy and the assessment of additional urban capacity, the Plan aims for some 47% of the strategic housing requirement of 8,350 dwellings to be provided on previously developed land. Although this is below the national target of 60% it is considered that, in the context of Charnwood, this represents a challenging target.

New Housing Allocations on Greenfield Sites

4.30 POLICY H/2

The greenfield sites listed below as identified on the Proposals Map are allocated for new housing and related ancillary uses subject to the criteria specified for each site:

		Net Residential Area		Approx No of Dwellings to 2006	Balance after 2006	TOTAL Approx	Net Density	
		Ha	Acres				Ha	Acres
H/2(a)	Land north of Bradgate Road, Anstey	3.3	8.1	30	70	100	30	12
H/2(b)	Land between Cotes Road and Willow Road, Barrow upon Soar	12	29.7	60	300	360	30	12
H/2(c)	Land at Brook Street, Burton on the Wolds	1.6	4.0	42	6	48	30	12
H/2(d)	Land at Peartree Lane, Loughborough	3.3	9	30	70	100	30	12
H/2(e)	Land at Meynell Road, Quorn	0.8	2.0	30	0	30	38	15
H/2(f)	Land at Little Haw Farm, Shepshed	1.7	4.2	30	20	50	30	12
H/2(g)	Land East of 19 Barkby Lane, Syston	2.7	6.7	30	50	80	30	12
H/2(h)	Land at Barkby Road, Syston	11.3	27.9	88	252	340	30	12
H/2(i)	Land at Wysall Lane, Wymeswold	2.3	5.7	30	40	70	30	12
	TOTAL	39	97.3	370	808	1178	30	12

(See also in particular Policies ST/3, EV/1, EV/17, EV/20, H/4, H/7, H/16, TR/5, TR/13, TR/18, RT/3, RT/4, RT/5, RT/6, RT/11, RT/12)

- 4.31 The development site selection process has been guided by the approved strategy for the location of development in Charnwood set out at paragraph 2.63. It has been further informed by the thorough examination of development possibilities afforded by the preparation of the report "Sustainability and the Impact of Major Development Options" and guidance in PPG3 on the sequential approach to development. A further influential factor has been the findings of the Borough Council's Housing Needs Study which, when combined with details of the distribution of the existing stock of rented housing, has provided the most effective tool to date in identifying the relative needs of communities across the Borough for the provision of affordable housing.

- 4.32 The Deposit Draft plan allocated the bulk of the housing requirement in two sites adjacent respectively to the urban areas of Loughborough and Greater Leicester in accordance with the strategic aims of the Structure Plan which seeks to reinforce urban concentration. Planning permission for these strategic sites has now been granted. Both sites derive considerable advantage from the extension of existing good quality public transport services already operating within the urban areas offering residents access to genuine transport choice. Located at either end of the bus based transport choice corridor between Leicester and Loughborough, the two sites in tandem have secured related investment in improvements to the transport system which should help to deliver an attractive bus link with competitive journey times advantageous to existing users and all communities lining the route. The potential for the encouragement in a modal shift to buses is unparalleled in the Borough. The development north of Birstall involves a mixed-use development including housing, employment, shopping, leisure and educational facilities which fully accords with national policy guidance.
- 4.33 The remaining allocated Greenfield sites provide for a mix of development opportunities on urban edge sites, at nodes within good public transport choice corridors and also provide for identified rural housing needs. Allocations at Loughborough and Shepshed are in accord with the aims of the Structure Plan which seeks to direct most development to the main urban areas.
- 4.34 The allocations at Barrow upon Soar and Syston represent sustainable development opportunities by virtue of their location in relation to established stations on the rail based transport choice corridor and proximity to District Centres with a wide range of local services and facilities. Because of their access to good public transport and a wide range of local services and facilities, these settlements represent the most sustainable locations for further development in the Borough outside the main urban areas. The site at Barrow Upon Soar will secure the provision of a perimeter road between Cotes Road and Nottingham Road. This will provide environmental and highway safety benefits by distributing local traffic and relieving congestion in the village centre. The developments at Syston will provide elements of affordable housing provision in an area of identified need.
- 4.35 Allocations in Wymeswold and Burton on the Wolds, outside the urban areas and transport choice corridors, account for approximately 9% of the housing allocation. These allocations are directed in part towards the enablement of elements of affordable housing to address demonstrable local needs but also make an important contribution to the achievement of the strategic housing requirement.
- 4.36 In combination the 9 sites allocated provide for a wide range and choice of new housing opportunities across the Borough, well related to existing or proposed employment areas. For the most part areas of particular importance to the preservation of the rural landscape or by virtue of their role in safeguarding the physical separation of settlements, are retained. A degree of compromise in some areas is inevitable but in all cases the site selection exercise must be informed by a synthesis of all relevant material in which no single factor can be permitted to become the determining factor.
- 4.37 An assessment of the likely contribution from each site in the remainder of the plan period up to 2006 has been made on the basis of an assessment of past build rates on large sites, and discussions with developer interests. This assessment suggests that on a number of sites an element of the proposed development will take place beyond the current plan period. This is a function of the expected build rates for the sites. The Modifications Inquiry Inspector acknowledged this overspill as a necessary consequence of additional greenfield allocations he identified as being required to enable the strategic target to be met. The additional greenfield sites are sites that have been supported for allocation by both Local Plan Inspectors. They involve development in sustainable locations in accordance with strategic guidance. The potential for the developers to progress these key sites should not be restricted by phasing. It is important that there is commitment to the delivery of these sites in total so that the developers involved can plan for the necessary infrastructure associated with these major developments.
- 4.38 Monitoring will take place on an annual basis and will be published as Housing Land Availability reports looking at planning permissions and completions on sites, identifying progress on urban capacity and Greenfield housing sites.

- 4.39 In line with PPG3 the densities proposed for the allocated sites seek to make the best use of the available land. For the previously developed sites within Loughborough, higher densities have been assumed to reflect their location within the urban area. For the purposes of the Plan and the calculation of housing land supply, densities of around 30 dwellings per hectare have been assumed in accordance with PPG3.
- 4.40 The following paragraphs set out in further detail the measures required to minimise the impact of the development of the allocated sites upon the landscape, infrastructure and local amenities. The policy guidance differentiates between those matters which are requirements and any planning obligations which may be sought. The aim is to achieve new developments which contribute to a balanced mix of land uses, sustain the range of community needs and minimise any adverse off-site impact upon amenities, facilities and infrastructure. The site-specific matters need to be considered together with other general requirements for recreation space, landscaping and affordable housing. The Borough Council may seek to negotiate legal agreement(s) with landowner/developer interests and any other body as appropriate to secure necessary provisions at the appropriate stage of a site's development.

Land north of Bradgate Road, Anstey

4.41 POLICY H/2(a)

Planning permission for the residential development of land north of Bradgate Road, Anstey will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) a layout, design and density of development is provided which substantially retains existing hedgerows and which is sympathetic with this edge of village location. This will include substantial block planting and landscaping to a minimum depth of 20 metres on the northern and western boundaries;**
- ii) the public footpath and bridleway is retained as part of the development;**
- iii) the form and layout of the development safeguards the amenities of existing properties around the site, particularly on Link Road;**
- iv) provision is made for additional school places generated by the development to be assessed in detail in consultation with the Director of Education, Leicestershire County Council and the local planning authority.**

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development:

- a) improved recreational facilities in the village;**
- b) traffic calming along Bradgate Road.**

(See also in particular policy H/2 & H/4)

- 4.42 An allocation of land at this location made in the Draft 'South West Charnwood Villages Local Plan' was previously rejected because of access difficulties. Vehicular access from Bradgate Road may require land not controlled by the developer or the local planning authorities to achieve visibility. However other options to provide access may be acceptable to the highway authority for the scale of housing proposed.
- 4.43 The site proposed is considered to be substantially free from environmental constraints, especially with development being limited to the lower, southern area of the site. Extensive landscaping and woodland planting will need to extend towards the footpath boundary to the north of the site, and the bridleway running through the site must be retained.
- 4.44 Development as proposed will result in the capacity of the village school being exceeded if additional accommodation is not provided.
- 4.45 Previous studies have identified a deficiency of recreational provision in Anstey. A contribution may be negotiated from this scheme to the improvement of the village's recreational facilities. In order to slow vehicle speeds and enhance highway safety a contribution may be negotiated for traffic calming measures along Bradgate Road designed to meet the highway authority's standards.

- 4.46 A contributory factor supporting the allocation of this site is the need to meet identified housing needs in the Forest sub-area of the Borough. The Borough Council's Housing Needs Survey identified significant need in this area, with many respondents expressing a preference to live in Anstey. An element of affordable housing will therefore be negotiated as part of the proposed development.

Land between Cotes Road and Willow Way, Barrow upon Soar

4.47 POLICY H/2(b)

Planning permission for the residential development of land between Cotes Road/Willow Road, Barrow upon Soar will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) a local distributor road and segregated cycle route is provided from a junction on Cotes Road north of No. 148 Cotes Road, to Willow Road, with the road to be designed as a perimeter road to the new housing area;**
- ii) a layout design and density of development is provided which is sympathetic with the sensitive edge of village location. This will include substantial block planting and landscaping to a minimum depth of 20 metres and public amenity open space extending in total, in accordance with Policy RT/12, over some 6ha on the northern and eastern site boundaries;**
- iii) the bridleway along Strancliffe Lane is retained as part of the development;**
- iv) vehicular access to the housing areas is taken primarily from the new distributor road;**
- v) provision is made for additional school places generated by the development to be assessed in detail in consultation with the Director of Education, Leicestershire County Council and the local planning authority.**

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development:

- a) improved off-road parking provision or improved transportation links serving Barrow upon Soar railway station;**
- b) improvements to the Cotes Road/Barrow Road and Barrow Road/Nottingham Road junctions and the A60 approach to Loughborough;**
- c) improved community/health facilities;**
- d) traffic calming along Cotes Road and Nottingham Road;**
- e) creation of safe pedestrian and cycle links from the development to the village centre and schools.**

(see also in particular policy H/2, H/4, TR/4)

- 4.48 This site is well placed to achieve a new designed edge to the north and east of Barrow upon Soar and the provision of a new perimeter road between Cotes Road and Nottingham Road by the extension of Willow Road. The perimeter road has been re-routed further north than the Consultation Draft Plan proposal to meet Cotes Road to the north of existing housing. This new road will help distribute local traffic, relieve congestion in the village centre and extend the benefits of the Nottingham Road to Melton Road Link. In order to minimise the adverse impacts of construction on existing residential areas the various components of the development and supporting infrastructure will need to be phased in accordance with a programme agreed with the local planning authority in consultation with the highway authority.
- 4.49 Whilst the re-routed road brings more developable land within the site much of the additional land is elevated and prominent. A carefully designed scheme, with substantial woodland planting, will be required to create a strong and defensible edge to development and to minimise the impact of the new road on the landscape. Development must not breach the

prominent east to west ridgeline to ensure that the rural character of the approach to the village from the north is safeguarded.

- 4.50 The development will need to include informal recreation land together with pedestrian and cycleway links to Cotes Road and Nottingham Road, incorporating the retention and enhancement of the bridleway along Strancliffe Lane. Development as proposed will result in the capacity of the village school being exceeded if additional accommodation is not provided.
- 4.51 The traffic generated from about 360 dwellings in this location could add to problems on the A60 access to Loughborough via Cotes Road. Contributions may be negotiated for improvements to the Cotes Road/Barrow Road and Barrow Road/Nottingham Road junctions, traffic calming in the village, and improvements to the A60 access into eastern Loughborough and safe pedestrian and cycle links from the new housing to the village centre and schools to improve transport choice accessibility. The site has been allocated partly because Barrow upon Soar meets the transport choice requirements for rail. The site is at the edge of the 1km catchment area for the station and a contribution may be negotiated to improve off-street parking provision in the vicinity of the station as a means of improving its accessibility. Given the scale of development a contribution may be negotiated for improved community/healthcare facilities in the village to cater for the resultant increase in population.

Land at Brook Street, Burton on the Wolds

4.52 POLICY H/2(c)

Planning permission for the residential development of land at Brook Street, Burton on the Wolds will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) **the main vehicular access is taken from Melton Road with only limited frontage development to Brook Street;**
- ii) **a substantial landscaped buffer to a minimum depth of 20 metres is provided on the site's northern and eastern boundaries;**
- iii) **the public footpath is retained as part of an open space network linking towards the ponds on the northern site boundary with land in the north-western corner of the site retained in open uses;**
- iv) **the ponds area is reclaimed as a wildlife and amenity feature together with the retention of existing hedgerows on the site;**
- v) **development is avoided on the steeply sloping portion of the site fronting Nos 36-38a Brook Street;**
- vi) **the existing agricultural uses are ceased together with the demolition of the associated buildings and clearance of the site prior to any new development.**
- vii) **provision is made for additional school places generated by the development to be assessed in detail in consultation with the Director of Education, Leicestershire County Council and the local planning authority.**

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions towards traffic calming measures along the B676 through the village.

(See also in particular Policy H/2 & H/4)

- 4.53 The key concern in the Wolds sub area is to secure affordable housing provision to meet local needs identified in the Borough Council's 'Housing Needs Survey'. The proposed site is centrally placed within the sub-area and able to help meet the affordable housing needs of the North Wolds communities. Development of this site could be achieved with least environmental harm and conforms well with the existing settlement form.
- 4.54 Given the character of this site at the village edge any housing scheme must incorporate measures to safeguard the setting of the village in views from the north and east, and provide for the retention of important landscape features within the site. The steeply sloping portion of the site fronting onto Brook Street will remain undeveloped as part of an open space network

focused around the existing pond and public footpath across the site. The removal of existing uses occupying the site will secure a related local environmental improvement.

- 4.55 In order to slow vehicle speeds and enhance highway safety a contribution may be negotiated for traffic calming measures along the B676 through the village designed to meet the highway authority's standards.

Land at Peartree Lane, Loughborough

4.56 POLICY H/2(d)

Planning permission for residential development of land at Peartree Lane, Loughborough will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) vehicular access is taken from the A6, or alternatively Wain Drive;**
- ii) if access is taken from Wain Drive, highway improvements will be required to the junction of Barsby Drive with Warwick Way to incorporate a right turn lane and provision made for traffic management measures along Barsby Drive and Braddon Road;**
- iii) the provision of routes for cyclists and pedestrians within the development area linking into adjacent existing and planned footpath network, and from the Gorse Covert open space to a suitably designed junction with the A6 at Peartree Lane;**
- iv) the provision of 4.6 hectares of structural landscaping including public open space extending from the existing Gorse Covert open space up to Peartree Lane, and a substantial landscaped buffer to a minimum depth of 20 metres along Peartree Lane;**
- v) the provision of a substantial landscaped buffer to a minimum depth of 20 metres on the site's northern boundary with the A6, incorporating suitable acoustic screening; and**
- vi) provision is made for additional school places generated by the development to be assessed in detail in consultation with the Director of Education, Leicestershire County Council and the local planning authority.**

In addition, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions towards:

- (a) improved provision for bus services accessible from the development;**
- (b) provision for the extension of the footpath/ bridleway at Peartree Lane northwards and the provision of a safe crossing facility on the realigned A6 for pedestrians and cyclists;**
- (c) the provision of a footpath/ cycleway southwards through the Gorse Covert area of open space to Maxwell Drive.**

(see also in particular Policies ST/3, H/2, H/4)

- 4.57 This site adjoins the Loughborough urban area and is close to the A6 with its existing regular bus services and segregated cycleway linking into the town centre. It is also close to the proposed employment allocation at Dishley Grange. It therefore enjoys a number of strategic locational advantages.

- 4.58 Because of the sloping nature of the site and its relationship with the Green Wedge to the north-west, any development will need to be sensitively planned. There is the opportunity through careful design and layout to provide a well designed landscaped edge to the town. The allocation proposes development on the lower lying land below the 55 metre contour, substantial planting along the A6 frontage and along Peartree Lane, and the extension of the existing open space network from Gorse Covert to Peartree Lane. In combination this will provide a strong landscape definition for the northern edge of the town and assimilate the proposed housing development in what is a sensitive location, and will help meet the informal

recreational needs arising from the development. Landscaping along the A6 site boundary will need to incorporate suitable acoustic screening.

- 4.59 Ideally vehicular access to the site should be taken from the A6. If this is not feasible the development will need to be accessed from the existing residential network via Wain Drive. In this case improvements to the junction of Barsby Drive with Warwick Way to incorporate a right turning lane will be required along with traffic calming along Barsby Drive and Braddon Way in order to accommodate the additional traffic arising from the development.
- 4.60 The development will result in the capacity of the local school being exceeded if additional accommodation is not provided. Contributions to additional school places will therefore be sought.
- 4.61 The site is well located with easy access to the A6 corridor close to existing bus services along Braddon Road. Contributions may be negotiated from the development to improve the provision for buses serving the site.
- 4.62 It is important that there is easy access from the site for pedestrians and cyclists to nearby shopping and employment opportunities. The extension of the pedestrian cycle route through Gorse Covert northwards past the site to the realigned A6, including a safe crossing facility will provide a key route between the main industrial areas off Derby Road, Gorse Covert and the main schools and residential areas.

Land at Meynell Road, Quorn

4.63 POLICY H/2(e)

Planning permission for the residential development of land at Meynell Road, Quorn will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) **substantial block planting and landscaping to a minimum depth of 20 metres is provided along the northern and western boundaries of the site adjacent to Meynell Road and the school playing fields;**
- ii) **a form and layout of development is provided which retains existing trees and hedgerows on the site and safeguards the open setting of this part of the village;**
- iii) **vehicular access to the site is provided from Meynell Road;**

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development;

- a) **improved provision for buses along the A6 transport choice corridor;**
- b) **environmental enhancement in the village;**
- c) **creation of safe pedestrian and cycle links from the site towards the village centre.**

(see also in particular Policy H/2)

- 4.64 A triangular area of land south of the realigned Meynell Road has been severed from a larger field by road construction. The portion of this site to the east of a strong hedgerow is already edged by development on two sides. In this area a carefully designed layout accessed from Meynell Road, and providing a strong edge treatment along the Meynell Road frontage would create a firm edge to development. By restricting the developed area the open character of this part of the village is better retained. A contribution may be sought to provide better cycle and pedestrian links from the site to the village centre to improve access for people not using their cars, living in this area.
- 4.65 Contributions may be negotiated from this development to improve transport choice accessibility by the implementation of measures for better bus provision along the former A6, and or traffic calming measures and environmental improvements elsewhere in the village.

Land at Little Haw Farm, Shepshed

4.66 POLICY H/2(f)

The development of land at Little Haw Farm, Shepshed, will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) vehicular access is taken from Anson Road;
- ii) existing hedgerows and trees within the site and forming the northern boundary with Tickow Lane are retained;
- iii) the form and layout of the development safeguards the amenities of existing properties around the site; and
- iv) provision is made for cyclists and pedestrians within the site including a safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle route through the site to link Anson Road with Tickow Lane.

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions towards:

- (a) improved provision for buses; and
- (b) the provision of a footpath/ cycleway from the site to the junction of Tickow Lane and McCarthy Road.

(see also in particular Policies ST/3, H/2, H/4)

- 4.67 This 1.7 hectare site adjoins the north western edge of the urban area of Shepshed. It lies close to existing employment areas and a range of local facilities, including shops, open spaces and a primary school. A regular bus service also passes the site along Anson Road running between Leicester and Loughborough via the centre of Shepshed. The site therefore enjoys strategic locational advantages that combine to offer a realistic opportunity to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car.
- 4.68 The site slopes gently downwards beyond the existing skyline development on Little Haw Lane and is well contained by mature treed hedgerows along its northern and western boundaries. Any development must respect the site's sloping nature and ensure that the visual enclosure of the site is maintained by the retention of existing hedgerows along Tickow Lane and within the site. The Council will also expect the developer to make adequate arrangements to secure their long term maintenance.
- 4.69 The density of development on the site should maximise the site's locational advantages while maintaining its important landscape features. It will also be important to ensure that the proposed dwellings and existing properties close to the site will not suffer a loss of amenity through overlooking and an unacceptable sense of enclosure or degree of overshadowing. Policy H/2 indicates a development of some 50 dwellings at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare in accordance with PPG3 density standards.
- 4.70 Anson Road is a minor approach road linking into the urban area. Development on the site should be accessed from it. The layout of the development should make provision for a safe and secure footpath and cycleway route to link Anson Road with Tickow Lane. Contributions will be sought to extend this route to the junction of McCarthy Road with Tickow Lane.

Land East of 19 Barkby Lane Syston

4.71 POLICY H/2(g)

Planning permission for residential development of land east of 19 Barkby Lane, Syston will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) vehicular access to the site is taken from Barkby Lane;
- ii) provision is made for highway improvements to the junction of Barkby Lane with Melton Road;

- iii) **provision is made for the extension and widening of the existing footpath on Barkby Lane incorporating street lighting;**
- iv) **a 20 metre landscaped buffer and suitable acoustic screening is provided alongside the railway line;**
- v) **the provision of additional planting to strengthen the existing hedgerows forming the western and northern site boundaries;**
- vi) **houses with windows facing the railway line are provided with suitable sound insulation;**
- vii) **provision is made for additional school places generated by the development to be assessed in detail in consultation with the Director of Education, Leicestershire County Council and the local planning authority;**

In addition, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development:

- a) **traffic management measures along Melton Road, Syston in the vicinity of the site;**
- b) **improved community and recreational facilities in the town.**

(see also in particular Policies H/2 and H/4)

- 4.72 This site lies on the southern edge of Syston and is bounded by the railway line to the east and existing housing to the north and west. The release of the site for housing has strategic advantages because of its location close to the Leicester urban area and Syston railway station. Development could take place without unnecessary intrusion into the wider area of open land lying to the south of Barkby Lane, designated as an area of Green Wedge separating Syston from Thurmaston.
- 4.73 With suitable landscaping and acoustic screening to the railway line, it is considered that a development of some 80 dwellings would be appropriate on this site in accordance with PPG3 density standards. Access should be provided from Barkby Lane and associated improvements will be required to the junction of Barkby Lane with Melton Road. These improvements will need to address the currently restricted visibility at this junction.
- 4.74 As with other housing allocations in Syston, this development will generate the need for additional education provision. The capacity of existing schools is inadequate and additional primary school accommodation needs to be provided.
- 4.75 Contributions may also be sought towards traffic management measures along Melton Road and to remedy any deficiencies in recreational facilities, allotment land and community facilities at Syston which would be made worse by the increase in population arising from this development.

Land at Barkby Road, Syston

4.76 POLICY H/2(h)

Planning permission for residential development of land at Barkby Road, Syston will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) **vehicular access to the site is taken from a new roundabout junction on Barkby Road;**
- ii) **provision is made for highway improvements to the junction of Barkby Road with Melton Road;**
- iii) **provision is made for traffic management measures along Queniborough Road, along Pembroke Avenue, Goodes Lane and through Barkby;**
- iv) **provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links to Central Avenue, Orchard Way and Lincoln Drive/Ruskin Avenue;**

- v) **substantial block planting and landscaping is provided to a minimum depth of 20 metres on the northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the site, and between the site and the adjoining Ridgemere Centre;**
- vi) **a form and layout is provided which ensures a high standard of amenity for residential properties within the site and safeguards the amenities of existing properties adjoining the site;**
- vii) **provision is made for additional school places generated by the development to be assessed in detail in consultation with the Director of Education, Leicestershire County Council and the local planning authority.**

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development:

- a) **improved community and recreational facilities in the town;**
- b) **provision of additional allotment land;**
- c) **improved transport choice along the A6007 Melton Road.**

(See also in particular Policy H/2 and H/4)

- 4.77 Development in this location would not impinge upon attractive countryside, areas of local separation or Green Wedge. The site includes the southern part of the Ridgemere Centre and an adjacent nursery. Given the open nature of the landform a strong landscape framework will be required particularly along the eastern boundary with the countryside.
- 4.78 The site meets transport choice requirements although it is at the margins of the 1km catchment area for Syston railway station, and is served by bus services. In developing the site traffic management measures and local highway improvements will be required to mitigate the impact of traffic generated in Syston and through Barkby. Improved access by foot and cycle will also be needed. A contribution may be sought to improve the site's accessibility by bus and to encourage the provision of quality bus services and wider transport choice along the A607, Melton Road.
- 4.79 This development will generate the need for additional education provision. The capacity of existing schools is inadequate and additional primary school accommodation needs to be provided. In addition contributions may be sought to remedy any deficiencies in recreational facilities, allotment land and community facilities at Syston which will be made worse by the increase in population.

Land at Wysall Lane, Wymeswold

4.80 POLICY H/2(i)

Planning permission for the residential development of land east and west of Wysall Lane, Wymeswold will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) **the design and layout of the site and associated highway works preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area and respect the rural character of this part of the settlement;**
- ii) **substantial block planting and landscaping to a minimum depth of 20 metres is provided on the northern edge of the development;**
- iii) **the provision of additional planting to strengthen the existing hedgerows forming the eastern and western and part of the north-eastern site boundaries;**
- iv) **provision is made for additional school spaces generated by the development to be assessed in detail in consultation with the Director of Education, Leicestershire County Council and the local planning authority;**
- v) **the public footpath is retained as part of the development.**

In addition, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions towards the provision of traffic management measures along the A6006 through Wymeswold, and Wysall Lane in the vicinity of the site.

(See also in particular Policies H/2 and H/4)

- 4.81 Wymeswold is one of the larger rural settlements in the Wolds area where some limited housing growth would be appropriate to help serve and sustain the Wolds communities. New housing development in the village would offer the prospect of securing an element of affordable housing to meet pressing local housing need, assist in providing choice in housing location across the Plan area, and contribute to the strategic housing requirement for the period to 2006. A site of some 2.3 hectares on either side of Wysall Lane is allocated for 70 dwellings in accordance with PPG3 density standards.

Implementation of Housing Allocations

- 4.82 Development briefs will be prepared to provide detailed guidance for the development of each site and to specify the distribution and balance of land uses. The briefs will usually be prepared by the local planning authority in consultation with prospective developers and will be intended to be attached to, and form part of, any planning permission. Planning permission will not normally be granted until the submission and agreement of a satisfactory planning solution in which a developer proposes to comply with any requirements set out in the site specific policies for each site, and other material considerations which may emerge.
- 4.83 The exact nature and extent of contributions from individual developments to improved transport choice, local highway and other infrastructure, and related community and environmental benefits will be a matter for negotiation between landowners/developers and the local planning authority having regard to current government guidance on planning obligations
- 4.84 Each new development will be expected to provide a range of accommodation, including an element of affordable units to meet local needs. Provision will also be needed for recreational facilities, appropriate landscaping and any infrastructure and community facilities which are necessary and related to the development. A developer will be expected to fund or provide these requirements in association with site development.
- 4.85 Provision of open space, landscaped areas and recreation/leisure facilities will need to accord with areas shown on the Proposals Map. Such provision will need to be accompanied by arrangements agreed with the Borough Council for their long term management and maintenance. This will normally be through the transfer of land to the Borough Council. For small areas of open space, recreation facilities, childrens play space or landscaping which are principally for the benefit of the development itself, the payment of a commuted sum for future maintenance may be sought.

Density

4.86 POLICY H/3

Planning permission will be granted for new housing layouts where the density proposed makes efficient use of land resources, safeguards the character and amenities of established housing areas, allows for appropriate open space provision and landscaping and reflects the demographic characteristics of the population.

High density developments will be permitted on sites within or adjoining Loughborough Town Centre or other District Centres, or other locations within existing limits to development well served by public transport.

Low density developments will not be permitted unless the development would complement the distinctive character of a locality or create a special feature as part of a new housing area.

(See also in particular Policy H/1, H/2)

- 4.87 It is accepted there will be variations in the density of new developments to reflect different site characteristics and different needs.
- 4.88 In the past a net density of 25 dwellings/hectare has been assumed as an average for the yield of housing sites. This has led to an underestimate of housing provision over time and also represents an inefficient use of land that cannot be sustained. PPG3 requires local planning authorities to encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land and to seek greater intensity of development at locations with good public transport accessibility. For the allocated sites in the Plan, a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare is indicated in accordance with PPG3. Where sites are well located in relation to existing town or village centres well served by public transport, higher densities have been assumed. Under Policies H/1 and H/2 some 1,278 dwellings are provided in total on a mix of greenfield and previously developed sites covering 41.6 hectares, resulting in an average density of 31 dwellings per hectare.
- 4.89 Other developments coming forward during the Plan period on sites within or adjoining Loughborough town centre or the district centres as identified in the Proposals Map, or locations within urban areas well served by public transport, will be expected to achieve high net densities. High density development will normally be at 40 dwellings per hectare (16 dwellings per acre) or more.
- 4.90 In overall terms it is expected that the increasing element of smaller households identified in the 2001 Census and other demographic studies, together with the focussing of development in transport choice locations should be reflected over the plan period in increasing densities of development. Actual densities achieved will be monitored annually to enable analysis over time of changing densities, and to inform the appropriate policy responses.

General Guidance on Provision for Affordable Housing

4.91 POLICY H/4

The Council will institute, and keep under review assessments of needs for affordable housing and other specialist housing needs. The Borough Council will seek to negotiate the provision of affordable housing to meet the targets specified on the following allocated sites which are considered suitable for affordable housing and are located in areas where an affordable housing needs has been identified:

H/2(a)	Land North of Bradgate Road, Anstey	approximately 15 dwellings
H/2(b)	Land between Cotes Road and Willow Way, Barrow upon Soar	approximately 55 dwellings
H/1(a)	Land off Nottingham Road, Barrow upon Soar	approximately 5 dwellings
H/2(c)	Land at Brook Street, Burton on the Wolds	approximately 10 dwellings
H/1(b)	Empress Road, Loughborough	approximately 5 dwellings
H/2(d)	Land at Peartree Lane, Loughborough	approximately 15 dwellings
H/1(c)	Former Factory, Churchside/ Forest Street, Shepshed	approximately 5 dwellings
H/2(f)	Land at Little Haw Farm, Shepshed	approximately 8 dwellings
H/2(g)	Land east of 19 Barkby Lane, Syston	approximately 12 dwellings
H/2(h)	Land Barkby Road, Syston	approximately 55 dwellings
H/2(i)	Land at Wysall Lane, Wymeswold	approximately 15 dwellings

- 4.92 Advice in PPG3 and Circular 6/98 makes it clear that where a need for affordable housing has been established, it is a material consideration that can properly be taken into account in determining planning applications. For the purposes of this policy, affordable housing is defined as both low cost market and subsidised housing, irrespective of tenure or ownership (whether exclusive or shared) or financial arrangements, available to people who cannot afford houses generally available on the open market in the local area. Households in affordable need are considered to be those households whose annual income represents less than 40% of the average purchase price of a terraced property in the area. This is based on evidence of incomes and house prices available from the 1995 Housing Needs Survey.
- 4.93 The 1995 Housing Needs Survey sought to identify housing needs in the area over the five year period to 2000. The results of this survey, coupled with an analysis of the Council's Housing Waiting List, experience of the Council's housing officers and a study of the existing stock of affordable housing, have been used to establish the scale of affordable housing need in the Borough.
- 4.94 The findings of the Housing Needs Survey are summarised in the document "Analysis of the 1995 Housing Needs Survey". The survey looked at those respondents expressing a need for housing and the amount that they could afford for housing. The analysis compared this income information with local property prices to estimate the number of households which would be unable to afford market prices and therefore would be likely to be in need of affordable housing.
- 4.95 Based on average house prices and rent levels locally in 1996, the analysis concluded that those households responding to the survey expressing a need for housing and having income levels below £15,000 per year or being able to pay less than £60 per week rent, would find it difficult to buy or rent on the open market. On this basis it was concluded that some 537 households were in immediate need of affordable housing and a further 1,500 had a need over the 5 year period to the year 2000, amounting to a total need of some 2,037 dwellings.
- 4.96 In terms of the distribution of this need the survey suggested that some 700 (34%) of those households wished to live in the Loughborough area, 154 (7%) in Syston, 122 (6%) in Birstall and 73 (4%) and 72 (4%) in Barrow upon Soar and Quorn.
- 4.97 As at March 1996 there were some 890 households registered on the Council's Housing Waiting List. Some 60% of these applicants were elderly, 20% were families and 20% singles and couples. In terms of distribution, 207 applicants (23%) wished to live in Loughborough, 106 (12%) in Birstall and 133 (15%) in Syston.
- 4.98 Analysis of trends in recent years suggests that in the region of some 300 applicants register on the list each year. Relets within the Council's own housing stock accommodate approximately 290 households from the list a year. As a result numbers on the list have remained relatively static, with new registrations being balanced by relets.
- 4.99 In its Housing Strategy Statement submitted as part of the HIP bid, the Council made a commitment to reducing its housing waiting list, particularly for families. This will only be possible through an increase in the affordable housing stock, as currently relets in the existing stock are only maintaining the list at its present level. The Housing Strategy Statement indicated a target of providing accommodation for 125 families a year to reduce the scale of the waiting list. This accommodation could be provided through purchases of existing properties as well as new build.
- 4.100 The Housing Needs Survey can only provide an indication of the scale of housing need in the Borough. Whilst a response rate of 40% was achieved, the age profile of respondents did not reflect the profile for the Borough as a whole, with a disproportionately high number of elderly respondents. However, the information obtained does provide an important indicator on the nature and scale of housing need in the Borough that can be compared with other information sources including the Council's Housing Waiting List. On the basis of the information from the Housing Needs Survey and the Waiting List, it is considered that there are at least 1,000-1,500 households in need of affordable housing in the Borough.
- 4.101 The existing stock of affordable housing can be identified from the 1991 Census and information on housing completions over the last six years. The 1991 Census showed some 11,712 rented properties in the Borough, of which the majority (7,150, 61%) were Council

properties. Of the total stock of rented accommodation, some 48% was in Loughborough. Including Shepshed, this figure becomes 57%. In some Loughborough wards over 47% of households are in the rented sector. It is in the southern parishes where the proportion of rented households falls below 20%.

- 4.102 Since 1991 permission has been granted for some 500 additional Housing Association properties, making up 10% of permissions over this period. Over 60% of these new properties were in the Loughborough area.
- 4.103 For the Council's housing stock, evidence shows that on average some 400 properties become available for reletting each year, amounting to some 5.6% of the stock. The effect of these relets in the existing stock is to keep the housing waiting list static. However relets in the Council and other rented sectors will meet some of the identified need within the Borough.
- 4.104 Whilst in terms of numbers, the greatest housing need appears to be in the Loughborough area, this is also the location with a large supply of rented accommodation. In relative terms, housing need is likely to be more acute in settlements where the mismatch between need and available stock is the greatest. Comparing the potential for relets within those settlements where a significant level of need was identified in the survey indicates that, in relative terms, housing need is most acute in Birstall, Quorn and Syston. In Birstall it would take almost 6 years to meet the identified need through relets of existing stock compared with some 2 years in Loughborough. These findings bear out Housing Officers' experience which suggests that the needs of housing waiting list applicants in Birstall and Syston are the more critical because of the limited supply of rented housing.
- 4.105 Circular 6/98 suggests that local authorities should seek to ensure that there is an appropriate mix of types of housing within areas. The targets specified in the policy seek to secure an element of affordable housing in those areas of identified need and where there is an existing limited stock of affordable housing.
- 4.106 It is recognised that the amount of affordable housing that can be secured on allocated sites is limited when compared with the scale of need identified. The targets specified take into account the scale of need in the locality, the size of the site and its suitability for affordable housing. Guidance in Circular 6/98 suggests that affordable housing should only be sought on developments of 25 dwellings or more or residential sites of 1 hectare or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings. The allocated sites identified meet these size thresholds, are in areas of need and are well located in relation to local services, facilities and public transport. Based on the economics of site provision and experience of negotiating affordable provision elsewhere, the targets represent no more than 15-20% of the development capacity of sites. The Borough Council has considered whether lower thresholds should be set for those rural settlements in the Borough with populations of 3,000 or less. For the smaller rural settlements it is considered that the rural exceptions policy as detailed as Policy H/4 provides the appropriate mechanism to secure affordable housing. For other settlements there is insufficient evidence to justify the application of lower thresholds. Many of these settlements are within 3km of other settlements where either affordable housing will be negotiated on allocated sites, or windfall sites will provide opportunities to secure affordable housing.
- 4.107 The Borough Council will either seek to negotiate a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or impose conditions to secure the levels of affordable housing specified.
- 4.108 The demand for social housing is analysed each year for the Housing Strategy Statement. It is also intended that the Housing Needs Survey will be regularly reviewed and repeat surveys undertaken where necessary to ensure that the information remains up to date and relevant.

Affordable Housing on Unallocated Sites

4.109 POLICY H/5

For housing developments not allocated in the Plan which come forward in areas of identified need, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate an element of affordable housing provided:

- i) the site is close to a range of local services and facilities and easily accessible by public transport, and;**

- ii) **the provision of affordable housing would not prejudice the achievement of other key planning objectives identified in relation to the development of the site and;**
- iii) **the development incorporates a range and mix of housing types.**
- 4.110 The scale of affordable housing sought on allocated sites will not meet the scale of need identified by the Housing Needs Survey and the Council's Housing Waiting List. Where additional windfall housing sites come forward in areas of identified need, the Council will seek to secure an element of affordable housing. Provision will only be sought on sites that meet the size thresholds detailed above, and will be at a scale commensurate with the remaining identified need, taking into account the suitability of the site and the economics of provision.
- 4.111 Where the affordable housing secured on sites is to be managed by a registered social landlord, this is likely to be an effective way of controlling occupancy to ensure that the accommodation remains available to those in need. In circumstances where a registered landlord is not involved, the Borough Council will seek to enter into a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act to ensure that affordable housing is available for local people in need and is secured in the long term. Local people in need will be considered to be those people in households whose annual income is less than 40% of the average purchase price of a terraced property in the area, who live within 3 kilometres of the site and are:
- on the Council's housing waiting list or register of another registered social landlord, or;
 - living in sub-standard accommodation, or;
 - sharing with other households, or;
 - employed within the local area, or;
 - immediate relatives of people who have been living in the local area for at least five of the last ten years.
- 4.112 If no occupiers are found within these categories, eligible people from elsewhere in the Borough will be considered.
- 4.113 For affordable housing involving low cost market housing, these eligibility criteria and the need to ensure housing is secured in the long term will not apply.
- 4.114 Whilst the provision of affordable housing on suitable sites is the preferred option, the provision of a financial contribution from a developer towards the provision of affordable housing in or near the settlement concerned may also be considered.

Affordable Housing in the Rural Areas

4.115 POLICY H/6

In those areas where market housing sites would not be suitable or are not able to provide affordable housing to meet local needs planning permission will be granted on an exceptions basis for small-scale schemes providing for affordable housing.

This exceptions policy will apply to sites where housing would be contrary to normally applicable policies and when all the following criteria are met:

- i) **a local need within approximately 3km of the site for a specific scale, type, tenure and price range of affordable housing has been identified by the Borough Council, or through an appropriate local survey, the format of which has been agreed by the Borough Council;**
- ii) **the proposed scheme is shown to be economically viable on the basis of building the affordable housing without any enabling development;**

- iii) **the scale, location, details of development are compatible with the form, function and character of the settlement and the local environment;**
- iv) **the affordable housing could not be provided on allocated sites, or through infill, redevelopment or conversion within established limits to development located within approximately 3km of the site;**
- v) **the benefits of the affordable housing are guaranteed for the local community in the long term preferably by the involvement of a registered housing association or local trust to manage the housing and the signing of a secure agreement between the Borough Council and relevant parties.**

4.116 This policy allows for small scale “exceptions” affordable housing schemes to serve people or families who are unable to afford to buy or rent a dwelling in their village at the prevailing market values but who could buy or rent genuinely affordable housing. To be acceptable proposals must provide solely for local needs identified on the basis of the Borough Council’s ‘Housing Needs Survey’ or equivalent evidence. Mixed schemes of high value market housing and affordable housing on the same site will not be acceptable within this policy.

4.117 In general sites will only be released on an exceptional basis in villages of less than 3,000 population where there is no realistic alternative means to provide the required affordable accommodation. The majority of new allocations and market housing sites are allowed for in and around Loughborough, Shepshed, settlements adjoining Leicester, in the Soar Valley south of Loughborough, and in the Wreake Valley. In these settlements affordable housing is not usually expected to be needed on exceptions sites. The need for exceptional releases is much more likely in the more rural parts of the Borough comprising the Wolds, the Charnwood Forest and the South-east Charnwood villages where the infrequent turnover in housing and higher prices commanded by rural property is more likely to deny low income groups access to the normal housing market.

4.118 People eligible for such “exceptions” schemes include:

- i) first time buyers;
- ii) retired people or people with disabilities who have lived or worked locally for at least 5 of the past 10 years;
- iii) those living in poor, sub-standard accommodation;
- iv) those sharing with other householders;
- v) people who are statutorily homeless and/or on the council’s housing waiting list;
- vi) immediate relatives of people already living in the local area for at least five of the last ten years.

All these groups could qualify for an “exceptions” housing scheme if people, by reason of their occupation, should need to remain in a specific area and are unable to buy/rent locally, or can demonstrate personal reasons for needing to live in a particular settlement. Local needs must be identified on the basis of detailed survey work taking into account the views of the relevant Parish Council or Parish Meeting.

4.119 Implementation of the policy will inevitably create pressure to release land in sensitive locations where housing would be contrary to normally applicable policies to protect, for example, important open spaces or the countryside. Schemes will only be permitted where they are shown to be acceptable in terms of impact on the local environment and community.

4.120 Any site could help meet needs in the vicinity in addition to, or in the absence of, more local needs. A distance of about 3km is considered appropriate to ensure good accessibility and to retain community links. Such a catchment area approach increases the likelihood of meeting needs throughout the Borough.

4.121 If ‘affordable’ accommodation under such schemes were ever likely to be left vacant because prospective occupiers did not pass the test of meeting genuine local need, consideration could be given to letting the accommodation on a temporary basis.

- 4.122 The affordable accommodation would be best secured in the long term through a legally binding agreement, usually a planning agreement.
- 4.123 To ensure the accommodation stays appropriate to meeting local needs the Council will normally, when granting planning permission, remove permitted development rights for extensions which could over time change the intended nature of the affordable accommodation.

Access Housing

4.124 POLICY H/7

The Borough Council will seek to negotiate with developers to provide dwellings specifically designed as mobility or wheelchair housing on new housing developments, including mixed use developments or changes of use of existing buildings, in areas where there is clear evidence of a local need. The best locations will be those located close to shops and public transport routes and on areas of level ground.

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of this type of residential accommodation.

- 4.125 'Access' housing is a term covering accommodation with specific design features allowing homes to be accessible to able-bodied and disabled people alike. A national survey by O.P.C.S (Prevalence of Disability Amongst Adults, Report 1, H.M.S.O, 1988) found 14% of all adults have at least one disability. The 2001 Census indicates about 15% of Charnwood residents have a limiting long term illness. Many of these will have some mobility problems and there is currently little access housing in the Borough.
- 4.126 Revisions to the Building Regulations aim to secure reasonable access for occupiers to be able to invite disabled people to visit, and to enable occupiers to stay longer in their homes should they experience declining mobility. However, they do not make provision for all new dwellings to facilitate independent living for people with disabilities.
- 4.127 It is desirable that new residential developments provide an element of adapted dwellings and ground floor elements of other accommodation to appropriate standards to meet local needs. In some cases needs can be met by attention to detail in conventional housing design and layout. People who use wheelchairs will generally require single storey accommodation with corridors and doors set wide enough for wheelchair access and above standard space to ensure full manoeuvrability.
- 4.128 The provision of such housing will be negotiated on suitable sites where there is evidence of local need. More work is needed to establish needs and standards locally for access housing. The proportion of access housing sought on sites will be based on an assessment of local needs and the suitability of the particular site in terms of its physical and locational characteristics.

Transit Site, Railway Terrace, Loughborough

4.129 POLICY H/8

Planning permission will be granted on land off Railway Terrace, Loughborough for a 10 pitch transit site for caravans occupied by gypsies and travellers, provided the following criteria are met:

- i) **vehicle access is taken from Falcon Street;**
- ii) **clear separation is maintained from existing housing areas and other activities;**
- iii) **landscaping, planting and screening measures are introduced to help assimilate the overall site in its surroundings and provide buffers between different uses on the site and the adjacent railway line;**

- iv) **a full assessment is undertaken to establish the extent of any site stability or landfill gas problems. Where problems are identified measures will need to be implemented to resolve them.**
- 4.130 There is at present no authorised provision for gypsies within the Borough although they are frequent visitors to the area. So far as Charnwood is concerned the County Council's 1992 study identified the need to provide one transit site of 10 pitches in the Loughborough area. In order to meet this need a transit site is proposed on part of the reclaimed landfill site off Railway Terrace on the north eastern edge of Loughborough.
- 4.131 A site in this location would comply with guidance in Circular 1/94 that gypsy caravan sites be located in areas frequented by gypsies and offer reasonable access to shops, schools and essential services. The transit site will need to be quite separate and discrete from existing and proposed activities in the locality. To this end independent access would be beneficial. Densely planted woodland will provide strong screening around the site. This and other landscaping will help separate, and minimise conflict between, different land uses on the site. Careful consideration needs to be given to ensure there are no problems related to site stability or landfill gas generation from the old landfill site. A survey to identify any risk and any measures necessary to resolve any identified problems will need to be included in any proposal.

Assessment of Gypsy Site Proposals

4.132 POLICY H/9

In the determination of planning applications for gypsy sites elsewhere in the plan area the Borough Council will take into account the following criteria:

- i) **a necessity is clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council for a specific scale and type of accommodation;**
 - ii) **the proposed scheme is in a location and of a form sympathetic to the character and appearance of the surrounding area;**
 - iii) **the site has safe and convenient access to the main road network;**
 - iv) **adequate screening and landscaping can be provided to avoid visual intrusion;**
 - v) **the site is within reasonable travelling distance of schools, shops and other community activities;**
 - vi) **the proposed layout makes provision, where appropriate, for mixed residential and business uses.**
- 4.133 Circular 1/94 provides general guidance on the provision and location of sites, site characteristics and services. New provision will only be permitted to meet specific needs identified through a full quantitative assessment examining amongst other things traditional patterns of movement and demand for temporary and permanent accommodation.

Assessment of Travelling Showpeople Site Proposals

4.134 POLICY H/10

In the determination of planning applications to provide sites for travelling show people the Borough Council will take into account the following criteria:

- i) **any storage, maintenance or other non-residential elements would not significantly harm the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring properties or other uses;**
- ii) **site must have safe and convenient access to the main road network;**
- iii) **adequate screening and landscaping must be provided to avoid visual intrusion;**

- iv) **the site must be readily accessible to schools, shops and other community facilities.**

(See also in particular Policy TR/18)

- 4.135 Although there is no duty on local authorities to provide accommodation Circular 22/91 'Travelling Showpeople' states the needs of these people should be considered in local plan preparation, bearing in mind suitable sites would need to accommodate a mixture of residential, storage and maintenance uses.
- 4.136 This type of mixed use could be appropriate in a primarily residential area, provided any scheme demonstrates existing residential amenities could be safeguarded, and the site offers satisfactory access to the main road network.
- 4.137 The occupation of a travelling showpeople's site will be restricted, preferably by the signing of a legal agreement, to members of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain and their immediate relations.

Houseboats

4.138 POLICY H/11

Planning permission will be granted for permanent mooring facilities and structures at locations within the defined limits to development and at marina sites, and for temporary facilities at other locations along the river and canal corridors where proposals:

- i) **provide proper vehicular and pedestrian access and car parking;**
 - ii) **do not restrict navigation along the waterway;**
 - iii) **provide adequate services and facilities;**
 - iv) **are of a design and layout sympathetic to the natural waterside environment and neighbouring uses and are not intrusive in the landscape or townscape;**
 - v) **safeguard the amenities of potential users of the moorings from any adverse effects from adjoining land uses and activities.**
- 4.139 The Borough is traversed by the Grand Union Canal and navigable sections of the rivers Wreake and Soar. These are assets for water-based recreation, and have potential to accommodate residential moorings in appropriate locations.
- 4.140 Proposals for residential and non-residential moorings will be considered in the policy context for the area in which they are located. Outside the urban area the Borough Council would prefer to see linear moorings for non-residential craft to encourage recreational use. Locations would need to be agreed with British Waterways.
- 4.141 Provision for houseboats will only be appropriate in environmentally acceptable locations and where the navigation would not be restricted in any way.

Student Halls of Residence

4.142 POLICY H/12

Planning permission will be granted for new buildings or the re-use of non-residential properties specifically for student accommodation at locations on, or readily accessible by cycle, public transport or on foot to, the university and college campuses.

Planning permission will be granted for developments which include reduced parking standards where it can be shown that there would be no adverse impact in the vicinity of the site.

(See also in particular Policies H/18 and TR/18)

- 4.143 The number of students attending Loughborough's University and Colleges is expected to increase during the plan period in accordance with Government policy to encourage one in three individuals to enter higher education by the year 2000. This will require more student accommodation. It should be noted that residential developments for student accommodation provided under this Policy will not be counted as making a contribution to meeting the overall housing requirement for the Borough.
- 4.144 The Town's higher education establishments will be expected to maximise the amount of accommodation provided on campus and so help reduce pressures on housing areas to accommodate students. Where sites are required off-campus they should have good access for non-car modes and be close to the campus.
- 4.145 As students generally have below average levels of car ownership the Borough Council may accept reduced parking standards where there would be no harmful knock-on effects such as excessive on-street parking. The Borough Council will seek to negotiate restrictions on the use of cars by residents and limiting the occupation of the properties to students in term time.

Houses in Multiple Occupation without On-site Supervision

4.146 POLICY H/13

Planning permission for the conversion of properties within primarily residential areas to hostels, self contained flats, cluster flats or to any use within Class C1 (hotels) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) will be granted provided the proposal would not:

- i) **introduce a potential source of noise and disturbance greater than that normally associated with a dwelling to the detriment of neighbouring residential amenities which could not be mitigated by careful planning of room layout and the use of sound insulation; and/or**
- ii) **adversely affect the general character and appearance of the surrounding area; and/or**
- iii) **necessitate associated extensions or external alterations inconsistent with the appearance of the property or its setting to the detriment of the street scene or neighbouring residential amenities; and/or**
- iv) **lead to a concentration of such uses damaging to the character and amenity of a street or residential area; and/or**
- v) **provide an external layout, design, and space standards which do not meet the needs and safety of residents, including people with mobility problems.**

(See also in particular Policy TR/18)

- 4.147 The existing housing stock offers opportunities to provide more accommodation for small households in flats, or for people living in a property sharing facilities. It should be noted that where a dwelling house is used by up to six individuals living as a household planning permission is not required. This policy applies to other types of multiple occupation.
- 4.148 In more densely developed areas with typically small terraced housing and little scope for off-street car parking the additional activity generated by multi-occupation households might be expected to be particularly intrusive to the detriment of neighbouring residential amenities. Such problems are likely to be greatest in the older housing areas of Loughborough, in close proximity to the University and other higher education sites where there are already concentrations of houses with multiple occupancy.
- 4.149 Elsewhere more generous space standards surrounding houses might be expected to diminish the potential for disturbance to acceptable levels. However each scheme would need to be considered on its merits having regard in particular to the relationship of a property to other dwellings and the number of bed spaces proposed.

- 4.150 The type of property best suited to conversion is likely to be a large two or three storey house, preferably detached, although larger three bed semi-detached houses with generous gardens and adequate off-street car parking might also present conversion opportunities. In general terms conversions are not usually feasible or desirable in smaller properties.
- 4.151 It will be important to provide garden space to meet the needs of the residents of the accommodation. The quantity and quality of garden space provided should have regard to the proximity of, and access to, parks and other public open space, the age group and mobility of residents, and the permanence of the residents in the property.
- 4.152 The level of car parking provision required should relate to existing standards having regard to the intensity of the use, the availability of car parking provision in the locality, and the age group and mobility of the residents. The overall intention should be to safeguard the local environment in terms of traffic generation and highway safety.
- 4.153 Where properties are approved for conversion they will also be required to provide satisfactory standards of accommodation having regard to the Borough Council's standards for the control of 'Housing in Multiple Occupation' (H.I.M.O's) for which powers for enforcement are available under the Housing Acts. Internal arrangements should be designed and constructed to minimise potential noise disturbance. Where appropriate conditions will be imposed on planning permissions to ensure adequate noise attenuation measures are provided.
- 4.154 If during the plan period the Borough Council considers there is unacceptable pressure for conversions in any location further detailed policy statements may be prepared. The conversion of a large number of houses in any locality to more intensive residential use is likely to unacceptably harm the residential character of an area and the balance of the community.

Care in the Community – Nursing, Residential Care, Rest Homes and Sheltered Housing (Class C2) Involving On-site Supervision

4.155 POLICY H/14

Planning permissions for nursing, residential care, rest homes and sheltered housing, and extensions to such homes, at locations within primarily residential areas will be granted provided the proposal would meet all the following criteria:

- i) provide an adequate amount of accommodation for warden/staff;**
- ii) provide adequate communal garden space;**
- iii) be located within easy reach of local shops and other facilities;**
- iv) provide an external layout, design and space standards to meet the needs and safety of residents including those with mobility problems and to minimise potential noise disturbance to and from adjacent properties;**
- v) ensure any development is of a scale, mass, design and detailing appropriate to the character of an area;**
- vi) not harm the residential amenities of adjoining occupiers;**
- vii) would not lead to a concentration of such uses damaging to the character and amenity of a street or residential area.**

Where sheltered housing is proposed it will be subject to a legal agreement restricting occupation to people over 60 years of age.

(See also in particular Policy TR/18)

- 4.156 The implementation of the Government's 'Care in the Community' programme will transfer people from institutions into housing accommodation within the community. Due to greater longevity there is also likely to be a need for further special homes and accommodation for the elderly.

- 4.157 In considering proposals care will be taken to ensure that the impact of schemes, individually and collectively, does not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential properties and the wider residential area. Schemes will need to provide a suitable living environment, especially for long term residents, and help secure their integration into the local community.

Self-Contained Residential Annexes

4.158 POLICY H/15

Proposals for self-contained residential annexes in the form of extensions to existing dwellings which require planning permission will be permitted where they meet local plan guidance on extensions and provided they cannot be occupied as a separate dwelling.

Where an extension is not achievable for design or physical reasons planning permission will be granted for the conversion of an existing outbuilding or erection of a new building within the curtilage of the existing dwelling where such an annex:

- i) is compatible with the site and its surroundings; and**
- ii) is not of a form which could be occupied as a separate dwelling.**

Where an annex is in the form of a building which could be independently occupied but would not be acceptable as a separate dwelling a condition will be attached to ensure that occupation of the building is tied to the main dwelling.

- 4.159 People are living longer and often wish to retain some independence whilst being close to their family. On occasion the provision of self-contained accommodation in the form of 'granny flats or annexes' to existing dwellings can meet this specific need.
- 4.160 Schemes will only be appropriate where they are acceptable in planning terms, and permanently retained as part of the existing dwelling unit. The preferable means of achieving an annex would be by extension of an existing dwelling. If an extension is not achievable for design or physical reasons then conversion of an existing outbuilding is more acceptable than a new building.

Design and Layout of New Housing Developments

4.161 POLICY H/16

All new housing developments will be expected to achieve high standards of design and layout. On allocated sites and within the Primarily Residential Areas defined on the Proposals Map planning permission will be granted for residential purposes (Class C3) provided the design and layout:

- i) respects the character and appearance of the streetscene, adjoining residential areas and overall settlement form particularly in terms of scale, massing, materials and setting;**
- ii) takes account of the effect of variations in site levels and utilises elements of design, plot orientation, spacing of dwellings and landscape to foster energy conservation and create for occupiers and neighbours appropriate standards of privacy, access to natural lighting to primary rooms, exposure to direct sun lighting of garden areas and protection from sources of noise, excessive traffic movement or other disturbance;**
- iii) creates attractive and distinctive open spaces and play areas linked by pedestrian and cycle routes and garden spaces to function as a strong open space system for public and private use, recreation and amenity purposes;**
- iv) uses the landform and existing features in and around the site such as woodland, trees, hedges, streams, ponds, important buildings and structures imaginatively as the focus for new development;**

- v) **would not result in the loss of significant trees, land or landscape features of high amenity value nor other sites of historical or ecological value worthy of retention;**
- vi) **creates an individual sense of place with an identity based on attractive and distinctive townscape which makes imaginative use of key and corner dwellings individually and in groups, uses hard and soft landscaping measures creatively to define, contain, diversify and add interest to the overall layout and screen any potentially intrusive features, and provides attractive built frontages, walls and landscape areas onto roads, footpaths and other public areas;**
- vii) **creates a designed informal edge softening the visual impact of development onto areas of open land;**
- viii) **minimises the opportunity for crime by creating a safe and secure living environment;**
- ix) **provides a safe community environment based on attractive pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access, and circulation space for residents and the general public especially those with disabilities and children;**
- x) **which accesses the majority of dwellings from a road network with vehicle speeds restricted to be compatible with pedestrian and road safety by appropriate design and traffic calming measures;**
- xi) **does not involve the loss of garages, parking space, social community, recreational or other facilities for which there is a need in the area;**
- xii) **would not prejudice the comprehensive development of a wider area;**
- xiii) **would not locate a housing area so close to an existing or proposed employment area falling within Classes B2 to B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or to any other use to the extent that the nature of the processes or activities undertaken therein would be detrimental to residential amenities.**

4.162 All new housing development will need to give full regard to its local surroundings particularly where proposals impinge upon sensitive buildings, areas or landscapes. The Borough Council will be concerned with the scale, the density and layout of buildings and structures and the appearance and treatment of spaces around buildings. The aim will be to ensure that new housing is accommodated without harming the local character and identity of a settlement or locality. There will be scope for innovative design solutions where it would achieve positive improvements to a locality and particularly where the traditional character has been lost or diminished.

4.163 Housing developments apart from complementing the character of a locality will also need to provide attractive and safe living environments for residents. The layout of housing areas should engender feelings of security by enabling the maximum casual supervision of a development by residents and passing pedestrians, cyclists and motorists during the day and by night.

4.164 The Borough Council will prepare design briefs to guide the development of all major housing and employment proposals and schemes in sensitive locations.

4.165 It is anticipated that within the defined primarily residential areas opportunities will continue to arise on small infill sites, vacant or underused land and through the redevelopment of redundant land and property. In combination these sites are expected to make a significant contribution to overall housing needs. Their early beneficial development will avoid the accumulation of vacant and derelict land, and diminish the need to allocate "green field" sites for development. However all such development must aim to provide a high quality residential environment for the benefit of the home owners and the occupiers of existing properties on adjacent land. The above criteria will be applied to ensure that development achieves these objectives and does not take place in unsuitable locations. Further advice on design matters is given in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

- 4.166 The provisions of the policy will be applied rigorously in all circumstances but especially so in respect of backland development. Backland development is typically residential development within the rear gardens of existing houses, although in some instances it may involve underused allotments or other vacant land within an established residential area. Pressure for development of this type is usually found in areas where the original housing layouts were spacious with long back gardens. Backland development by its very nature will be sensitive requiring particular care in its design and layout to avoid conflict with established residential amenities together with suitable vehicular access. Backland development enclosed on all sides by existing urban land use is likely to represent a further useful source of small scale housing from unplanned sites. However backland development in other circumstances is likely to intrude upon adjacent rural amenities and/or conflict with the established settlement form to the detriment of its particular character and appearance.
- 4.167 One particular form of backland development, “tandem development”, being the building of a single property immediately in front, or to the rear of an existing dwelling will be limited by the policy to those situations where the amenities of all surrounding dwellings, together with those of the original “host” property, can be adequately safeguarded and there is no opportunity for a more comprehensive scheme.
- 4.168 Sites for residential caravans and mobile homes will be acceptable in principle within the primarily residential areas. Planning applications for such development will be determined within the same policy context as that for conventional housing. When acceptable such development will be controlled and regulated by appropriate planning conditions and site licensing provisions.

Extensions to Dwellings

4.169 POLICY H/17

Where Planning permission is required for a residential extension to an existing dwelling or for a garage, permission will be granted provided the development meets all of the following criteria:

- i) it remains compatible in scale, mass, design and use of materials with the original dwelling;**
 - ii) it would not appear as an intrusive or incongruous feature in the streetscene to the detriment of visual amenities;**
 - iii) it would not prove detrimental to the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties by reason of overshadowing, dominance, or substantial loss of privacy or light;**
 - iv) it would not involve the removal of areas of existing landscaping important to the character of the location.**
- 4.170 Many extensions to existing dwellings and ancillary buildings within associated garden areas do not require the specific grant of planning permission being deemed permitted development under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. However when a proposal exceeds the permitted development allowances or falls outside the criteria affording exemption, planning permission will be required. In these circumstances the Borough Council will act to ensure that development remains in keeping with the original property and the surrounding area without injury to the amenity of residents. Further detailed guidance concerning the design of extensions is given in the Borough Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas

4.171 POLICY H/18

Planning permission will not be granted for non-residential development in ‘Primarily Residential Areas’ unless all the following criteria are met:

- i) the use can be accommodated without damaging the amenity of nearby residents or of the area by reason of noise, vibration, illumination, smell, fumes, soot, ash, dust, grit or other source of nuisance;
 - ii) the use can be accommodated in a building consistent in its scale, use of materials and massing of individual elements with the established form and character of adjacent residential areas;
 - iii) the use is of a scale and intensity compatible with a residential area;
 - iv) the introduction of the new use would not lead to a loss of off-street residential parking provision;
 - v) the use does not lead to a material increase in traffic generation, in particular of heavy goods vehicles onto residential streets.
- 4.172 On occasion opportunities arise to accommodate uses other than residential in established housing areas. Such alternative uses will only be acceptable where it is clearly demonstrated that there would be no material damage to the amenities and character of the housing area.
- 4.173 The most compatible uses would be small-scale, Class B1 uses, shopping facilities for purely local needs, or community facilities.

Residential Development at Locations Within the Limits to Development but Outside the Primarily Residential Areas

4.174 POLICY H/19

In locations within the Limits to Development but outside the Primarily Residential Areas planning permission will be granted for the extension, subdivision, replacement or change of use to residential institutions of existing dwellings provided the proposal meets the criteria for housing development and extensions set out in this Plan.

- 4.175 Small pockets of residential accommodation occur within areas where employment uses are predominant. In these situations the occupiers of properties will normally be allowed to modify, or replace, the housing element provided the proposed development would safeguard the character and amenity of the area and provide an acceptable living environment. The introduction of new residential accommodation in employment areas will not normally be appropriate as it could conflict with and constrain the employment land use potential and create unsatisfactory living accommodation for the occupiers.
- 4.176 Elsewhere within the limits to development new residential development will usually be restricted to locations in town and village centres where housing is an acceptable use, perhaps as part of redevelopment schemes.

The Ridgeway Area of Rothley

4.177 POLICY H/20

Within the Ridgeway Area of Rothley as defined on the Proposals Map, proposals for infill dwellings, and other development requiring planning permission, will not be granted unless they are in keeping with the unique, spacious and dignified residential character of the area having regard to all of the following criteria:

- i) the siting, design and layout of the development;
- ii) the shape and size of plot for any proposed new dwelling;
- iii) the need to protect privacy and residential amenities;
- iv) the need to protect existing trees;
- v) access and parking arrangements;

(See also in particular Policy CT/5)

- 4.178 The Ridgeway Area of Rothley is a remnant of an uncompleted early 20th century garden suburb development. It is an attractive local feature of historic and architectural interest.
- 4.179 Specific policy guidance, as included in the adopted Soar Valley Local Plan, has been successfully applied over the past 20 years to control development proposals within the individual housing areas. This guidance has strong local support.
- 4.180 It will be applied to ensure that all development proposals requiring planning permission such as houses, large garages and other buildings and structures are carefully assessed and only permitted where they would be in keeping with the traditional, spacious and dignified character of the residential areas. Proposals for tandem development would not be in keeping with the unique character of the area, and are unlikely to be permitted.

Improvement of Existing Housing Areas

- 4.181 The Borough Council will continue to encourage residents to improve their properties within the appropriate legislation and with the aid of available grants where properties qualify for assistance. Area based improvement will be achieved through the implementation of a phased program of environmental improvement schemes, such as traffic calming in those areas meriting priority treatment.
- 4.182 The Housing Act 1990 restructured the system of housing improvement grants and area designations. Previous area designation ('General Improvement Areas') are to be re-assessed against a new set of criteria from which 'Housing Renewal Areas' will be declared where appropriate. The identification of any such areas within the Borough will be undertaken as part of a review of the Borough Council's "Housing Renewal Strategy" originally adopted in 1977.
- 4.183 The Director of Legal and Environmental Services is responsible for dealing with unsatisfactory accommodation in the Borough, including the allocation of available grants.
- 4.184 Subject to available finance the Borough Council will continue a programme of housing improvement and area environmental improvements.

The Role of the Borough Council in Housing

- 4.185 The role of the Borough Council in housing has two main aspects:
- a legal duty to consider and assess the need for housing within the Borough:

Sources of data such as census information, the Housing Waiting List and the Borough wide Housing Needs Survey allow a detailed assessment to be made of the requirement for housing. This information is used to assist in allocating land for housing within the local plan and also to identify areas where affordable and special needs housing is required in the future.
 - the power to provide accommodation to meet the needs identified:

Although the Borough Council has an important role as a landlord, its main role is increasingly to enable other organisations to provide new housing, rather than providing the housing itself. This role is maximised by providing funding to housing associations and other providers to meet part of the cost of new affordable housing development. The Borough Council may also provide land for such schemes but this resource is now greatly reduced.

In future it is intended that the enabling role will be extended to make use of policy H/4, which relates to an element of affordable housing being provided on sites allocated for housing where there is an identified need.
- 4.186 Every year the Borough Council produces a Housing Strategy Statement. This identifies the housing needs within the Borough and explains how these needs are to be met. The Housing Strategy Statement demonstrates the Borough Council's commitment to working with a range of partners to improve the existing housing provision in Charnwood and, as the highest priority, to generate new housing for rent and sale.

CHAPTER 5: EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

Introduction

- 5.1 The Borough of Charnwood is centrally located between the East Midlands' three principal urban centres: Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. It benefits from excellent accessibility to the national road and rail networks, and is close to the East Midlands International Airport.
- 5.2 The economy remains relatively strong, diverse and balanced despite the damaging effect of the economic recession. There remains an important manufacturing sector at a time when, nationally, the economy is developing a stronger service base. Job losses in textiles and engineering continue to be a cause for concern although new technology industries are expanding. The local workforce contains a high level of professional and skilled occupations. Monitoring of business requirements has confirmed a growing demand for new industrial and commercial premises located within the plan area, particularly in Loughborough.
- 5.3 Loughborough is the Borough's principal employment centre. In recent years the town's economy has diversified from the traditional textile and engineering base into pharmaceuticals, general manufacturing services, and warehousing and distribution. A key component of the service sector is research and development. This area offers strong new employment potential especially through the development of the Science Park off Ashby Road. A further boost to this sector has been the arrival of AstraZeneca at Loughborough Industrial Park, following their take-over of Fisons Pharmaceuticals.
- 5.4 Shephed has moved from a traditional reliance on manufacturing (principally hosiery and knitwear) towards distribution firms and facilities. These are taking advantage of a location adjacent to Junction 23 of the M1. The town has strengthened economic links with Loughborough in recent years.
- 5.5 Outside these two principal centres the large villages along the Soar and Wreake Valleys remain significant locations for a variety of industrial employment, including activities related to mineral extraction, textiles and engineering. The area's accessibility by road continues to improve with the completion of the A46 Leicester Western Bypass and there is potential to exploit rail and waterway routes. The local economy will be bolstered by new employment areas to be developed at Pontylue Farm, Syston and adjacent to the quarry access road at Mountsorrel.
- 5.6 However the local economy is not self-contained. The Borough has strong economic links with Leicester and lesser linkages with North West Leicestershire and south Nottinghamshire. Journey to work figures from the 1991 Census show that 44% of the Borough's workforce lived outside its boundaries. Although the Wreake and Soar Valleys are net exporters of employment, Loughborough is a net importer, with over 12,500 workers travelling into the town each day.

Government Guidance

- 5.7 In PPG12 'Development Plans' it is made clear that the preparation of all development plans should take into account economic considerations such as revitalising and broadening the local economy, stimulating employment opportunities, urban regeneration, balancing urban and greenfield development, socio-economic changes, movement in the economic structure towards services, and the contribution from the rural economy. Policies with primarily economic priorities should provide for choice, flexibility and competition.
- 5.8 PPG4 'Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms' emphasises the need to achieve sustainable development by weighing the importance of industrial and commercial development against that of maintaining and improving environmental quality. It is recognised that the locational demands of business should be a key factor in the preparation of local plans, and that this is closely related to transport issues. Development plans offer the opportunity to locate development to minimise the length and number of trips, especially by motor vehicles, increase the use of more energy efficient modes of transport and discourage development where it would add to congestion.

- 5.9 In PPG7 'The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development' the guiding principle is the achievement of development likely to sustain the rural economy whilst maintaining or enhancing the countryside for its ecological, agricultural and recreational value.

The Leicestershire Structure Plan

- 5.10 Provision is to be made in Charnwood for about 95 hectares of land for employment in the industrial, office, warehousing and distribution sectors between 1991 and 2006. These uses are grouped under Part B of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.
- 5.11 The Structure Plan indicates that this figure is intended to provide a guide-line and that there should be flexibility in its application. It is envisaged that the majority of new employment land will be allocated within and adjoining settlements offering a realistic choice of transport, normally Loughborough, Shepshed, settlements adjoining the Leicester urban area, and settlements along the three transport choice corridors.
- 5.12 To further encourage the diversification of the economy, provision is made for a limited number of 'high quality' employment sites for B1 (Business) and B2 (General Industrial) uses. Although none are specified in Charnwood it is recognised that suitable sites may come forward which offer good access to the road network, a realistic choice of transport, and scope for high design standards.
- 5.13 For rural areas the Plan envisages small scale employment development may be appropriate within and adjoining those settlements not identified for major development.

The Charnwood Perspective

- 5.14 In August 1992 the Borough Council approved an economic review for the year ending December 1991. This wide ranging review highlighted the following areas of interest relevant to preparation of this plan:
- i) the need for sufficient land to be allocated to provide for additional jobs in a variety of industries;
 - ii) the considerable benefits that could accrue from the successful and appropriate development of the Loughborough Science Park;
 - iii) the potential employment benefits from tourism related developments having regard to the need to safeguard sensitive environments;
 - iv) the scope to attract large companies to the area to broaden the employment base of the local economy;
 - v) the sustained increase in unemployment over the previous two years, with the emergence of local 'blackspots' particularly in parts of Loughborough and Mountsorrel;
 - vi) the considerable growth in new firms in recent years, especially in the small business sector;
 - vii) the presence of existing employment sites which are poorly located, or contain buildings difficult to re-use for current employment purposes;
 - viii) the need to combine land use planning with wider-ranging economic development initiatives.
- 5.15 The Review drew attention to the overall increase in employment within the Borough during the 1980's from 50,200 employees in 1981 to about 55,000 in 1989. This increase was, in percentage terms, slightly below the corresponding increase in population over the same period. There were also changes in the type of employment available. Job levels declined during the 1980's in only 3 sectors, namely agriculture and forestry; energy and water supply; and metal goods, engineering and vehicle industries.

- 5.16 Three further sectors are identified as vital to current and future, employment, namely engineering, other manufacturing, and services. Jobs in manufacturing will need to be sustained and new service jobs created in order to ensure that sufficient work will be available for the local workforce. The Review anticipates that the major sources of new jobs will be from operations involved in minerals and mineral products; distribution, hotels, catering and repairs; transport and communication; banking, finance, insurance and business services; and other services.
- 5.17 From this assessment it is clear the local plan will need to secure provision suitable for the diverse needs likely to arise over the plan period in response to changing economic circumstances. Changes are likely to result from the interplay of numerous factors including the effects of a single European Market allied to the opening of the Channel Tunnel, and the ever increasing competition from newly developed countries.
- 5.18 Current floorspace figures indicate that very small units remain in demand at a time when the industrial property market is at a low ebb, and that the greatest over supply of property in relation to demand is for larger floorspace units. The demand for accommodation is highest in Loughborough.

Aims and Objectives

- 5.19 The employment policies and proposals have been formulated with regard to the general guidance set out above and in line with the following aim:
- “To identify sufficient land, primarily through the retention and extension where appropriate of existing employment areas within the Borough, particularly in locations consistent with the Structure Plan to ensure the maintenance, diversification and expansion of investment and employment opportunities in the interests of sustaining a healthy local economy”.
- 5.20 In combination the proposals seek to address the following broad objectives:
- i) to identify sites to provide for new job creation in conformity with the requirements of the Structure Plan balanced with environmental and infrastructure considerations;
 - ii) to ensure that new employment sites are easily accessible by both private and public transport and to all sections of the community, with particular reference to areas of high unemployment;
 - iii) to foster the diversification of the local economy by creating conditions likely to attract new manufacturing, service and high technology investment;
 - iv) to improve the appearance and working environment of employment areas;
 - v) to ensure that new industrial development avoids injury to the character and amenity of adjacent land uses;
 - vi) to ensure that industrial processes and operators carry no risk to the health and safety of the community or the environment;
 - vii) to maximise employment densities within new economic development sites;
 - viii) to define ‘Primarily Employment Areas’ to be safeguarded from development which would reduce their employment potential.

Definition of Employment Terms

- 5.21 Employment uses are defined in accordance with Part B of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987. The terms referred to in this chapter are as follows:
- Class B1: Business (Offices, industrial processes and research and development of a ‘light’ industrial nature);
- Class B2: General Industry;

Class B8: Storage and Distribution.

Other uses involving sources of employment such as shopping, mineral extraction, tourism etc. are referred to elsewhere in this plan.

- 5.22 A developer or industrialist wishing to change the use of a building will usually require planning permission. This will always be so when the change includes a change of Use Class. However within Part B some changes of use do not require planning consent. These are:-

TO	FROM
B1 (business)	B2 (general industrial)
B1 (business)	B8 (storage and distribution)
B8 (storage and distribution)*	B1 (business)
B8 (storage and distribution)*	B2 (general industrial)

* where the change of use relates to not more than 235m² (2530ft²) of floor space.

Planning Criteria for Employment Developments

5.23 POLICY E/1

In granting planning permission for the development of land for employment purposes the Borough Council will require:

- i) **provision for vehicular access, loading and manoeuvring which avoids danger, congestion or delay to other road users;**
- ii) **provision for safe and adequate access for cyclists and pedestrians and for public transport where appropriate, including links to existing or proposed route networks;**
- iii) **the avoidance of nuisance to neighbouring land uses occasioned by noise, other emissions, hours of operation of street parking;**
- iv) **the provision through the overall design and layout of the development of a scheme which remains compatible with the established character and appearance of the locality as defined by the massing, scale, form and material employed in any neighbouring development;**
- v) **in the case of an extension, the provision of a development which would complement or enhance the existing building and remain compatible in its design, scale and use of materials;**
- vi) **the provision of hard and soft landscaping details appropriate and necessary to define and contain the development within a high quality environment and to screen from view areas of open storage, utilitarian buildings and potentially intrusive plant and equipment; and**
- vii) **the incorporation, where appropriate, of measures to protect, conserve or enhance adjacent residential, visual or rural amenities.**

(See also in particular Policy TR/18)

- 5.24 Provision must be made for adequate manoeuvring space to ensure that standards of safety are maintained and that commercial vehicles in particular can operate without unnecessary constraint and delay occasioned by indiscriminate parking and blockage of industrial estate roads. In addition, within larger developments adequate provision must be made for the delivery of effective transport choice opportunities. In order to help reduce car dependency measures will need to be implemented to make access by public transport, cyclists and pedestrians more attractive to and from employment areas.

- 5.25 Clearly employment development will be primarily directed towards the delivery of goods and services to customers on the most competitive basis and such commercial parameters will continue to give rise to a need for low cost buildings, essentially utilitarian in function and appearance. However high standards of design and layout are not alien to employment development and will be used often to promote a favourable image of the company to potential clients. Such buildings can make an important contribution to the accumulated architectural heritage and to business confidence in the community generally. The Borough Council will wish to encourage innovative and original designs in new development, particularly at the margins of industrial estates where, coupled with sensitive landscape planting, it may screen from view the more utilitarian elements of design.
- 5.26 Within established areas care must be exercised to safeguard the environmental standards and amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring property, especially where the character of the locality is primarily residential. Incompatible uses likely to lead to complaints from adjoining residents should be minimised by restricting activities and hours of operation within employment areas. In the case of new employment sites it will be desirable to provide landscape “buffer” zones to afford visual and acoustic screening between employment and housing uses or other potentially incompatible uses.
- 5.27 In some instances businesses may have developed in a particular fashion or in a location in such a way as to detract seriously from residential amenities and the local environment. In these circumstances the Council will negotiate to seek appropriate measures to ameliorate problems by agreement. If this fails, relocation to more suitable sites will be encouraged. However, extensions to such existing premises will not be approved unless acceptable ameliorating measures can be achieved.
- 5.28 The Borough Council recognises that the development of small-scale business enterprises has a role to play in providing local job opportunities in villages. Proposals for the development of new sites, redevelopment and conversions of extensions to existing sites will be acceptable where the scale and nature of the activity accords with the character and appearance of a village and its setting in the countryside, and it results in no harm to the amenities enjoyed by nearby residents or other land uses.

Storage of Hazardous Substances

5.29 POLICY E/2

Hazardous Substances Consent will not be granted for the storage of hazardous substances where the proposal would:

- i) **prejudice the potential for development on adjoining land;**
- ii) **constitute a hazard to health or present a significant risk of escape of any dangerous material;**
- iii) **involve unsatisfactory access to rail or road networks by virtue of traffic generated having to pass through residential areas or other sensitive locations.**

Proposals for other development in the vicinity of hazardous installations will be resisted where the proposal would be likely to lead to a significant increase of risk to the population.

- 5.30 Hazardous Substances Consent will be required for the storage of certain toxic, highly reactive, explosive and flammable substances. A definitive list appears in Schedule 1 of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 1992. Such developments are likely to have significant implications for adjoining occupiers and the potential use of land in the vicinity.
- 5.31 It will be important to ensure the population likely to be at risk is not significantly increased by inappropriate residential, industrial, commercial or other development within the vicinity of notified installations. Where hazardous substances consent is granted the safest means of transportation will be expected to and from the site, including ready road access for emergency vehicles. There is one hazardous installation in the Borough at Shepshed – the Shepshed Brick and Tile Co. Ltd.

- 5.32 In the application of this policy the Borough Council will be guided by the provisions of Circular 4/00 and the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 and by the specialist advice of the Environment Agency.

Hazardous Installations

5.33 POLICY E/3

Planning permission will not be granted for hazardous installations which would have adverse affects on the population or environment. Where planning permission is granted adequate access arrangements will be required onto the rail network or specified road network for the transportation of hazardous materials.

- 5.34 In the consideration of applications for hazardous installations it will be desirable to minimise or avoid potential risk to the health and wellbeing of neighbouring communities and the environment generally. The Borough Council will be guided in the application of this policy by the specialist advice of the Environment Agency.

Employment Land Provision

- 5.35 The Structure Plan requires that provision be made for about 95 hectares of land for employment purposes in Charnwood over the period 1991 to 2006. At March 1994 a significant proportion of this overall requirement had already been provided by way of previous starts on employment related development and outstanding commitments in the form of planning consents and allocations in adopted local plans. The situation is summarised in the table below:

Employment Land Supply in Charnwood at March 1994

		Area in Hectares
(A)	Employment Land Requirement 1991 to 2006	95.00
(B)	Starts between 4/91 and 3/94	9.69
(C)	Commitments already made on sites of 0.2ha (0.52a) or Floorspace equivalent of over 930m ² (10,000 sq ft)	40.51
(A-(B+C))	In order to meet Structure Plan requirements the Local Plan needs to identify provision for	44.80

- 5.36 Details of the employment sites already committed for development at March 1994 are set out in Table 1. In the event of planning permission lapsing, consent will normally be renewed for employment purposes on these sites. The sites are those included in the County Council's 'Industrial Land Availability' schedule adjusted to reflect the realistic contribution of net employment land from each site having regard to current information.

TABLE 1**EMPLOYMENT LAND AVAILABILITY MARCH 1994****ALL FIGURES IN HECTARES**

	Draft LCC Figures	Adjustment	Notes
51NW021 Windmill Road/Great Central Road	0.78		
51NW013 Science Park	7.88	-3.94	50% retained for landscaping
51NW028 Windmill Road	0.88		
51NW029 Epinal Way	0.54		
51NW030 Woodgate	0.41		
51NW031 William Street	1.58	-1.58	RNIB education/ housing site
52SW012 Chainbridge	0.55		
52SW017 Loughborough Industrial Park	6.56		Net of roads and landscaping
52SW018 Bishop Meadow (Fisons)	9.30	-5.00	4.3ha available; balance for open space/playing fields
52SW20 Belton Road North	1.11		
52SW028 Woodbrook Park	1.91		
52SW048 Meadow Lane/Hanford Way	0.36		
52SW070 North Woodbrook Park	14.50	-14.50	Removed to allocation and reduced to 6ha net development
52SW071 Station Avenue	0.40		
LOUGHBOROUGH	46.76	-25.02	21.74 Net
41NE010 Motorway Trading Estate	3.25	-2.72	Only 0.53ha remains net of roads and landscaping
41NE020 Ashby Road (Bradgate)	0.88		
41NE022 Sullington Road	0.30		
41NE025 Ashby Road (Moseley)	0.26		
SHEPSHED	4.69	-2.72	1.97 Net
60NW007 Red Hill Lane	0.56		
60NW095 Melton Road	0.34		
THURMASTON	0.90		0.90 Net
61SW013 Half Croft	0.51		
61SW018 Pontylue Farm	12.37	-2.50	Brief attached to consent 89/0739 suggests 20% for landscaping etc
61SW030 Barkby Road	2.03		
SYSTON	14.91	-2.50	12.41 Net
51NE066 Betty Hensers Lane	1.45	-1.45	Consent for supermarket
51NE009 Loughborough Road	5.06	-5.06	Removed to allocation
51SE006 Linkfield Road	0.82		
MOUNTSORREL	7.33	-6.51	0.82 Net
51NE001 Hayhill Estate	2.00	-2.00	Removed to allocation
SILEBY	2.00	-2.00	0
61SW015 Melton Road	0.18	-0.18	Removed to allocation
QUENIBOROUGH	0.18	-0.18	0
61SW022 Melton Road	0.87		
61SW026 The Warren	1.80		
EAST GOSCOTE	2.67	-	2.67 Net
TOTAL	79.44	38.93	40.51 Net

Loughborough Science Park

5.37 POLICY E/4

In the determination of applications for development within the Loughborough Science Park, the Borough Council will take into account, in particular, the following considerations:

- i) all buildings shall be used for the following purposes only:
 - a) any use falling within Class B1 (b) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987; OR;
 - b) any use falling within Class B1 (a) or B1 (c) which also has either:
 - a special need to be located close to the University or other research facilities on the site or elsewhere in Loughborough; or
 - is otherwise directly or functionally related to the University or other research facilities on the site or elsewhere in Loughborough.
- ii) the overall development of the park should not exceed a gross floorspace of 92,900m² with approximately 50% of the site area being retained and landscaped to create a parkland setting;
- iii) buildings and other structures shall be constructed to a high standard of external appearance with extensive landscaping;
- iv) service yards shall be well screened and no external storage shall be permitted;
- v) existing woodland, trees and other natural features within and adjacent to the site shall be conserved and enhanced to sustain and improve their wildlife habitat and amenity value;
- vi) it can be demonstrated that measures will be taken to maximise the potential for access to the site by walking, cycling and public transport.

The Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions towards the implementation of measures to improve the transport choice potential of the site in the form of:

- a) improved bus stops and information, bus priority measures, in particular a bus only link between Kirkstone Drive and the A512, and contributions to services;
- b) continuous and direct cycle and pedestrian links to the site from housing areas.

A package of measures will be required as part of the implementation of the development which significantly reduces the use of private cars to and from the development. This will provide measures and facilities to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport for occupiers jointly or separately.

- 5.38 The Loughborough Science Park, which extends over 34ha (84 acres) of attractively bounded land on the principal western approach to Loughborough, was allocated in the Loughborough Local Plan. Its purpose was, and remains, to attract new technology businesses and industries to a high quality environment with the intention of strengthening and diversifying the County economy. The first phase has been completed with the development of 19ha (47 acres) initially occupied by British Gas to accommodate its new National Research Centre. A further 6.5ha (16 acres) has been set aside for University playing fields, while 3.2ha (8 acres) have been lost to the dualling of the A512, leaving a balance of 5.2ha (13 acres) for the Science Park. The locational characteristics of the site immediately adjacent to one of the nation's premier universities in the field of technology, centrally positioned in the country with excellent road, rail and air communications and situated within a mature and attractive landscape lends the development a particular importance unequalled in Leicestershire and only rarely found elsewhere. These qualities demand that the overriding principle of a Science Park development should not be diluted by unrestricted B1 (business) uses; an

argument which was supported by an Inspector in a 1993 appeal decision. His findings in respect of acceptable uses are embodied in paragraph (i) of the policy.

- 5.39 The site is extremely attractive and sensitive in landscape terms and it is these characteristics which present the opportunity for the achievement of the prestigious high quality, low density development within a parkland setting currently being promoted. In the absence of these special development proposals arising from the unique relationship with the University these landscape factors would have been sufficient to merit the retention of the site in open uses.
- 5.40 In any development it will be particularly important to ensure the retention and conservation of the established areas of ancient woodland adjoining the site and the parkland qualities of the allocated area itself. To this end consultants recommended a maximum building coverage of 20% over the site as a whole. Therefore, subject to the number of storeys employed in development and to the level of car parking provision it is estimated that between 40% and 50% of the allocation will remain available as a landscaped setting. It is considered that more intensive development would prejudice the intention to create a sufficiently attractive environment.
- 5.41 Within the context provided by the existing form of the site, established tree cover and opportunities for additional landscaping works there remains scope to introduce diversity through varying the scale, massing and density of built features within the Park. Working within these constraints and assuming an average of one and a half storey development throughout the Park it is estimated that the maximum gross floorspace which the site could provide would be approximately one 92,900m².
- 5.42 In view of the amenity considerations of the area it is important to ensure that the quality of design achieved in built development, the specific uses of individual premises and the nature of any processes and operations undertaken remain compatible with the overall environment and the Science Park concept.
- 5.43 The Borough Council wishes to improve access to the site for non-car modes especially for journeys to work. This will include better links from housing areas for buses, cycles and pedestrians. The content of Commuter Plans will indicate how traffic generation is to be reduced. Measures such as reduced levels of car parking should be considered as part of such plans, and will be subject to a condition or planning obligation as appropriate.

New Employment Areas

5.44 POLICY E/5

The sites listed below and identified on the Proposals Map are allocated for employment use subject to the criteria specified for each site:

	Area Ha	(Acres)
a) Extension to Hayhill Industrial Estate, Sileby	2	(5)
b) Extension to Woodbrook Industrial Park, Belton Road, Loughborough	6	(15)
c) Dishley Grange, Hathern	20	(50)
d) Granite Way, Mountsorrel	5	(13)
e) Land at Rothley Lodge, east of the A6 Bypass, Rothley	13	(32)
f) Land north of Harrowgate Drive, Wanlip	4	(10)
TOTAL	50	(123)

All areas are net of land required for structural landscaping and distributor roads.

(See also in particular Policies ST/3, EV/17, EV/20, E/1, E/7, TR/5, TR/13, TR/18)

- 5.45 The allocated sites have been closely examined and evaluated against a set of criteria to determine their compatibility with strategic and environmental policies and objectives. The details of this exercise are set out in “Sustainability and the Impact of Major Development Options”. In selecting the sites the Borough Council is satisfied that they cause no serious harm to the broad range of traditional and new environmental considerations. Their distribution across the Borough and location close to where people live should assist in the reduction of trip lengths for journeys to work and afford a high degree of accessibility by frequent public transport services. Of the six allocated sites in Policy E/5 four of them involve extensions to established industrial estates. These sites located at Loughborough, and the large villages of Barrow-upon-Soar and Mountsorrel, are well placed to benefit from good proximity to an existing local resident workforce and transport choice opportunities. The two other new employment sites at Birstall and Rothley which lie on the A6 transport choice corridor are similarly also well located to assist in achieving a better relationship between the location of jobs and where people live. Additionally most are conveniently located in relation to the existing and emerging strategic road network for the purposes of efficient freight delivery or distribution and/or enable the provision of additional highway improvements.
- 5.46 In combination the allocations will offer a range and choice of sites suited to the varying needs of developers and employers over the plan period complementary to existing provision and commitments. Overall it is anticipated that the relative attraction of the Borough derived from its excellent accessibility and general environmental appeal will ensure that the necessary investment is attracted to secure their development and the delivery of new jobs.
- 5.47 In total the employment land allocations will extend to over 50ha (123 acres). Together with existing starts and completions, this exceeds the total Structure Plan requirement by 5ha (12 acres) representing a 5% overprovision. However this margin is not considered to be seriously out of conformity with the Structure Plan.
- 5.48 The individual sites are discussed in more detail in Policies E/5(a)-(f) below. These policies establish the extent of each allocation, the scale and type of development, the main planning principles applicable, and the planning requirements and obligations which will be sought. The policy guidance differentiates between those matters which have to be addressed and planning obligations which may be sought for development to proceed. The aim is to achieve new developments which contribute to a balanced mix of land uses, sustain the range of community needs and minimise any adverse off-site impact upon amenities, facilities and infrastructure. Planning permission will be granted if all these matters are addressed. The site-specific matters need to be considered together with other general requirements, in particular for landscaping and general transport standards. The Borough Council may seek legal agreement(s) with landowner/developer interests and any other body as appropriate to secure some provision at the appropriate stage of a site’s development.

Extension to Hayhill Industrial Estate, Sileby

5.49 POLICY E/5(a)

Planning permission for employment development on about 2ha (5 acres) of land adjacent to the Hayhill Industrial estate, Barrow Road, Sileby, will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) access is taken from the existing Industrial Estate Road. No individual accesses will be allowed onto Barrow Road;**
- ii) existing hedges, trees and treed areas are retained wherever appropriate and reinforced to protect and enhance visual amenity;**
- iii) a landscaping strip of at least 15 metres in width including mounding, tree and shrub planting is provided along the Barrow Road frontage to extend the existing strong edge to the Sileby Road frontage of the Hayhill Industrial Estate;**
- iv) a strong landscaped buffer is provided along the south edge between the proposed employment area and existing housing. This will include extension of the existing tree area to the railway embankment;**

- v) the existing hedge is retained along the northern edge and reinforced with planting of trees individually and in groups to add visual interest;
- vi) a maintenance strip and landscaping area is provided along the watercourse forming the north west boundary of the site to be agreed with the local planning authority in consultation with the Environment Agency;
- vii) a high standard of materials and design and layout of buildings are provided;
- viii) within the development area landscaping and fencing is provided to add interest and to screen any storage areas;
- ix) no open storage uses are provided within 20 metres of the base of the railway embankment;
- x) the development respects any operational requirements of the adjoining railway;
- xi) adequate measures are taken to deal with any landfill or site stability problems;
- xii) adequate measures are taken to protect any ecological interest in accordance with Policies EV/22 and EV/23;

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to the implementation of a traffic management scheme along Sibley Road.

(See also in particular Policies E/5, EV/22, EV/23)

- 5.50 This site is an extension of the existing Hayhill Industrial Estate in a sensitive location between Sibley and Barrow upon Soar. New development will need to safeguard the amenities of existing houses along Barrow Road and be of a design and layout in harmony with the site's location on the edge of the Soar Valley Countryside.
- 5.51 The policy includes a requirement (xii) in recognition of the site's ecological value, a factor which was recognised after the adoption of the policy in the Soar Valley Local Plan. Development as proposed will result in the generation of additional traffic, including HGVs onto Sibley Road which, towards Barrow and Sibley, runs through residential areas. Implementation of traffic management measures will improve highway safety and enhance the local environment.

Extension to Woodbrook Industrial Park, Belton Road, Loughborough

5.52 POLICY E/5(b)

Planning permission for employment development on land adjacent to the Woodbrook Industrial Park will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) access to the site and associated highway improvements are provided which:
 - include improvements to the highway network to ensure that traffic movements on Bishop Meadow Road and Belton Road and their respective junctions are not adversely affected by the traffic generated by the development; and
 - prevent vehicular access to the Industrial Estate Road network via Bottleacre Lane.
- ii) an overall layout is provided which:
 - allows for the relocation of any recreational uses displaced;
 - safeguards the potential to access adjacent land located between the Woodbrook and mainline rail corridor;

- retains existing trees and major hedgerows with supplementary landscape planting around the site margins abutting the Woodbrook and the Main Line Railway to screen and contain development;
 - provides safe access for pedestrians and cyclists into, and throughout the proposed development area linking with existing and planned routes in the vicinity of the site;
- iii) it can be demonstrated that measures will be taken to maximise the potential for access to the site by walking, cycling and public transport.

A package of measures will be required as part of the implementation of the development which significantly reduces the use of private cars to and from the development. This will provide measures and facilities to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport for occupiers jointly or separately.

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development:

- a) implementation of bus priority measures and improved bus facilities along the A6 and penetrating the industrial area from Belton Road via Jubilee Drive;
- b) construction of cycleways along Belton Road/Alan Moss Road and the Grand Union Canal.

(See also in particular Policy E/5)

- 5.53 The extension of the Woodbrook Industrial Park was recognised in the Loughborough Local Plan as the only opportunity then available for employment land expansion in the town. That Plan recognised the severe constraints (access, ownership, floodland) which would have to be overcome. In recognition of these continuing problems, the size of the allocation is reduced from 14ha to 6ha, representing a realistic judgement as to what might be developed in the Plan period. Any development permitted will safeguard the potential for access into the rest of the land in future.
- 5.54 The Borough of Charnwood will expect Commuter Plans to be submitted showing how traffic generation is to be reduced, especially for private cars. Measures such as reduced levels of car parking should be considered as part of such plans, and will be subject to a condition or planning obligation as appropriate.

Land at Dishley Grange, Hathern

5.55 POLICY E/5(c)

Planning permission for employment development of land at Dishley Grange, Derby Road, Loughborough, will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) all highway improvements necessitated by the development are provided. As a minimum these will include:
 - the construction of a new distributor standard road link between Bishop Meadow Road and the A6 north of Dishley Grange;
 - the diversion and re-alignment of the A6 to provide a dual carriageway section of trunk road to the north-west of Dishley Grange to include a roundabout link to the new distributor road;
 - improvements to the A6/Shepshed Road junction in Hathern;
 - the improvement of the A6/Bishop Meadow Road roundabout junction;
- ii) primary access to the site is taken from a roundabout on the new distributor road;
- iii) a cycleway is constructed alongside the Blackbrook between the A6 and the Grand Union Canal and linking into employment areas;

- iv) **approximately 32 hectares of land are laid out for replacement and improved playing field provision including changing rooms and associated parking facilities. Provision shall include as a minimum:**
 - **3 cricket squares**
 - **4 football pitches**
 - **4 hockey pitches**
- v) **the Loughborough New Football Club Project is retained or relocated on a site appropriate for the Club's long term development requirements which involve the provision of a club house, floodlighting, enclosure of the pitch and training areas;**
- vi) **substantial block planting and landscaping to a minimum depth of 20 metres is provided where necessary to separate conflicting land-uses, screen the development from important views and safeguard the setting of Dishley Grange;**
- vii) **blocks of planting are provided within the recreation area to add visual interest to the site;**
- viii) **buildings on the site are designed to a high standard in terms of their use of materials, colours, heights, massing and layout taking into account the edge of town location adjacent to the Loughborough/Hathern Green Wedge and the Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value;**
- ix) **buildings in key positions, particularly along the primary site frontages to the new distributor road, Dishley Grange and the adjacent recreation land, will make minimal use of plastic coated steel in their facades in preference for more traditional materials. Large span steel clad buildings will be situated towards the centre of the allocation or suitably screened to avoid any unnecessary intrusion to the detriment of the surrounding area;**
- x) **a positive and complementary relationship is achieved between the development and the adjoining recreation land and the Dishley Grange complex. Open storage, parking and service areas will not be appropriate in these locations;**
- xi) **substantial landscaping is provided within the employment site to fragment the overall mass of the development;**
- xii) **necessary measures are taken to provide appropriate compensatory washland or flood accommodation in any detailed scheme to be agreed with the local planning authority in consultation with the Environment Agency;**
- xiii) **it can be demonstrated that measures will be taken to maximise the potential for access to the site by walking, cycling and public transport.**

A package of measures will be required as part of the implementation of the development which significantly reduces the use of private cars to and from the development. This will provide measures and facilities to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport for occupiers jointly or separately.

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development:

- a) **the creation of a landscaped public open space and wildlife park on 18ha of land north of the distributor road alongside the River Soar, with arrangements for proper maintenance to be agreed with the Borough Council on completion;**
- b) **the establishment of a recreation/leisure/tourism/educational facility centred on Dishley Grange involving the conversion and re-use of the historic buildings on the site;**
- c) **implementation of measures to improve bus access along the A6 and penetrating the industrial area from Belton Road via Belton Road West in the**

form of bus stops and information, bus priority measures and contributions to services as appropriate;

- d) continuation of a cycle route from the site along the Blackbrook/Grand Union Canal corridors to link to housing areas in Loughborough for journeys to work.**

(See also in particular Policies E/5, TR/4)

- 5.56 Responses generated by the Consultation Draft Local Plan reaffirmed the need for further employment land provision at Loughborough in order to enable the town to continue to prosper and attract new investment. In particular there is a need to foster new employment opportunities to replace those being lost in the heavy engineering sector and to provide opportunities for established businesses to expand or relocate within the town to remain competitive. This need has been heightened with the acknowledgement that significant physical constraints may well frustrate the development in full of Loughborough's only remaining reserve of land for traditional employment development at Woodbrook Industrial Park (Policy E/5(b) applies).
- 5.57 Various physical and policy constraints bearing upon land around Loughborough limit severely the opportunities for appropriate employment land development. However evidence submitted to the Borough Council suggests that the extent of essential washland bordering the existing Bishop Meadow employment area may not be as extensive as that indicated on the Proposals Map. Consultations with the Environment Agency have to date proved inconclusive but the scope for some adjustment to the washland boundary is admitted subject to supporting evidence.
- 5.58 The Borough Council wishes to see the new distributor road re-routed to link with the existing industrial estate along a route south of Dishley Pool and via Messenger Close. Implementation of such a road will allow for the provision of an independent access road to solely serve the AstraZeneca site along the route previously safeguarded for the distributor road to the north of Dishley Pool. Consultations will continue with landowners and occupiers affected by these proposals. The design of highway improvements to serve the development will need to assess the potential impact of the development on the A6 further into Loughborough in consultation with the Highway Authorities.
- 5.59 To address traffic congestion on a more sustainable level measures are proposed in association with the development to make more attractive to commuters alternative transport options in the form of improved bus services, cycleways and footpaths both within and beyond the development area itself. The Borough Council will expect Commuter Plans to be submitted showing how traffic generation is to be reduced especially for private cars. Measures such as reduced levels of car parking should be considered as part of such plans, and will be subject to a condition or planning obligation as appropriate.
- 5.60 The allocation currently comprises areas of formal playing fields and agricultural land, the latter accommodating the annual Leicestershire Show over recent years. The landform is generally flat interspersed by field hedgerows containing relatively few trees of any stature. As a consequence the landscape is somewhat sensitive being open to view with minimal natural screening. Provided the development is limited to the area shown on the Proposals Map and extensively landscaped about its margins it is considered that any intrusion into the Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value can be effectively contained while the incursion of built development into the Green Wedge between Hathern and Loughborough is minimised preserving the separate identity of the village.
- 5.61 Replacement playing fields will be necessitated but their relocation within the Green Wedge, provided any related club houses, changing facilities and maintenance buildings are modest in scale and design, would not be inconsistent with Green Wedge policy. The existing golf driving range, rugby pitches and grounds occupied by the Loughborough New Football Club Project are excluded from the allocation but these areas might also be made available for development subject to the provision of suitable replacement facilities.
- 5.62 The displacement of the existing playing fields will inevitably result in the loss of an important amenity readily accessible to residents of the Dishley and Gorse Covert housing estates. By way of securing some compensation for this loss the Borough Council considers it reasonable to negotiate with developers and landowners the provision of some 18ha for improved public access and wildlife habitat creation.

- 5.63 In any development particular measures will be required to conserve and enhance the Dishley Grange Farm complex. In addition to the presence of an Ancient Monument and a collection of listed buildings the farm has important links with the 18th Century agricultural revolution having been the location for early experimentation by Robert Bakewell in the selective breeding of livestock. These associations warrant particular care both to preserve the historic context and to protect the potential for tourism and education. In respect of this last point the Borough Council will negotiate with the developer/landowner to exploit in association with the overall development the full potential of the Dishley Grange complex consistent with its historic and architectural value.

Granite Way, Mountsorrel

5.64 POLICY E/5(d)

Planning permission for employment development of land off Granite Way, Mountsorrel will be granted provided the following criteria are met;

- i) primary access to the employment area is taken from Granite Way. There shall be no access from Loughborough Road or Hawcliffe Road;**
- ii) safe access by foot and cycle is provided to the employment area from Leicester Road;**
- iii) access to the Showmans winter storage site to the rear of 251 Loughborough Road is taken some 60 metres from the roundabout junction of Granite Way and Loughborough Road;**
- iv) a new access to the Hawcliffe Road depot is provided from Granite Way;**
- v) a strongly landscaped buffer to a minimum depth of 15 metres and mounding some 3 metres in height with tree and shrub planting is provided between the main employment area and the gardens of Nos. 20A to 86 Hawcliffe Road;**
- vi) a strongly landscaped buffer of mounding varying between 3 metres and 5 metres in height combined with tree and shrub planting, to be designed as the edge between this part of Mountsorrel and the surrounding countryside, is provided between Granite Way and adjacent countryside;**
- vii) a high standard of materials, design and layout of buildings is provided on the western more elevated parts of the site;**
- viii) buildings on the south-eastern edge of the site adjacent to existing housing are domestic in scale, no more than 6 metres high at eaves level, and designed to strengthen the landscaped buffer between the employment area and adjoining gardens;**
- ix) development of land north of Granite Way demonstrates strong design, careful siting of buildings and use of materials, colours, walling and fencing appropriate to this key site on the entry to Mountsorrel, and provides a strong edge between the Soar Valley Nurseries and the development;**
- x) the layout of built development and design of mounding in the 50 metre corridor of the overhead transmission lines avoids interference with that equipment;**
- xi) strong landscaping is provided within the development to add interest and screen any open storage areas;**
- xii) the development of the site includes a range of plot sizes to include units for small and starter businesses;**
- xiii) development of the site north of Granite Way and adjoining Nos. 20A to 86 Hawcliffe Road is restricted to Class B1 uses. The remainder of the site is restricted to Class B1, B2 and B8 uses.**

The Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions towards the implementation of measures to improve transport choice along the A6 corridor including cycleways, improved bus stops and information, bus priority measures and contributions to services as appropriate.

(See also in particular Policy E/5)

- 5.65 This site was originally allocated in the Soar Valley Local Plan. The detailed requirements of the policy safeguard residential amenity and seek to ensure this edge-of-village site is carefully integrated with the existing built form and the surrounding countryside.

Land at Rothley Lodge, East of the A6 Bypass, Rothley

5.66 POLICY E/5(e)

Planning permission for employment development on land at Rothley Lodge east of the A6 Bypass, Rothley will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) necessary highway improvements are provided, to be assessed in detail with the local planning authority and the highway authority. Development will be phased to ensure completion of necessary improvements at an early stage;
- ii) primary vehicular access is taken from the A6 Bypass junction adjacent to the site;
- iii) a secondary vehicular access to the site is provided;
- iv) substantial structural planting and landscaping to a minimum depth of 20 metres is provided to consolidate existing planting around the site. This will create a strong wooded edge to development incorporating features sympathetic to the landscape character of the Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value adjacent to the site;
- v) the use of materials, colours, restrictions on the height of buildings, and a design and layout of development to minimise the adverse impact on the landscape character of the proposed Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value adjacent to the site. Given the prominence of the existing landform substantial remodelling of and associated landscape planting will be required within the site to screen and fragment the overall mass of development which would otherwise appear as intrusive in views obtained from the wider landscape;
- vi) improved access for pedestrians and cyclists into and within the site is provided from the old A6 and adjoining housing areas across the hilltop junction;
- vii) it can be demonstrated that measures will be taken to maximise the potential for access to the site by walking, cycling and public transport.

A package of measures will be required as part of the implementation of the development which significantly reduces the use of private cars to and from the development. This will provide measures and facilities to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport for occupiers jointly or separately.

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development:

- a) implementation of measures to improve access for buses, cyclists and pedestrians along the A6 corridor, to and from surrounding villages, in the form of bus stops and information, bus priority measures, contributions to services as appropriate, and safe cycle and pedestrian routes;
- b) creation of landscaped public open space and a wildlife park in the area between the site and Sibley Mill alongside the River Soar. Arrangements will need to be agreed with the Borough Council on completion to secure public access and proper maintenance.

(See also in particular Policies EV/3, E/5)

- 5.67 The site satisfies the requirements for transport choice, can be satisfactorily accessed and offers the scope to contribute to significant local infrastructure improvements the precise nature of which will be the subject of further negotiations.
- 5.68 The gross site area extends to some 18ha (45 acres) occupying a prominent shoulder of land which projects eastwards into the Soar Valley. Substantial planting and associated landscaping measures will be required to screen development and help assimilate it into the wider landscape. A sensitive solution is called for and, notwithstanding the availability of some 5ha (13 acres) for structural planting, the achievement of an acceptable solution may impinge, to some degree, upon the net development area. Careful attention to the design and layout of buildings will assist in the achievement of an appropriate balance between development and the environment which respects the sensitivity of the site. The site may also have some archaeological significance and consequently development at Rothley Lodge will require an archaeological assessment and/or evaluation to be undertaken. In line with Policy EV/3 the intrinsic value of any remains likely to be affected by the development will determine whether they should be preserved in situ or arrangements made for their excavation and recording.
- 5.69 The development will be expected to provide necessary highway improvements at an early stage of development. These could include improvements to the Hill Top roundabout/A6 bypass junction at Rothley. In addition the potential impact of the development on the trunk road network and the need for improvements will be assessed in consultation with the Highway Authorities. Achievement of a flood-free link across the river valley particularly between villages east of the river valley and the A6 bypass remains a desirable objective but is not considered to be reasonably and directly related to this development.
- 5.70 Development of this site will be expected to help fund measures to significantly improve non-car access to the site along the A6 corridor and to and from the surrounding villages. Layout of the development will need to facilitate good access for buses, cyclists and pedestrians. In addition contributions will be sought towards the implementation of traffic calming measures along the former A6 through local villages and to the creation of amenity/wildlife areas in the river valley adjacent to the site. Arrangements will need to be agreed with the Borough Council for access and maintenance of these areas. The development should also help fund provision for improved public access and a wildlife park in the river valley next to the allocated site.
- 5.71 Given the site's location adjacent to the grade separated A6 Bypass junction at Hilltop, Rothley there may be scope to accommodate roadside facilities to serve trunk road traffic movements as part of site development.
- 5.72 The Borough Council will expect Commuter Plans to be submitted showing how traffic generation is to be reduced, especially private cars from this site located next to the A6 bypass. Measures such as reduced levels of car parking should be considered as part of such plans, and will be subject to a condition or planning obligation as appropriate.

Land North of Harrowgate Drive, and West of A6, Wanlip

5.73 POLICY E/5(f)

Planning permission for the development of a high quality business park will be granted on land north of Harrowgate Drive, Wanlip and west of the A6, provided the following criteria are met;

- i) access to the site is taken from the new local distributor road proposed as part of the adjacent residential development. There shall be no direct access to the A6, nor any vehicular access through the proposed housing development to the business park;**
- ii) pedestrian and cycle links are created between the proposed housing areas and the business park linking into existing and proposed footpaths and cycleways nearby;**

- iii) the development is restricted to business (Class B1) and general industrial (Class B2) uses and which would not detract from the special visual character of the development or be damaging to the amenity of adjoining uses;
- iv) a comprehensively landscaped development is achieved with buildings designed to a high standard in terms of their use of materials, colours, heights, massing and layout, taking into account the proximity of proposed residential development, the visual impact on the skyline and the immediate and longer distance views of the site;
- v) buildings in key positions, particularly along the primary site frontages to the new distributor road are restricted to B1 uses. Buildings in these locations will be expected to make minimal use of plastic coated steel in their facades in preference for more traditional materials. There should be a positive and complementary relationship between the Business Park and adjoining residential areas proposed to the south. Open storage, parking and service areas will not be appropriate in these locations;
- vi) substantial within site landscaping is provided to consolidate existing planting and to fragment the overall mass of development;
- vii) block planting and landscaping to a minimum depth of 20 metres is provided where necessary to separate conflicting land-uses and screen the development from important views. Additional planting to consolidate existing planting around Ryclose Spinney and north of Longslade Community College should also be provided to help screen the development from long range views from the Soar Valley;
- viii) in association with the adjacent housing development:
 - a) the provision of a new local distributor road penetrating the site from the A6 to provide the main means of access to the development;
 - b) the provision of off-site highway improvements necessitated by the development and carriageway and junction improvements to deliver genuine transport choice opportunities for movement between the development and Leicester. As a minimum these will include:
 - improvements to the Leicester Western Bypass, Greengate Lane and Redhill Circle junctions;
 - carriageway improvements along the A6 to secure dedicated bus lanes southbound and northbound from the site to Redhill Circle;
 - contributions to improved bus facilities along the A6 to include bus shelters, signage, and service information;
 - traffic management measures on side roads linking to the A6;
 - c) the provision of a Park and Ride facility on land to the east of the A6 corridor involving the laying out, surfacing, landscaping and lighting of this facility along with the provision of waiting shelters;
 - d) the provision of sports fields and other recreational facilities to include at least two football pitches and a cricket square and a community sports hall to incorporate a sports hall, squash courts, generally activity rooms along with catering or alternative provision to meet the emerging needs of the new community;
- ix) it can be demonstrated that measures will be taken to maximise the potential for access to the site by walking, cycling and public transport.

A package of measures will be required as part of the implementation of the development which significantly reduces the use of private cars to and from the development. This will provide measures and facilities to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport for occupiers jointly or separately.

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to address the following matters generated by the development:

- a) **the construction of a cycleway along the Great Central Railway from the Leicester Western Bypass to Hensons Close;**
- b) **the provision of a rail halt on the Great Central Railway to serve the development;**
- c) **the establishment of commercially viable public transport services penetrating the site to a level and frequency that ensures the delivery of genuine transport choice.**

(See also in particular Policies E/5, TR/13, TR/22, TR/29, CA/10, CF/8)

- 5.74 This 4ha allocation comprises one component of a comprehensive package of development incorporating elements of housing, community facilities, recreation provision, roadside services and transport infrastructure on land north of Harrowgate Drive, Birstall, within the parish of Wanlip. The various elements of the scheme are addressed under the relevant sections of this Local Plan, but all come together to fund and deliver the overall package based broadly upon a proposition put forward in response to the Consultation Draft Local Plan by the developer/landowner partnership concerned. Accordingly the quantum of requirements and obligations attached to the allocation must be read in association with the related proposals set out in this Plan. In negotiating the details of the contributions required from the various components of the overall development the Borough Council will have regard to the scale, nature and consequent impact of each element to ensure that they remain reasonable and related.
- 5.75 The landowner has signalled an intention to sponsor a high quality development in which the residential component is founded upon the principles embodied in the garden suburb movement. Such a commitment is to be encouraged and the Borough Council is anxious to ensure that the employment area complements the overall design approach.
- 5.76 The allocation occupies a shoulder of land close to the skyline which appears prominent in views particularly from the A6, and in distant views from various vantage points to the east and west. In view of these considerations a sensitive design solution is called for which will be best delivered through the promotion of a prestigious business park development with high quality buildings set within an extensively landscaped area. For this reason Class B8 warehousing uses which normally require large utilitarian structures for storage and distribution purposes will not be appropriate.
- 5.77 Specific measures will be pursued to encourage bus penetration of the site and to facilitate easy access on foot or by cycle in an attempt to stem the growth in private car traffic. The allocation is furthermore ideally located strategically being adjacent to the A6 bus corridor and therefore easily accessible by that mode to the large volume of people residing along that route from Loughborough to Leicester. The Borough Council will expect Commuter Plans to be submitted showing how traffic generation is to be reduced. Measures such as reduced levels of car parking should be considered as part of such plans, and will be subject to a condition or planning obligation as appropriate.

Implementation of the Employment Land Allocations

- 5.78 Development briefs will be prepared to provide detailed guidance for the development of each site and to specify the distribution and balance of land uses, any restrictions on particular uses, as well as specifications for buildings construction and finish, site layout and landscaping. In the preparation of briefs the Council will have particular regard to the provisions of related policies set out in this Plan.
- 5.79 The briefs will usually be prepared by the local planning authority in consultation with prospective developments and will be intended to be attached to and form part of any planning permission. Planning permission will not normally be granted until the submission and agreement of a satisfactory planning solution in which a developer proposes to comply with any requirements set out in the site specific policies for each site, and any other material considerations.

- 5.80 The exact nature and extent of contribution from individual developments to improved transport choice, local highway and other infrastructure, and related community benefits will be a matter for negotiation between landowners/developers and the local planning authority, having regard to current government guidance on planning obligations. In order to help reduce car dependency for journeys to work developers will be required to plan for alternative travel modes such as walking, cycling and public transport in the development of the allocated employment sites. In the case of proposals likely to result in significant traffic generation the Council will expect applications to be accompanied by a Commuter Plan setting out targets and measures to reduce private car use.
- 5.81 Provision of open space and landscaped areas will need to accord with areas shown on the Proposals Map. Such provision will need to be accompanied by arrangements agreed with the Borough Council for their long term management and maintenance. This will usually be through the transfer of land to the Borough Council. For small areas of open space or landscaping principally for the benefit of the development itself, the payment of a commuted sum for future maintenance may be sought.
- 5.82 Where provision of any requirement is not achievable by conditions the Borough Council will require the signing of a legal agreement with the landowner, developer and any other body as appropriate to secure provision as part of a phased and comprehensive development.
- 5.83 The timing of development will be governed by the availability of infrastructure required to enable development to proceed.

Future Use of the Dishley Grange Farmstead

5.84 POLICY E/6

Planning permission will be granted for the establishment of a recreation/leisure/tourism/education facility utilising land and buildings at Dishley Grange farmstead, Hathern provided it is demonstrated that the facility:

- i) is focused on the important archaeological and historic character derived from the ancient monument, listed buildings and water meadows at the farmstead together with their landscape setting. These features must be safeguarded, incorporated into and enhanced by any proposals. Particular attention will need to be given to the accommodation of archaeological remains worthy of preservation in situ without unacceptable harm; and**
 - ii) secures a public resource for the benefit of the wider community with levels of use compatible with the long term preservation of the archaeological and historic character; and**
 - iii) is of a design, scale, character and form which creates a positive and attractive gateway feature at the northern entry along the A6 into Loughborough; and**
 - iv) respects the environmental and amenity value of the Loughborough/Hathern green wedge to which this site makes an important contribution.**
- 5.85 Treatment of the retained farmstead as a separate entity is the best way to safeguard its special interest in the long term. The farmstead occupies a sensitive location within the Loughborough/Hathern green wedge on the approach into Loughborough from the north along the A6. A carefully controlled and well designed scheme incorporating the historic/archaeological features and their settings and compatible with environmental protection policies is the best means of safeguarding the special interest for the community in the long term. It will also enable the creation of a high quality and unique entry into Loughborough.
- 5.86 Dishley Grange Farmstead is a site of important archaeological interest and any development should allow for the investigation of remains and possible preservation in situ if significant remains are identified in accordance with Policy EV/2. In considering applications for development which could affect these archaeological interests, the Borough Council will liaise with English Heritage and Leicestershire Museum Arts and Records Services.

Control of Employment Uses in Primarily Employment Areas

5.87 POLICY E/7

In determining planning applications within the Primarily Employment Areas and employment land allocations for business, industry and warehousing development, as defined by Part B of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, the Council will take into account, amongst other matters, the following criteria:

- i) the environmental impact of the proposed development, including visual need to minimise the adverse intrusion in sensitive landscapes;
- ii) planning permission will be granted for business and industrial uses (Classes B1 and B2) provided that in locations adjacent to existing or proposed residential areas residential amenities can be protected by appropriate measures;
- iii) permission will be granted for storage and distribution industries (Class B8) unless it is shown there will be seriously detrimental effects in terms of:
 - a) a significantly lower level of job creation compared with Class B1 or B2 uses in areas of limited employment land supply and higher levels of unemployment;
 - b) an unacceptable impact upon local traffic movements, particularly the intrusive effect of heavy goods traffic;
 - c) inadequate provision of parking, manoeuvring, and servicing spaces in an off-road location.

5.88 The Primarily Employment Areas comprise the main employment areas in the plan area where business, industry and warehousing will remain the dominant activities. They will be extended and supplemented by the additional allocations set out above.

5.89 In all new employment development the Council is anxious to encourage compatible patterns of land use to safeguard neighbouring amenities and environmental quality and to ensure an adequate range of employment opportunities in areas of need.

5.90 Where employment areas adjoin residential areas it may be necessary to impose conditions limiting the use of the premises, restricting hours of operation or defining permissible noise levels.

5.91 Existing and proposed employment areas in the Borough will provide for the diverse needs of employees and investors. The mix of uses achieved in any site will reflect the location, environmental qualities, market demand and accessibility. Within this general guidance the Borough Council wishes to provide for a variety of activities, including:

- i) large companies likely to broaden the employment base of the local economy especially in sectors such as high technology, professional and financial services; and
- ii) provision for small businesses, including start-up accommodation, serving areas of high unemployment in the form of small units/workshops on proposed industrial sites and conversion of buildings where this is appropriate.

Provision for Small Businesses

5.92 In considering applications for new employment uses within the Primarily Employment Areas identified in Policy E/7 and within the new land allocations proposed in Policy E/5 the Council will negotiate the provision of premises suitable for the needs of small businesses where it can be demonstrated that such needs exist and are not currently being met in the locality.

5.93 PPG4 states that planning authorities should ensure that their development plans contain positive policies to provide for the needs of small businesses.

Location of Offices

- 5.94 There is an improving market for offices with the demand for office space concentrated in Loughborough Town Centre. There are also more recent demands for office space to service industry in locations with good access, parking and preferably a location with an attractive environmental setting. These demands are focused in Loughborough, although there is some interest in locations in the Soar Valley and nearer Leicester in the south of the Borough.
- 5.95 Present demand as expressed in the form of enquiries to the Borough Council indicates continuing interest in office accommodation particularly for areas between 100m² and 200m². There is also an interest in much larger sites including over 3,700m².
- 5.96 The level of provision available has increased recently. In Loughborough development of a site between Woodgate/Southfields Road in the Town Centre has provided about 3,250m² of purpose built office suites.
- 5.97 The proposed town centre opportunity sites in Loughborough will provide excellent opportunities for new office development most likely as part of mixed developments. New provision will in part compensate for existing office space on parts of the sites. Other opportunities may arise through the conversion of existing buildings such as houses and obsolete factory buildings at the fringes of the town centre, and the use of upper storeys over shops.
- 5.98 Matters relating to offices providing a service to the general public (primarily Class A2 uses) within or close to shopping areas are dealt with in the 'Central Areas and Shopping' chapter.

Safeguarding Employment Land and Buildings

5.99 POLICY E/8

Planning permission for development for uses other than those falling with Part B (business, industrial and warehousing) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, (as amended) of land and buildings situated within primarily employment areas, will not be granted unless:-

- i) **the removal of the employment use would enable the achievement of significant environmental improvements in local residential amenity by virtue of the removal of heavy traffic movements, indiscriminate street parking and/or sources of noise, fumes, dust, vibration or other nuisance; or**
- ii) **the alternative use would secure specific benefits to the advantage of the local community which would also serve planning function and could not be achieved by other means; or**
- iii) **the land and buildings are unfit for employment purposes; or**
- iv) **the alternative use is small scale, complementary and ancillary to the main employment use; or**
- v) **the alternative development could not be suitably accommodated within a town centre location or a residential area by reason of its trading profile, overall appearance or need for buildings of industrial scale and character, and is not a shop falling within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987 (as amended); or**
- vi) **the alternative use is otherwise acceptable in planning terms and would be essential to enable the relocation or expansion elsewhere in the area of the current activity for which the site or premises have become unsuitable.**

And provided the loss of the employment use would not result in a shortage in employment land and buildings either in the short term or over the plan period, nor result in any underprovision to the disadvantage of the local community or across the Borough as a whole.

- 5.100 The retention of existing employment areas will ensure the provision of a ready supply of land and buildings for the new businesses and enterprises needed to create jobs and facilitate growth in the local economy and reduce the need to make further greenfield allocations outside the urban areas.
- 5.101 Those areas designated as being primarily employment areas are particularly well placed to provide for modern business needs with a range of land and buildings appropriate to contemporary requirements, usually with the benefit of good estate roads and immediate access to the specified road network. It is particularly important that these areas should be safeguarded from speculative housing or retail development.
- 5.102 Also identified as falling within Primarily Employment Areas are many industrial businesses which continue to operate from older premises including nineteenth century mill buildings historically associated with areas of terraced housing and village communities. In total these businesses employ significant numbers and often provide a local source of work easily accessible to people without independent means of transport.
- 5.103 While most such businesses continue without injury to neighbouring residential amenities a limited number do give rise to local problems. In these circumstances the interests of the business and the local community may be best served by the encouragement of its relocation and the redevelopment of the site for more appropriate uses. Such sites may usefully contribute to windfall housing opportunities.
- 5.104 In the case of older premises it is to be expected that many will have outlived their natural usefulness and will be incapable of conversion to meet modern business needs. In these instances, too, alternative development may offer the only practical use for the site. The policy also recognises that a situation may arise where redevelopment for alternative use is the only way of financing relocation or expansion.
- 5.105 Finally there will always be a demand for a range of uses which, although not falling within the generic group of Part B uses as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, have a need for and benefit from an industrial estate type of location often with the additional advantage of a prominent frontage to and excellent access from the principal road network. Typically such businesses often require industrial style buildings and commonly relate to leisure and entertainment uses or the motor trade.
- 5.106 However in all cases the development of employment land for alternative purposes will be the exception and will normally be permitted only where there exists an adequate supply of employment land to meet overall strategic requirements in accordance with a pattern of distribution which ensures for all communities within the Borough convenient access to employment opportunities.

Sales Areas for Cars, Caravans and Other Vehicles

5.107 POLICY E/9

Planning permission will be granted for development involving sales areas or showrooms for cars, caravans and other vehicles within primarily employment areas provided the development would not result in a shortage of employment land and buildings either in the short term or over the plan period, nor result in any underprovision to the disadvantage of the local community or across the Borough as a whole.

In those circumstances where the use of the premises for unrestricted shop purposes, as defined under Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, would be unacceptable, conditions will be attached to any consent removing permitted development rights.

- 5.108 Development involving the sale of cars, caravans and other vehicles is specifically excluded from Loughborough's Core Retail Area and will not normally be appropriate within primarily residential areas where their appearance in the streetscene, associated traffic generation and related disturbance would be detrimental to visual and residential amenities. Over recent years there has been a trend for such businesses to relocate from congested town centre and edge of centre sites to more spacious accommodation in industrial areas, primarily in locations benefiting from prime frontage to the primary road network. This shift in distribution

has brought distinct advantages to central areas in the form of new development opportunities which can provide townscape improvements, scope for the expansion of shopping and new jobs, primarily within the office sector. These advantages have balanced the loss of land allocated for employment purposes.

- 5.109 The provision of such businesses in employment areas has been achieved to date without serious injury to employment land supply and further such development is likely to be acceptable provided adequate employment land remains to meet strategic requirements in locations accessible to the local labour needs.
- 5.110 Where the normally permissive change of use to a general shop use (Class A1) would be unacceptable by virtue of inappropriate provision for access or car parking, unsuitable environmental impact, or detrimental effect upon the vitality and viability of a neighbouring shopping centre, conditions will be imposed to more strictly control the nature of sales permitted.

Regeneration Opportunity Site – Land Between Burder Street and Midland Main Line, Loughborough

5.111 POLICY E/10

Planning permission will be granted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Regeneration Opportunity Site lying between Burder Street and the Midland Main Line at Loughborough provided that the development of the site would:

- i) avoid piecemeal development prejudicial to the achievement of a comprehensive scheme for the whole site;**
- ii) safeguard the residential amenities of the residents of Burder Street;**
- iii) allow for improved access and servicing for Loughborough Station in particular for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians;**
- iv) allow for the provision of a bus/rail interchange;**
- v) secure the provision of a link road from Nottingham Road to Meadow Lane on the general route indicated on the Proposals Map with the details to be approved through development control process;**
- vi) secure a significant environmental improvement at this important entrance to the town;**
- vii) protect any operational use required in association with the operation of the railway;**
- viii) provide for satisfactory access to the local road network.**

(See also in particular Policies E/11, TR/9)

- 5.112 This is a key site in the town. It is the focus of the Council's successful bid for Challenge Funding under the Single Regeneration Budget. In economic terms it offers the opportunity for job creation by the attraction of a range of land uses. In environmental terms its development will transform a major entrance to the town and enable the removal of the through traffic from the residential Ratcliffe Road. In social terms it will aid the regeneration of an area of the town with very high unemployment. It can also provide the opportunity for improved transport links, encourage use of the railway and provide a better interchange between different transport modes.

Acceptable Uses for Proposed Regeneration Opportunity Site

5.113 POLICY E/11

Planning permission will be granted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Regeneration Opportunity site lying between Burder Street and the Midland Main Line Loughborough for the following uses:

- i) **Employment (Classes B1, B2 and B8);**
- ii) **Dwelling houses (Class C3);**
- iii) **Hotels (Class C1);**
- iv) **Non-residential institutions (Class D1);**
- v) **Assembly and Leisure (Class D2);**
- vi) **Transport related uses; and**
- vii) **Recreation**

(See also in particular Policies E/10, TR/11)

- 5.114 The Borough Council is anxious to encourage the early and successful redevelopment of the Opportunity Site in accord with the other policies set out in this Plan. There is a particular concern that any redevelopment should not undermine the strategy for the growth and expansion of the town centre but subject to that consideration the Council will be prepared to adopt a flexible approach to the range of uses within the site in order to deliver the overall package of environmental and economic improvements.

CHAPTER 6: RURAL LAND AND ECONOMY

Introduction

- 6.1 The Borough is an area facing strong pressures for change. At present it contains extensive tracts of countryside and open land, much of which is particularly attractive. The local differences in character and appearance between areas reflect factors such as local geology, landform, settlement pattern and the influence of man over time. The rural areas are a resource much valued by those who live and work within them, visit them for recreation, or merely travel through. Around settlements these open areas are fundamental to the identity and separation of individual communities.
- 6.2 The landscape reflects the cumulative effects of natural, social and economic change over time. It will continue to evolve in response to future needs and demands. Over the plan period the rural areas will face further change, to provide in part for the needs of urban and other development, and also for recreation and other needs of local people. In some areas there will be changes as the rural economy moves away from its traditional reliance on agricultural production, and land is 'set-aside' from productive use.
- 6.3 The Local Plan has a key role to play by guiding development in the areas outside the built-up areas. There is a need to safeguard the countryside, avoid danger of coalescence between settlements, and protect local landscapes. This is particularly important in those areas facing the most pressure to accommodate development.

Government Guidance

- 6.4 PPG7 'The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development' February 1997 sets out the factors to be considered in land use planning for rural areas. These cover the need to encourage rural enterprise; to protect landscape, wildlife and historic features; safeguard best and most versatile agricultural land; have regard to the quality and versatility of land for use in forestry and other rural enterprises; strengthen rural communities; achieve good quality development which respects the character of the countryside and secure safe development. The guiding principle in the countryside is to ensure development benefits economic activity and maintains or enhances the environment. The PPG indicates that building in the open countryside away from existing settlements or from areas allocated for developments should be strictly controlled. It is recognised that whilst agriculture will remain the main rural land use farmers will continue to diversify to other activities to supplement incomes.
- 6.5 The 1995 White Paper 'Rural England' – A Nation Committed to a Living Countryside' provides a comprehensive review of rural policy. It restates the need to sustain the economy of rural areas whilst ensuring conservation of the rural environment. The emphasis is on sustainable development by strengthening villages and towns, protecting the countryside and reducing the need to travel for all activities.

Leicestershire Structure Plan and Related Guidance

- 6.6 The Structure Plan recognises the importance of safeguarding the countryside for its own sake whilst providing for development to support the rural economy. It contains general guidance seeking to safeguard areas of particularly attractive countryside, areas of local landscape value, green wedges, areas of local separation, and the best and most versatile farmland.
- 6.7 With regard to Charnwood the Structure Plan acknowledges that there would be serious environmental consequences if the Borough were to provide development to meet all of its forecast natural increase in population. The level of provision in Charnwood has therefore been reduced to reflect the environmental limits to development capacity in the Borough and increased in Districts with fewer constraints.

The Charnwood Perspective

6.8 It is possible to distinguish four broad landscape areas in the Borough:

i) **Charnwood Forest**

The western part of the Borough contains the highest land with Beacon Hill at 248 metres above sea level. The landscape has an undulating ridge and valley form. The character of the underlying geology is reflected in the rugged appearance with rocky outcrops and quarrying activities at Longcliffe and Buddon Wood. There are numerous areas of woodland both ancient and more recently planted. There is a high level of ecological and scientific interest and amenity value. The landscape is generally a patchwork of hedge and tree lined fields with occasional dry stone walling. There has been some loss of features as a result of mechanised farming. The area has few settlements and is dotted with farmsteads. Traditional buildings are constructed of local materials, usually granite walls and slate roofs. Bradgate Park, The Outwoods, Beacon Hill and Broombriggs Farm are major outdoor recreation attractions. To the east the landform shelves gradually to the valley of the river Soar.

ii) **River Valleys**

The River Soar follows a corridor running north west to south east through the heart of the Borough. The river's main tributaries are the Blackbrook, north of Loughborough, and the Rothley Brook. At Rothley the Soar merges with the river Wreake which follows a narrower valley to the north east towards Melton Mowbray. The valleys of the rivers and the main tributaries are low-lying, generally at and below the 60 metres contour. The river valleys are characterised by pastoral farming. The traditional small-scale landscape of hedge and tree lined fields has in parts given way to a more open fabric as arable practices have increased. Elsewhere the landscape has been greatly modified by the impact of sand and gravel extraction especially in the south of the Borough. Both valleys are important communication corridors with a dense settlement pattern alongside as towns and villages have developed at the edge of the flood plain.

iii) **The Wolds**

East of the Soar Valley and north of the Wreake valley the landform rises gently towards a flat area around Six Hills at 130 metres above sea level. A rolling landscape is created by streams running in deep valleys generally in a south-west to north-easterly axis. This is the most important agricultural area, especially for arable farming. There is a scattering of small, traditional villages and hamlets and many farmsteads. The landscape has an open fabric with some pockets of woodland. The British Gypsum mine at Barrow upon Soar and the disused Wymeswold Airfield are alien features in the Wolds countryside.

iv) **High Leicestershire**

To the south of the Wreake valley the land rises away to the south east with a ridge and valley landscape on a south-east to north west axis. Reaching to 125 metres above sea level this undulating landscape marks the edge of the "High Leicestershire" area. This is an agricultural area. Villages are small, based around groups of traditional farmsteads, and in the case of Barkby around an historic hall.

6.9 Outside the built-up areas there are likely to be continuing pressures for change over the plan period. These include:

- i) **New development:** This includes housing, roads, employment areas, and recreation facilities. These individually and together will need to be carefully planned in order to minimise threats to the character and appearance of the countryside and the identity of individual communities.

- ii) **Changes in the Rural Economy:** The current landscape has resulted from interaction of estate management and farming over the years. In coming years measures such as 'set-aside' may bring further change to the landscape. Profitable agricultural businesses are necessary for the maintenance of the countryside with its characteristic features. Changes in methods of agricultural support and farm policies are reducing farm incomes and putting an increasing number of businesses at risk. Diversification of farm businesses provides an avenue for farmers to respond to these economic trends.
- iii) **Opportunities for Recreation:** The continual visitor pressure on popular recreation areas such as Bradgate Park, Beacon Hill and the Outwoods could damage the very quality of the environment which attracts visitors in the first place. Alternative attractions are needed to relieve pressure on the overused areas and provide new experiences. Farming will continue to be the dominant land use in the rural area. Diversification of the rural economy could create opportunities to provide new recreation and amenity areas.
- iv) **Mineral Extraction:** The Borough is an area rich in natural resources. There is likely to be continuing pressure for mineral extraction for roadstone, gypsum and sand and gravel.
- v) **Flood Alleviation Measures:** The completion of flood defence works along the river Soar as far south as Quorn may affect in the longer term the landscape, ecology and management of the wider river valley. Such measures are also to be put into effect on the Barkby Brook to alleviate flooding in central Syston.
- vi) **National Forest:** The defined area of the National Forest includes parts of the Charnwood Forest area and offers considerable opportunities for new woodland planting and habitat creation as well as new recreation and access opportunities and rural economic development where this is consistent with policies to safeguard the countryside and landscape.

Aims and Objectives

- 6.10 The Local Plan needs to provide a policy framework for the rural areas to balance potentially conflicting users and interests. In overall terms the aims are to:
- i) identify areas of Green Wedge and other open land necessary to preserve the separate identity of settlements;
 - ii) protect the character and appearance of the countryside for its own sake, especially within areas of particularly attractive countryside and other areas of local landscape value;
 - iii) facilitate the diversification of the rural economy including the promotion of the National Forest;
 - iv) give considerable weight to the conservation of the best and most versatile agricultural land as a national resource.
- 6.11 The policies and proposals seek to address the following broad objectives with regard to the countryside in the Borough:-
- i) to safeguard and enhance the character, appearance and amenity value of the countryside for its own sake by controls and restrictions on development;
 - ii) to safeguard the role of farming as the dominant land use in areas of countryside and open land in the Borough;
 - iii) to ensure that clear separation is retained between communities;
 - iv) to improve the appearance of, access to and public enjoyment of the rural areas;
 - v) to resolve conflicts between rural interests by the control of development, proper management of the countryside and the promotion of a greater understanding of countryside issues;

- vi) to encourage respect for the countryside in all development proposals;
- vii) to support and encourage the creation of the National Forest;
- viii) to encourage the planting of native trees and woodlands.

General Principles for Areas of Countryside, Green Wedge and Local Separation

6.12 POLICY CT/1

Land lying outside the defined Limits to Development is variously identified on the Proposals Map as Countryside, Green Wedge and Areas of Local Separation.

Development within these areas of generally open land will be strictly controlled. Planning permission will be granted for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for uses suitable in scale and nature, and small-scale new built development, where there would not be a significant adverse environmental impact and the proposal would:

- i) be essential for the efficient long-term operation of agriculture, horticulture or forestry; or**
- ii) facilitate the diversification of the rural economy; or**
- iii) improve facilities for recreation, or leisure uses; or**
- iv) implement strategically important schemes for mineral related uses, transport infrastructure, and for public services or utilities.**

In all cases it should be demonstrated that the proposed development could not reasonably be located within or adjacent to an existing settlement.

(See also in particular Policies CT/2, CT/3, CT/4, CT/6, CT/15)

- 6.13 National planning policy guidance emphasises the need to protect the countryside for its own sake. With the reduced dependency upon agriculture the imperative now is to enable new forms of rural enterprise to sustain the rural economy while protecting the countryside for the sake of its natural beauty, the diversity of its landscape and its ecological, agricultural and recreational value. Policy CT/1 sets out those uses that will be acceptable in principle in the countryside and will apply with other countryside policies in the plan.
- 6.14 The Structure Plan also requires the definition of Green Wedges and allows for the identification of areas of local separation as discrete policy areas quite distinct from the countryside.
- 6.15 The guiding principles within these areas of essentially open land will be to ensure that new development is small scale and does not adversely affect the appearance and character of the landscape. Wherever possible new development should be focussed on towns and villages in locations which reduce travel needs and extend transport choice accessibility. Particular care must be exercised in allowing development even for so called “soft uses” such as recreation. The quality of agricultural land and the landscape character will be important considerations.

Development in the Countryside

6.16 POLICY CT/2

In areas defined as Countryside, development(s) acceptable in principle will be permitted where it would not harm the character and appearance of the countryside and provided it could safeguard its historic, nature conservation, amenity, and other local interest.

(See also in particular Policies CT/1, CT/6)

- 6.17 Whilst it is recognised some new development will be necessary outside settlements, the countryside within the plan area will be protected from inappropriate or harmful developments. The range of developments acceptable in principle is defined in Policy CT/1.

Development in Green Wedges

6.18 POLICY CT/3

In the Green Wedge areas development acceptable in principle will be permitted where it would:

- i) protect the predominately open and undeveloped character of the area; and**
- ii) be consistent with safeguarding the area's function to provide, strategically important separation between settlements; and**
- iii) maintain or enhance public access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders compatible with land use activities; and**
- iv) secure landscape improvements usually in the form of tree groups and woodland.**

The green wedges are defined on the Proposals Map. They include land between:

- i) Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall/Thurcaston/Anstey/Cropston;**
- ii) Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston (Soar Valley North);**
- iii) Beaumont Leys/Glenfrith/Anstey/Groby;**
- iv) Syston/Thurmaston (east of Melton Road);**
- v) Loughborough/Shepshed;**
- vi) Loughborough/Quorn;**
- vii) Loughborough/Hathern.**

(See also in particular Policies ST/1(v), CT/1, CT/6)

- 6.19 The guiding principle of Green Wedge policy is to safeguard those areas of structurally important open land around Leicester and Loughborough which provide important separation between communities, and so help protect the individual identities of those communities. Apart from protecting and enhancing these predominantly open areas it will also be important to improve access to them given their proximity to the main areas of population, and to secure landscape improvements. Further guidance on green wedge policy is included at Policy ST/1(v) and paragraph 2.31.
- 6.20 Green Wedge areas face continuing pressure to accommodate new development. The consideration of individual proposals will have regard to the cumulative impact of change in these areas and how it is affecting their overall character, appearance, and function.
- 6.21 Development in Green Wedges will only be acceptable for certain uses provided they do not damage the open and undeveloped character of the Wedge. The range of appropriate development is defined in Policy CT/1. Further background information is set out in Technical Report No.3. Proposals for transport routes or infrastructure located in green wedges will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances. The environmental impact of such schemes will need to be controlled to safeguard the open and undeveloped character of the locality.
- 6.22 The Borough Council will also use all available powers to maintain and improve the overall environment of the Green Wedges and encourage their positive management.

Development in Areas of Local Separation

6.23 POLICY CT/4

In areas of local separation development acceptable in principle will only be permitted where the location, scale and design of development would ensure that:

- i) the predominantly open and undeveloped character of the area is retained; and
- ii) the already narrow gap between settlements is not reduced.

Areas of local separation are defined on the Proposals Map to include land between:

- a) Loughborough/Woodthorpe;
- b) Quorn/Mountsorrel;
- c) Mountsorrel/Rothley (East and West of Mountsorrel Lane);
- d) Sileby/Cossington;
- e) Sileby/Barrow upon Soar;
- f) Thurcaston/Cropston/The Ridgeway Area of Rothley;
- g) Wanlip/Birstall;
- h) Rearsby/East Goscote;
- i) East Goscote/Queniborough;
- j) Queniborough/Syston
- k) Syston/Thurmaston (west of Melton Road);
- l) Syston Barkby;
- m) Anstey/Newtown Linford

(See also in particular Policies CT/1, CT/6)

- 6.24 The dense settlement pattern alongside the Soar and Wreake river valley and on the edge of Leicester and Loughborough results in narrow gaps between many of the settlements. In previous local plan exercises local residents have stressed the importance they place on preserving the separate identities of communities. These already narrow gaps should remain predominantly open and undeveloped to secure effective separation. The range of appropriate development is defined in Policy CT/1. Further background information on the evolution of this policy is set out in Technical Report No.2.

Local Separation – The Ridgeway Area of Rothley

6.25 POLICY CT/5

Planning permission for appropriate development within the Ridgeway Separation policy area defined on the Proposals Map will be granted where all the following criteria are met:

- i) the character and appearance of the countryside is not harmed;
- ii) the separation between the residential areas and between those areas and the village of Rothley and Mountsorrel is not unacceptably reduced;
- iii) the historic and architectural interest of the individual residential areas and their open setting in the landscape are safeguarded;
- iv) the amenities of existing properties are not adversely affected.

(See also in particular Policies CT/1, CT/6, H/20)

- 6.26 The Ridgeway area of Rothley is quite unique in Charnwood deriving its spacious and dignified character in a mature landscaped setting from the concepts of the Garden City movement of the early 20th Century. The area comprises three distinct enclaves of residential development separated by areas of open land from one another and from the neighbouring settlements of Rothley and Mountsorrel. The range of appropriate development is defined in Policy CT/1.
- 6.27 The residential areas are contained by the defined Limits to Development and the Borough Council is anxious to ensure that any further development within them does not damage the unique character and appearance of the area. Accordingly any development proposals will be determined within the context provided by policy H/20.
- 6.28 Clearly the residential enclaves derive their particular character from the areas of open land which surround them and the Borough Council therefore attaches considerable importance to the retention of these spaces to prevent consolidation and to resist any trend towards coalescence with the villages of Mountsorrel and Rothley. Given the particular characteristics of this area it is not considered that countryside policy alone could achieve that objective while the purpose of local separation policy is to preserve the separate identity of settlements, rather than separate communities within the same settlement. Accordingly the Council is persuaded that the historical and environmental considerations which combine to lend this area its unique character and quality justify the designation of a specific separation policy for the Ridgeway Area.

Planning Criteria for Development in Areas of Countryside, Green Wedges and Local Separation

6.29 POLICY CT/6

Where development is acceptable in principle in the countryside, Green Wedges or Areas of Local Separation planning permission will be granted provided all the following criteria are met:

- i) any buildings are sited where possible in association with existing buildings and structures and are themselves not intrusive in the landscape;**
- ii) the form, mass, scale and design of the proposed development including any access roads, would conform with the established character and appearance of the site and its surroundings;**
- iii) colours and textures of materials used would blend with the local environment;**
- iv) existing trees, hedges, walls, ponds, water courses and other important features are retained and integrated into the proposals;**
- v) visual and acoustic screening/landscaping is provided where necessary on a scale and of a nature in conformity with the site and its surroundings. Where appropriate landscaping works will be required outside the development site by legal agreement;**
- vi) the proposal does not generate noise, dust, fumes, smell, light or other nuisance to the detriment of residential or visual amenities and the enjoyment of the area by other users;**
- vii) the proposal would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile farmland;**
- viii) essential agricultural and forestry operations are not prejudiced;**
- ix) existing off-road public access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders is maintained and, where practicable, extended when compatible with land use activities.**

(See also in particular Policies EV/2, EV/3, CT/1, CT/2, CT/3, CT/4, CT/5)

- 6.30 Where development proposals are acceptable in principle in the countryside, Green Wedges and areas of local separation having regard to the policy context provided by Policies CT/1 to CT/5. It will be important to ensure that their implementation is compatible with the local environment. This guidance will apply to all proposals for development and changes of use requiring planning permission.

Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside

6.31 POLICY CT/7

Within the designated Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside planning permission will be granted for uses where the proposal would not detract from the essentially undeveloped rural character of the landscape, damage natural features and landform or diminish the visual amenities afforded by important viewpoints by reason of:

- i) the introduction of prominent, visually obtrusive or incongruous elements by reason of poor siting, design construction and landscaping; or**
- ii) the use of materials or designs incompatible with the traditional vernacular or otherwise unsuitable due to their colour or reflective qualities;**
- iii) the removal of traditional buildings and structures, or particular elements of them, or other landscape features which contribute to the special character and appearance of the locality.**

Where development is acceptable in principle it will be expected to maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the landscape.

Proposals by statutory agencies involving the construction of large buildings or structures, including overhead power lines, will be acceptable where they are shown to be essential to operational requirements, and are located to minimise the visual impact on the landscape.

(See also in particular Policy CT/1)

- 6.32 The plan area contains three areas where the landscape is of sufficient quality to merit designation within an 'Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside' (A.P.A.C). Each definition continues beyond the local plan area into other districts. Within each defined area there may be pockets of relatively ordinary landscape but it is the overall area which functions as the defined APAC.
- 6.33 Each APAC possesses distinct characteristics. The Charnwood Forest area has an intimate character due to frequent and irregular changes in topography. It is an area largely free from dereliction with a rich ecological diversity, hard rock outcrops, extensive tracts of woodland, water features and dispersed farmsteads in the vernacular style. The widespread use of local building materials including Swithland slate and stone in many of the buildings in the small dispersed villages give the area a common theme and unique quality. Much of the designated area falls within the National Forest area where policies will be applied to enhance and diversify the landscape, enrich natural habitats, improve recreation and public access, and foster the aims of rural diversification in a manner compatible with the special landscape characteristics of this area.
- 6.34 The northern Wreake Valley is a small scale intimate valley landscape which for the most part retains much of its unspoilt rural character. North of East Goscote small largely unspoilt villages stand on the higher land either side of the valley, sitting comfortably in the landscape. From the higher land to the north-west and south-east fine views across the river valley can be enjoyed.

- 6.35 High Leicestershire is an extensive tract of upland landscape focused on Tilton-on-the-Hill to the east of the Borough. This landform extends into Charnwood around South Croxton to meet the lower lying landscape of the eastern edge of the Wreake Valley. The landform comprises three valleys where the Gaddesby, Queniborough and Barkby Brooks flow north-westwards eventually to join the River Wreake. On either side of these watercourses the land forms a series of ridgelines sloping down to the river valley. The area is characterised by dispersed farmsteads and small unspoilt villages like South Croxton, Barkby and Beeby. For the most part the area is unaffected by large scale built development. With the exception of Barkby Holt, tree cover is limited to strong planting along the brooks coupled with a few isolated stands of woodland. Visually the area forms the western edge of the more extensive area of High Leicestershire where pleasing long range views can be enjoyed across a broad sweep of countryside largely unspoilt by built development. More background information is set out in Technical Report No.1.
- 6.36 The specific guidance for the APAC provides an additional cover above other normally applicable policies. The range of appropriate uses is defined in policy CT/1. It will be applied to ensure development in the APAC is strictly controlled, and to safeguard those features which contribute to the special character and appearance of the designated areas.
- 6.37 The Charnwood Forest area is one of the most important areas of landscape, ecological and geological interest in Leicestershire. It is subject to pressures for change especially related to recreation and mineral extraction and is worthy of special protection. The Borough Council would support any efforts to designate the area, for example, as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value

6.38 POLICY CT/8

Within the Soar Valley area of local landscape value planning permission will be granted for development where the proposal would not damage the intimate pastoral character based on a water meadow landscape nor impair its ecological interest by reason of:

- i) the introduction of prominent, visually obtrusive or incongruous elements in terms of siting, design, construction and landscaping; or,**
- ii) the use of materials or designs incompatible with the river valley character or otherwise unsuitable due to their colour or reflective qualities;**
- iii) the removal of buildings and structures, or particular elements of them, or other landscape features which contribute to the special character and appearance of the locality;**

Where development is acceptable in principle it will be expected to maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the landscape.

(See also in particular Policy CT/9)

- 6.39 The valley of the River Soar is an important natural resource which also serves as a principal communications and settlement corridor. It is an area which faces continuing pressures for change from new road schemes, sand and gravel extraction, flood alleviation measures, the encroachment of urban development, demand for recreation and rural diversification. The river valley is flanked by the most densely populated parts of the Borough with about 60 per cent of its population living within a mile of either side of the valley.
- 6.40 The area is particularly vulnerable given its linear form, close proximity to settlements and the open nature of the landscape. Many parts are prominent in views from adjacent higher land. The traditional landscape qualities should be safeguarded from inappropriate development. All new development which demonstrates a need to locate in the 'Area of Local Landscape Value' will need to be sympathetic with the area's special character and appearance. It will also need to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the floodplain of the river Soar, and that any necessary compensatory measures are included as part of a proposal.

Environmental Improvement of the Countryside, Green Wedge and Areas of Local Separation

6.41 POLICY CT/9

In the determination of planning applications for development in the areas of countryside, green wedge and local separation, but in particular within the Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value and elsewhere in the Countryside Priority Area identified on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will seek to secure environmental improvements compatible with existing land-use activities in terms of:

- i) improvement of rights of way and off-road access for walkers, cyclist and horse-riders, as a co-ordinated network;
- ii) the protection or enhancement of traditional natural habitats of ecological value and the creation of new areas;
- iii) upgrading natural landscape cover of trees, hedges, woodland and other habitats using traditional plant species and other features;
- iv) implementation of countryside management projects;
- v) safeguarding or enhancement of key features of acknowledged archaeological or landscape interest;
- vi) reclamation of derelict land;
- vii) reducing the intrusiveness of existing unsympathetic development by securing comprehensive landscaping as part of any proposals for conversion or extension of buildings;
- viii) better integration of new development including transport schemes and service installations into the landscape.

(See also in particular Policies CT/1, CT/2, CT/3, CT/4, CT/5, CT/6, CT/7, CT/8)

6.42 The open land within the plan area is for the most part attractive or unspoilt. However there are areas which would benefit from improvement by the removal of unsightly features and creating better public access. Implementation of measures will create opportunities for informal recreation which take pressure off the most popular areas. The Countryside Priority Area is an area where improvements are required. The County Council's "Countryside 2000" document gives guidance on the conservation and enhancement of rural landscapes. Local Plans must include policies in respect of the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land and for improving the physical environment.

6.43 The Proposed Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value is an area in need of particular attention. Whilst much of the river valley is pleasant, in parts attractive, there are areas where the natural landscape requires regeneration and traditional management. The 'Wanlip Action Area Plan' and 'Management Scheme' for Watermead Country Park prepared by the County Council together with the Borough and Leicester City Councils has helped the successful restoration of the area of the valley penetrating the Leicester urban area where past sand and gravel extraction has ravaged the landscape. The preparation of an 'Improvement Scheme' for the 'Area of Local Landscape Value' could help safeguard and enhance the traditional qualities of the river valley. At the same time improved public access could increase the river valley's value for informal recreation and tourism. The river valley has a role to play as an alternative to Charnwood Forest for many informal recreation trips, using footpaths and rights of way with little or no harmful environmental impact. It is immediately accessible to people living in adjoining settlements. More background information is set out in Technical Report No.6.

6.44 The Environment Agency in August 2001 published a 'Soar Local Environment Agency Plan (LEAP) Consultation Report' for the river's catchment area. This sets out a framework for protecting and improving the local environment on a partnership basis with the intention to direct resources to where they are most needed. The aim is to ensure a balance is achieved between the conflicting demands placed upon this natural resource.

- 6.45 The measures should be seen as inter-dependent and the aim is to secure an acceptable balance between them to the benefit of the areas of open land. Measures will be implemented after they have been discussed and agreed with landowners and interested parties. The Local Plan guidance provides a general context for the assessment of individual schemes as they arise. The Borough Council will seek to negotiate contributions from development to the implementation of measures where this is reasonably and directly related to it. Where resources allow initiatives for specific improvements will be considered for direct funding.

Rural Diversification

6.46 POLICY CT/10

Planning permission will be granted for proposals to diversify the rural economy in locations outside the Limits to Development defined on the Proposals Map provided all the following criteria are met:

- i) **the proposal enables economic activity likely to retain or provide additional jobs in rural areas;**
- ii) **features of landscape, ecological or historic importance are properly safeguarded;**
- iii) **the proposal would not generate significant noise or, other nuisance problems;**
- iv) **levels of traffic generated would not be detrimental to the quality of the rural environment or highway safety;**
- v) **any new buildings and structures or extensions to existing buildings would be small-scale and essential for the proposed use.**

(See also in particular Policies CT/1 to CT/9 and CT/18)

- 6.47 The maintenance of the rural landscape depends on a successful rural economy. Structural changes taking place in agriculture suggest a continuing need to diversify away from traditional practices to achieve a stronger economic base and wider employment opportunities. However any change must not take place at the expense of the character and appearance of the countryside.
- 6.48 A range of alternative uses may be acceptable on existing farms and farmsteads such as processing farm produce and timber, craft manufacture and the repair and renovation of agricultural machinery, farm shops, direct sale of pick-your-own fruit and vegetables, holiday accommodation, catering, facilities for sport and recreation, education facilities related to farming/countryside issues, and livery for horses and ponies. Whilst large areas of land might be subject to diversification it is intended that new built development will be strictly controlled.

New Dwellings for Farm and Forestry Workers

6.49 POLICY CT/11

New housing development, including conversions, in locations outside the limits to development shown on the Proposals Map will be strictly controlled.

New permanent dwellings will be permitted where they support existing agricultural activities on well-established agricultural or forestry units, and provided all the following criteria are met:

- i) **suitable accommodation is not available on the unit or in the locality, and could not be provided by conversion of an existing farm building on the site; and**
- ii) **the dwelling is acceptable in terms of siting, size, design and external appearance and would not harm the character and appearance of the locality; and**
- iii) **functional requirements of the unit justify a full-time worker living on site.**

Temporary and removable agricultural accommodation will be granted where essential to support a new agricultural or forestry activity where the following criteria are met:

- a) it is demonstrated that there is clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise and that it is planned on a sound financial basis; and
- b) there is a proven functional need; and
- c) suitable accommodation is not available on the unit or in the locality; and
- d) the accommodation is in a location where a new permanent dwelling would be acceptable.

Temporary accommodation must be removed at the end of the permitted period if a new dwelling is not justified.

Any accommodation permitted will be subject to a condition limiting the occupation of the dwelling to a person solely, mainly, or last working in the locality in agriculture or forestry, a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependents.

Where the approved accommodation is an additional dwelling on a particular unit then as well as imposing an occupancy condition on that dwelling, the Borough Council will consider whether there is a need to impose the same or a similar condition on any existing dwellings on the unit which are under the control of the applicant.

- 6.50 New permanent residential accommodation in locations outside the defined limits to development will be restricted to those occasions where the specific needs of farm and forestry workers justify accommodation on the basis of a technical appraisal carried out before determining any planning application, and where the accommodation satisfies planning considerations including current government guidance as set out in Annex I to PPG7 'The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development'. For clarification, paragraph 15(b) of that guidance says that the need relates to a full time worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture.
- 6.51 In exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for mobile accommodation for a temporary period to help assist in the establishment of a farm or forestry enterprise, and a permanent dwelling would be appropriate. Such circumstances would usually be where it is clearly demonstrated and that the scale of investment and long-term commitment would enable the normal test of viability to be met by the end of the temporary period. If at the end of the temporary period a permanent dwelling is not justified the mobile accommodation must be removed. Caravans and mobile homes can have a detrimental effect on the environment and amenity value of an area and their location will be treated in the same way as a permanent dwelling.
- 6.52 The Borough Council will impose occupancy conditions to ensure that new accommodation and, where appropriate, existing accommodation on a farm unit are restricted to use by people suitably involved in farming or forestry or defined dependents.

Removal of Restrictions on Occupancy of Dwellings

6.53 POLICY CT/12

Planning permission for the retention of a dwelling without compliance with a condition restricting occupancy will not be granted unless the Borough Council can be satisfied that:

- i) a long term need for the occupancy condition no longer exists in the locality; and
- ii) there is clear evidence of a genuine effort having been made to sell or rent the dwelling to prospective occupiers able to comply with the occupancy condition.

- 6.54 Occupancy conditions are used to limit the occupation of dwellings in the rural areas to those for whom it is essential to live at or in the vicinity of their workplace; usually for those who work in forestry or agriculture. This approach will help avoid the proliferation of dwellings outside the defined Limits to Development.
- 6.55 An occupancy condition will only be removed if an applicant demonstrates the property has been marketed for a period of at least 18 months at a realistic price reflecting the location and condition of the property and that no interest has been shown in its occupation on a restricted basis.

Riding Stables, Kennels and Similar Establishments

6.56 POLICY CT/13

Proposals for loose boxes and stables for recreational purposes which do not require on-site supervision and management will be granted planning permission in locations outside the Limits to Development defined on the Proposals Map where they meet the following criteria:-

- i) any buildings and structures are of a design, siting and materials, and suitably landscaped, to harmonise with the character and appearance of a locality; and**
- ii) the proposed use would not result in traffic generation, noise, smell or other nuisance unacceptable in its effect on residential amenity, highway safety and the rural character of locality.**

Larger-scale proposals for riding stables and all proposals for kennels and similar establishments which because of their nature require full-time, on-site supervision and management will only be permitted where an acceptable scheme is submitted in association with, and in close proximity to, an existing dwelling.

- 6.57 Recreational and commercial schemes involving the care of animals are becoming increasingly popular in locations outside towns and villages. Where these schemes require planning permission the approach will be to ensure they are compatible with residential areas and there is not an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. This is in line with government guidance seeking to strictly control development in locations outside built-up areas. It is also consistent with the move towards farm diversification and other appropriate changes in the countryside.
- 6.58 In the case of larger scale proposals for riding stables, kennels and similar establishments there may be a need for residential accommodation to enable effective on-site supervision, management and ensure security. Such residential provision will not fall for consideration under the functional and financial tests set out in Policy CT/11, as these uses are not agriculture or forestry related. Rather it will be a requirement that residential needs are provided for in existing dwellings at the outset as part of an overall proposal. This will help avoid the cumulative and damaging effect of sporadic new developments in the countryside. The Borough Council may attach a condition to any planning permission tying the occupation of a dwelling to the related enterprise.
- 6.59 The use of existing farm buildings and erection of new buildings within existing groups of farm buildings would be the most effective means of reducing the landscape impact of such development, as well as securing beneficial use of buildings.

Replacement Dwellings

6.60 POLICY CT/14

Planning permission for the replacement of an existing dwelling in a location outside the Limits to Development will not be granted unless all the following criteria are met:

- i) the replacement would not result in the loss of a building acknowledged to be of local historic or architectural interest;**
- ii) the original building is unsuitable for habitation and/or not viable to repair;**

- iii) **the proposed replacement dwelling represents only a modest change in the size of the original property and is of a mass, height, colour, design and materials compatible with the traditional character and appearance of the locality;**
- iv) **the proposed replacement dwelling is on the site of the original dwelling or, if appropriate, in a siting elsewhere within the curtilage where there would be a less damaging visual impact and provided that the original dwelling is demolished;**
- v) **there is no increase in the number of dwellings on the site;**
- vi) **there would be no significant adverse impact on the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring properties.**

(See also in particular Policy EV/8)

- 6.61 Areas of open land outside the Limits to Development contain many dwellings of traditional design and construction which contribute to the area's character. Proposals to replace these existing dwellings can result in the loss of farmhouses and other traditional properties with their replacement by more substantial modern properties. The overall effect can be damaging to rural and visual amenities, and result in an increase in the number of new dwellings unrelated to traditional rural activities. Where buildings are Listed under the provisions of the Planning Acts the Borough Council can exercise statutory controls over their demolition. Elsewhere the powers available to the Council are limited but particular priority will be attached to the need to conserve and enhance buildings of local historic or architectural interest whose modest contribution to the rural landscape often belies their value.
- 6.62 Within the plan area it is envisaged that opportunities to replace existing dwellings will be restricted to exceptional circumstances. An example would be where an existing property is habitable but is uneconomic to repair because of structural problems.
- 6.63 Where the Borough Council is satisfied a replacement dwelling has been justified planning permission will be granted provided that the proposal harmonises with the character of appearance of a locality. Replacement dwellings should not increase the volume of the original property by more than 10 per cent. They must also achieve in their design a mass and form which can be absorbed in the landscape and avoid injury to the amenities of any other properties in the vicinity.

Conversion of Existing Rural Buildings

6.64 POLICY CT/15

Planning permission for the conversion of a building in a location outside the Limits to Development defined on the Proposals Map will not be granted unless development is able to satisfy the following criteria:

- i) **the form, mass, size and general design of the existing building and its relationship with other buildings in the locality is in keeping with its surroundings. Any proposed changes, including for vehicular access must be shown not to have a significant adverse affect on the landscape;**
- ii) **it is demonstrated the building has been built and used for the purpose for which it was originally approved for a reasonable period of time;**
- iii) **the building is in a structurally sound condition and of permanent and substantial construction. It must be capable of the proposed use or conversion without substantial, alteration, rebuilding and/or extensions;**
- iv) **the proposed use or conversion is designed to safeguard the essential character, form, setting and structure, of the building;**
- v) **the conversion would not lead to the dispersal of activity of a scale and nature which would prejudice the vitality of nearby towns and villages.**

Suitable uses for buildings in the countryside are those which assist the rural economy. Primarily these will relate to agricultural, employment, community, recreation or tourism uses.

Residential use will be approved where it is shown to be impractical to convert or re-use the building for other uses and where:

- a) **the building is worthy of retention being of acknowledged historic or architectural value;**
- b) **the proposed development involves minimal external change to the building;**
- c) **the creation of a residential curtilage around the building would not harm the character and appearance of the locality.**

Residential uses may also be appropriate as a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use in circumstances where the enterprise is completed before the residential element is occupied.

- 6.65 The reuse and conversion of existing buildings can assist agricultural diversification. However control is necessary to avoid the proliferation of inappropriate development in the countryside, Green Wedges and areas of local separation. Whilst reuse of rural buildings is able to promote rural enterprise and jobs, development will not be allowed on a scale in dispersed locations which would threaten the economic base of villages and towns. Residential use does not contribute to the rural economy and will only be considered favourably in exceptional circumstances in line with policies to restrict new housing outside the limits to development. Residential accommodation may be acceptable as part of mixed business development.
- 6.66 Applications for the conversion of recently constructed buildings will be carefully considered to establish whether they have been used for the purposes they were built.

Extensions to Existing Rural Dwellings

6.67 POLICY CT/16

Planning permission will be granted for a residential extension to a dwelling in a location outside the Limits to Development defined on the Proposals Map provided:

- i) **the existing dwelling is of permanent construction, substantially intact and shown to have a reasonable remaining life; and**
- ii) **the proposal is not damaging to the character and appearance of the existing building or the locality in terms of its mass, height, siting, colour, design or materials; and**
- iii) **it would not harm the amenities enjoyed by those living in any neighbouring properties.**

- 6.68 The addition of small-scale extensions to existing dwellings is usually likely to be acceptable. Larger extensions to properties located in areas of special character or prominent locations will not be permitted. Such extensions can be visually very damaging and appear as incongruous features in the landscape.

Extensions to Semi-Permanent Recreational Chalets

6.69 POLICY CT/17

Planning permission for extensions to semi-permanent recreational chalets in locations outside the Limits to Development, defined on the Proposals Map, will not be granted unless the development meets all of the following criteria:

- i) **the existing chalet is habitable and of a sound structural condition;**

- ii) **the existing chalet is one of group of similar chalets and not in an isolated location;**
- iii) **the proposed extension is of a design and materials appropriate to the existing chalet and suitable for the location; and**
- iv) **the proposed extension does not increase the height of the building and provides a modest increase in volume, of not more than 15 cubic metres with the increased volume only being permitted to provide for adequate sanitary arrangements.**

In granting planning permission the Borough Council may consider attaching a condition restricting the use of the chalet to recreational purposes.

- 6.70 The Borough contains sites of long-established recreational chalets usually of insubstantial construction in informal settings in the heart of the countryside. These chalets are used for weekend or holiday accommodation. It is the intention of the policy to resist proposals which would effectively make these properties into dwellings suitable for permanent use in locations where such a use would clearly be contrary to development plan policies. On this basis proposals for replacement properties or outbuildings requiring planning permission will not be granted. The approach seeks to reduce the number of inappropriate dwellings and so protect the character and appearance of the countryside.
- 6.71 The policy allows only for modest extensions to existing chalets, where the extra space would provide solely for adequate sanitary arrangements. Proposals of a more substantial nature which would have a greater adverse impact on the rural surroundings will be resisted.

Safeguarding Agricultural Land

6.72 POLICY CT/18

Development involving agricultural land must utilise land of the lowest practicable grade. Planning permission will not be granted for development which would utilise best and most versatile land unless it is demonstrated that:

- i) **there is an overriding need for the development; and**
- ii) **suitable land in urban areas or of grades below 3a is not available or has special significance which outweighs the agricultural land consideration.**

For all proposals land take will be restricted to that which is reasonably required for the proposed development. Applicants will also be expected to submit details showing the effect of the development on farm holdings. Where development would substantially erode farm viability and structure it will not be permitted unless justified under Policy CT/10.

- 6.73 The plan area contains significant areas of land of grades 2 and 3a in the best and most versatile category. This valuable and finite resource must be safeguarded for the future. Thus, in assessing proposals for development considerable weight will be given to safeguarding such land and it will only be released in limited circumstances. Once agricultural land is lost, even to soft uses, restoration of its original resource value is not usually practicable.

Intensive Livestock Units

6.74 POLICY CT/19

Applications involving intensive livestock units located in areas of countryside, green wedge, or local separation will be permitted in circumstances where a proposal is acceptable in principle and all the following criteria are met:

- i) **a proposal would provide adequate safeguards for local residents from problems related to traffic generation, noise, odours, air or water pollution, and visual intrusion;**

- ii) **the proposal would not pollute water resources;**
- iii) **the proposal includes a landscaping scheme showing how built development relates to its setting and incorporates landscaping and planting in a manner which conserves or enhances landscape and ecological value;**
- iv) **the scale, form, mass, design, colour and materials are sympathetic to the character and appearance of an area;**
- v) **the building would not result in the over concentration of such units harmful to amenity of settlements or areas of open land.**

(See also in particular Policies EV/33, EV/39, CT/1 to CT/5, CT/7, CT/8)

6.75 Intensive livestock units will only be acceptable in locations where they would not harm the character and appearance of a locality, where there would be minimal potential for conflict between neighbouring land uses, and the potential nuisance and pollution risk is minimised.

Improvements to Public Access

6.76 The Borough Council working in co-operation with landowners, the County Council, and other interested parties will support the achievement of a comprehensive network of public access routes for non-motorised modes in areas outside the limits to development and between these areas and the built-up areas. This will contribute to the overall transportation policy approach of this plan to reduce the need for car based travel by creating conditions where people will be more likely to use non-car modes. This network will be based on:

- i) creating and sustaining a comprehensive network of safe and interesting routes based on footpaths, bridleways and off-road cycle routes and country lanes;
- ii) providing carefully designed and located signposting and interpretation facilities to draw attention to scenic and interesting routes;
- iii) ensuring continuing and increased access compatible with the operations of farming and other locally based activities;
- iv) relieving recreation pressures on the most heavily used areas.

6.77 It will be important to work towards a comprehensive coverage of recreational routes providing safe access for walkers, horse-riders and cyclists. By spreading the availability of routes pressures will be eased on areas already heavily used such as parts of the Charnwood Forest.

6.78 Priority will be given to those areas located within the 'Countryside Priority Area' identified in the County Council's 'Countryside 2000' programme, and to those areas where demand is high and not matched by the level of provision.

6.79 Implementation of the Wanlip Action Area Plan and Watermead Country Park Management Scheme is an example of how improvements can be achieved.

6.80 The policy will be implemented by continuing discussion and co-operation between Leicestershire County Council, the Borough Council, Parish Councils, landowners, representatives of countryside users, and other interested parties.

Development Located in the National Forest

6.81 POLICY CT/20

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals and related planting within the National Forest area defined on the Proposals Map where:

- i) **the overall scheme does not conflict with restraint policies to safeguard the attractive rural character of the landscape;**
- ii) **the development is of a high quality with design, layout and materials reflecting traditional local architecture and the setting of the site in the National Forest;**

- iii) **an accompanying woodland planting scheme or other habitat measures provide a landscaped Forest setting appropriate to the scale and type of development and compatible with land uses and the ecological and landscape character of the Forest within the plan area; and**
- iv) **public access links are provided compatible with the scale and type of development and integrated with existing access routes in the Forest area.**

Other habitat measures may be considered favourably where:

- a) **they would be more appropriate in landscape and ecological terms; and**
- b) **the woodland planting is not required to screen the proposed development or for other specified reasons.**

Proposals for development other than housing and employment will be permitted provided that there is a clear and direct relationship between the development proposed and the establishment and maintenance of the Forest.

(See also in particular Policies CT/1, CT/6, CT/7 and CT/14)

- 6.82 The National Forest is a major initiative promoted by the Countryside Commission supported by local authorities in the Midlands. It is a unique concept of national importance opening up opportunities to enhance and diversify the landscape, enrich natural habitats, improve recreation and public access, and foster the aims of rural diversification. The National Forest covers over 500 square kilometres of land in Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. The local plan area contains the eastern margins of the Forest extending as far as The Outwoods, and Swithland Wood. The Countryside Commission's 'National Forest Strategy' forms the basis of planning policies for those parts of the plan area located within the National Forest.
- 6.83 Planting guidelines relating to development in the National Forest will be included in the Borough Council's 'Supplementary Planning Guidance'. These guidelines are intended to assist landowners and developers in negotiating and submitting schemes which accord with the Plan's policies.
- 6.84 That part of the National Forest in the local plan area is predominantly located within the Charnwood Forest Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside. Although the significance of the National Forest merits specific policies it must be emphasised that Forest related developments will only be permitted where they accord with national and local planning guidance to safeguard areas of special significance.
- 6.85 The Forest Strategy recognises that the National Forest within the Borough contains an already well-wooded landscape of great diversity, extensive ecological and historic interest and distinctive upland relief. Given the character of this part of the National Forest it will be undesirable to encourage significant afforestation related to new development. In this case the planting guidelines should be sufficiently flexible to allow a type and scale of landscape treatment appropriate to the particular locality.
- 6.86 The Strategy further recognises that the existing tracts of open land within the Charnwood Forest area often perform an important role in affording views which permit the appreciation of its varied relief and landscape character. Accordingly in certain areas extensive woodland planting in association with any new development would not be appropriate; existing grass or heath land habitats could be lost and important views could be impaired. In these circumstances the Borough Council will exercise a degree of discretion in the application of National Forest related policies to secure alternative habitat creation in place of woodland planting over an area equivalent to that required by the standard.
- 6.87 New housing and industrial development will be expected to provide woodland, or other agreed planting, to contribute to the Forest as well as benefit from the environmental benefits the Forest is expected to bring. Larger scale developments should provide significant planting. The emphasis will be on improving the landscape setting of sites within or adjacent to existing settlements, and their setting in the adjoining countryside. For industrial/commercial development substantial planting will be desirable along road frontages in the Forest area.

- 6.88 Any planning permission granted for proposals to re-use or adapt existing rural farm buildings within the Forest will need to provide a suitable planted setting sympathetic with the Forest's character. The conversion or re-use of buildings for new commercial, industrial, recreation and tourism uses would provide much needed rural employment. However conversion for residential purposes will be of less economic benefit and more likely to harm the Forest character.
- 6.89 Where new agricultural buildings are proposed in the Forest the Borough Council will seek the provision of adequate planting to ensure the building is properly screened and does not have an intrusive impact on the Forest landscape.
- 6.90 The main types of forest-related development likely to come forward in the National Forest are:
- i) operational activities such as car parks and interpretation facilities;
 - ii) tourism, recreation, sport and leisure activities requiring rural locations;
 - iii) restoration of mineral workings to woodland or other habitats, public open space or leisure uses;
 - iv) farm diversification involving land, existing rural buildings and, on occasions small-scale new development;
 - v) rural and forest enterprises for visitor attractions and businesses including timber processing, woodland products, local crafts, tree nurseries.
- 6.91 The policy is framed to ensure environmentally damaging development is not permitted in the National Forest area whilst allowing for appropriate developments compatible with the achievement of the Forest's objectives.
- 6.92 The Borough Council will secure the implementation of planting and landscaping schemes for developments approved within the National Forest area by conditions and/or by the negotiation of planning obligations depending on the individual circumstances of the application. These measures could relate to the means and timescale of implementation or the achievement of off-site planting. Where a developer is not able to provide the desirable level of off-site planting the Borough Council will consider the provision of a financial contribution in lieu of the cost of planting, to be paid into an off-site planting fund for use within the Forest area.
- 6.93 The Borough Council will fund schemes such as tree planting, habitat creation, improved public access or other initiatives in line with the general aims of the Forest Strategy prepared by the Countryside Commission in line with provision made in the Revenue Budget.

Maintenance and Management of New Planted Areas in The National Forest

6.94 POLICY CT/21

The Local Planning Authority will seek to negotiate agreements with developers to make secure arrangements by appropriate persons or bodies for the maintenance and management of planting and open space proposals associated with developments in the National Forest in line with best arboricultural practice. Dead, deceased or damaged trees and any failed planting will need to be replaced by the developer during the initial five year maintenance period.

- 6.95 Where woodland or other planting is provided in relation to specific development proposals it will be important that at the outset arrangements are in place, agreed with the Borough Council to ensure the long term maintenance and management of the areas to be planted. This is usually likely to be achieved by legal agreements, or by management agreements between the Borough Council and the appropriate bodies.

- 6.96 The Borough Council will seek to secure management agreements with landowners with respect to new and existing woodlands located in the National Forest taking into account all of the following factors:
- i) the aims of the National Forest;
 - ii) the interests of visual amenity;
 - iii) the interests of rural amenity;
 - iv) the desirability of maximising public access;
 - v) the principles of good woodland and habitat management.

CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Introduction

- 7.1 The existing transport network within the plan area relies on two major communication corridors along radial routes extending out from the Leicester urban area. The Soar Valley corridor including the A6, the London-Sheffield mainline railway, and the Grand Union Canal links Leicester and Loughborough. Along the Wreake Valley corridor run sections of the A607/A46 roads and that section of the Birmingham-Peterborough railway line between Leicester and Melton Mowbray. Elsewhere a network of minor roads connect smaller villages to the main road corridors, within and outside the Borough, and to the urban areas. The Great Central Railway between Birstall and Loughborough currently fulfils a recreational role only.
- 7.2 The land use policies and proposals of this Plan are closely related to future transportation requirements. Over the plan period there will continue to be a need for new roads and highway improvements, but increasingly an emphasis will be placed on providing for better public transport, safer cycling and pedestrian routes. The intention is to achieve an effective transport network providing choice in the means of transport for people and goods in the plan area with the aim of reducing reliance on private cars. This will only be achievable through the careful co-ordination of transport and land use planning.

Government Guidance

- 7.3 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires all plans to include land-use policies relevant to the management of traffic and also empowers local planning authorities to keep under review matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area. These include the communications and transport systems in their areas.
- 7.4 The White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' published in September 1990 set out a new environmental strategy expressing concerns over global warming and the need for energy conservation. With regard to transport a number of commitments were made including:
- to assess ways of locating development to reduce the distances travelled and increase transport choice;
 - to improve the operation of environmental impact assessment;
 - to improve environmental aspects of road design;
 - to avoid reliance on providing new road capacity to facilitate greater travel by car in already congested areas;
 - to improve local traffic management quality;
 - to continue support for public transport improvements and cycling as alternatives to the car.
- 7.5 PPG12 'Development Plans' carries forward the Government's approach in 'This Common Inheritance'. It states that development plans should include land-use policies and proposals relating to the development of the transport network and related services and the safeguarding of transport routes. They should indicate the timescale and priorities for proposed developments, specifically major road and railway projects. This guidance is outlined broadly in the approved Structure Plan, developed in more detail in this Local Plan and given practicable application through the submission of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) to Government. LTPs enable Government to assess proposals for investment and to make appropriate settlements for capital and other expenditure.

- 7.6 Guidance on 'Transport' (PPG13) published in March 1994 jointly by the Department of the Environment and the Department of Transport emphasises that Development Plans should encourage patterns of development and introduce complementary transport measures thereby giving people the choice of using more environment-friendly means than the car and reducing the need to travel. This can help reduce local air pollution from vehicle emissions as well as reducing other impacts on the environment while also, alleviating congestion. The guidance covers the range of factors influencing the need to travel, namely: residential density, settlement size and structure, neighbourhood planning, access to transport infrastructure and travel demand. A key aspect of this guidance is the importance of local authorities preparing and carrying out their land use planning and transport programmes in ways which will help reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys.
- 7.7 The Government has introduced Local Transport Plans (LTPs) as the appropriate format for local transport authorities to bid for transport funding. LTPs are comprehensive assessments of transport needs and proposals for specific areas covering public transport, cycling, walking and demand management to restrain vehicular movements.
- 7.8 The County/City Councils' successful LTP bid for Central Leicestershire includes proposals to extend transport choice into and within the city of Leicester. This is supported by the Central Leicestershire Strategic Transport Study (CALTRANS), the purpose of which is to develop a strategic transport model to assess the contributions that all modes of transport can make to future transport needs in Central Leicestershire in order to inform and justify subsequent package bids for the area. The 'Loughborough/Shepshed Package Bid' is now addressed in the County council's Leicestershire LTP. This places increased emphasis on demand management measures directed at reducing use of the private car to complement measures to make alternative modes more attractive. It is intended that preparation of this Local Plan and the LTP are moving towards a more sustainable transport strategy in line with PPG13 and subsequent government guidance.

The Leicestershire Structure Plan

- 7.9 The Structure Plan identifies fundamental links between land use and transport. The Plan encourages development in locations where people may be obliged to make only short journeys in undertaking their daily routine. In these circumstances people may be more inclined to walk or cycle but where they choose to use a car, journey lengths may be kept to a minimum. Additionally or alternatively the Plan aims to encourage new development in locations where good public transport provision is already available or can be easily developed on a commercially viable basis. The overall intention is to ensure that people are afforded a realistic choice in selecting the mode of transport most appropriately suited to their particular needs and resources. Through related improvements in public transport and provision for cyclists and pedestrians it is intended to encourage greater public acceptance and use of these modes to offset projected increases in private car usage.
- 7.10 Within Charnwood the Structure Plan aims to direct the majority of the new development towards the main urban areas of Leicester and adjoining settlements (including Birstall and Thurmaston), Loughborough and Shepshed, and to locations along specified Transport Choice corridors where frequent and efficient public transport services already exist or can be provided. The Borough is particularly well served for transport choice having within its boundaries sections of three of the five corridors identified in the County. The Structure Plan and related County Council initiatives propose to build upon these strategic advantages through a combination of:
- i) provision in all new development for bus penetration with priority or special access measures as necessary and the promotion of a "Quality Bus Initiative" along the former A6 route between Leicester and Loughborough;
 - ii) provision of suburban service railway stations. The stations now open at Barrow upon Soar, Sileby and Syston together with those planned at Thurmaston and East Goscote will develop fully the public transport potential of the rail based transport choice corridors; and
 - iii) provision for adequate, convenient and safe pedestrian and cycling facilities in all new development and existing urban areas.

- 7.11 If development has to be accommodated outside the specified corridors the Structure Plan indicates that it will need to be located in other corridors offering realistic transport choice usually in the form of a dedicated public transport route which penetrates an urban area. Notwithstanding the promotion of development and measures in support of improved transport choice provision, the Structure Plan acknowledges that a large proportion of trips within the County will continue to be made by road. For this reason improvements to the road network will be essential to deliver higher standards of safety and to remove congestion and delay. The County Council's Transport Policies and Programme which forms an annual bid for Government approval for funding prioritises various schemes for implementation on a rolling five year programme.

The Role of the Borough Council

- 7.12 The highway authority responsible for trunk roads and including most motorways is the Secretary of State for Transport. In the plan area this comprises the M1, A6 and A46. The Highways Agency provides day to day management of motorways and trunk roads on behalf of the Department of Transport, and comments directly to the local planning authority about development proposals in the plan area affecting these roads. The County Council performs similar functions to the Highways Agency for local roads. The Borough Council influences the use of transport in its role as local planning authority. Measures will be taken to control development likely to generate unacceptable traffic or environmental impacts, and to foster patterns of development and schemes with good accessibility for all types of transport.
- 7.13 The Borough Council is able to address transport issues at two levels:
- i) on matters of national significance or which affect other authorities such as new legislation or transport proposals which lie outside the administrative boundary, the Council is limited to comment as a consultee;
 - ii) in making decisions to implement its preferred policies and proposals for development control and the control of off-street car parking and taxi licensing.

Transport Issues in Charnwood

- 7.14 Perceived deficiencies in the highway network provoke considerable concern among the communities of the Borough. The highway fails to perform efficiently or effectively where the volume of traffic on particular roads exceeds the technical and/or environmental capacity for that route. When the technical capacity of a road and its junctions is exceeded congestion results. This is a cause for particular concern when the resultant delays are excessive or spread outside peak hours. Measuring environmental capacity is less easily defined but flows of traffic which exceed this capacity are damaging to the quality of life of neighbouring communities due to excessive noise, disturbance, fumes, dust and danger or the severance of communities.
- 7.15 The main local traffic problems have been identified through previous local plan exercises, consultations with Parish Councils and local people, discussions with the County Council as Highway Authority and on-site surveys. These problems which are readily apparent at peak hours may be summarised as follows:
- i) Loughborough: Congestion occurs along major roads into and through the Borough's main urban area. This is particularly evident on the A6(T) Leicester Road and Derby Road), the A60 (Nottingham Road), the A512 (Ashby Road) and links between including the A6004 (Epinal Way/Shelthorpe Road/Warwick Way). Traffic generated by committed developments in the area south of Loughborough has increased pressure on the road access into the south of the town.

There are localised problems in the north-eastern part of the town where terraced residential streets form part of the A60 (King Street/Wharncliffe Road/Queens Road), or otherwise act as primary routes serving the town's major employment areas (Ratcliffe Road/Nottingham Road).

In the town centre present routes require improvement if future development prospects are not to be heavily constrained.

- ii) Shepshed: Much of the highway network in and around Shepshed is of a poor standard. The settlement has experienced substantial growth in recent years bringing further traffic with no significant improvement to the road network serving the central area. It would not be desirable to introduce more traffic onto this road network which does not appear capable of realistic improvement.
- iii) Soar Valley Villages: Implementation of traffic calming and management measures along the old A6 corridor complementary to the A6 Quorn-Mountsorrel Bypass have reduced many local problems of heavy through traffic flows in Quorn and Mountsorrel. Elsewhere there remains no direct flood-free link between Sileby and Cossington and the A6 bypass avoiding Barrow upon Soar.
- iv) Wreake Valley Villages: The A46 and A607 both feed into the Thurmaston bypass and Melton Road. This is the only major road into Leicester between the already congested A6 through Birstall and the A47 into eastern Leicester. Even with the new Syston Northern Bypass the limited capacity on the A46 south of Syston remains a problem. At peak periods there is considerable congestion and delay. As a result traffic is increasingly using as an alternative the minor roads through Queniborough, Barkby and Beeby to the detriment of village amenities and highway safety.
- v) Birstall: Following the opening of the A46 Leicester Western Bypass in November 1995 there was a slight reduction in traffic on the A6 through Birstall. However current flows, in common with all radial routes in and out of the City, are still very high and typically about 24,000 vehicles per day.

Between 1997 and 2000 daily traffic flows on the A6 have risen by about 5%. This is within the nationally predicted trend of 2% to 8% for this period. The future traffic demands are nevertheless likely to increase on this important radial route into the City as a result of the committed development allocations along the Soar Valley corridor and in Loughborough. As Beaumont Leys develops in the City traffic flows are expected to increase along Greengate Lane in the absence of any alternative route or remedial measures.

The Central Leicestershire Local Transport Plan recognises the need to provide good alternatives to travel by car. The LTP therefore sets out a strategy for a series of park and ride sites and bus priority measures to serve city based travellers on the northern and western radial routes into the City. One of the potential locations for a park and ride site is adjacent to the A6 north of Birstall.

- vi) Anstey: In Anstey there is congestion around The Nook, particularly at peak periods, due to high volumes of traffic and a poor junction layout. Studies indicate that this is due, in large part, to significant volumes of commuter traffic diverting off the more congested A6 and A50. The completion of the A46 Leicester Western Bypass is expected to reduce traffic through the village centre.
 - vii) Heavy Lorry Movements: The continuing, heavy flows of lorries through some local communities has created environmental problems. Problems are most apparent on east-to-west routes through villages such as Wymeswold on the A6006, and Burton on the Wolds on the B676.
- 7.16 Bus patronage nationally has been in steady decline over many years. Currently commercial services focus on urban and inter-urban routes and almost always operate throughout the main day time period. Rural bus services have not been able to match the mobility offered by the car. In some areas a minimum service can only be maintained with County Council subsidy. Evening services in general do not meet people's needs.
- 7.17 Accessibility to rail services has seen significant improvements. There is one main-line station, at Loughborough, on the Sheffield-London line. In early 1994 stations opened at Barrow upon Soar, Sileby and Syston as Phase 1 of the Ivanhoe Line. Passenger services currently operate between Loughborough and Leicester.
- 7.18 Use of non-motorised modes (walking and cycling) has declined as car-use has increased and roads have become more congested. Pedestrians using central areas have to circulate in traffic dominated environments.

Aims and Objectives

- 7.19 In overall terms the Local Plan seeks to provide a policy framework for transport issues which meets the following aims:
- i) to promote an integrated land use and transportation strategy with the aim of enabling the provision of appropriate infrastructure so as to reduce the need for dependence upon the private car and support the viability of existing and proposed public transport services in the interests of encouraging sustainable development and in support of the transport choice strategy.
 - ii) to support the Government's proposed motorway and trunk road improvements and the County Council's Transport Policies and Programme with a view to securing the implementation within the plan period of particularly those programmed schemes which offer wider benefits through the relief of heavy traffic flows in environmentally sensitive locations.
 - iii) to provide for the management of traffic and extension of traffic calming measures in the interests in particular of pedestrians and cyclists.
- 7.20 The policies and proposals for transport set out in the rest of this chapter address the following objectives:-
- i) to ensure the provision and maintenance of an efficient, effective and safe road network within the Borough;
 - ii) to tackle problems arising from delay and congestion on the main road network and the unacceptable impact of traffic in environmentally sensitive locations;
 - iii) to encourage in new development measures to improve bus penetration and provision for cyclists and pedestrians to broaden transport choice and reduce dependency on the private car;
 - iv) to safeguard opportunities for the development of rail transport;
 - v) to introduce positive measures for the promotion of public transport, walking and cycling;
 - vi) to manage traffic in the interests of improving the quality of the environment; and
 - vii) to secure adequate provision for car parking and servicing.
- 7.21 The aims and objectives represent a gradual shift in transport policy rather than a radical change. The movement away from the present high reliance on the car is fundamental to sustainability objectives. If changes are postponed to some future date they may be less effective or come at higher cost because traffic growth has been allowed to continue creating even worse congestion and related environmental damage.

The Specified Road Network (SRN)

7.22 POLICY TR/1

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in serious congestion on the Specified Road Network or otherwise prejudice its ability to provide for the safe and most efficient movement of traffic within the Borough. The County's Specified Road Network within Charnwood Borough as shown on the Proposals Map includes the following roads:

- i) **Motorway and Trunk roads: M1, A6(T), A46(T);**
- ii) **All other 'A' Class Roads: (A512, A60, A6004, A6006, A607, A5630), and the B5350 (Forest Road/Woodgate/Southfield Road/Royland Road – Loughborough).**

Other new road schemes which become operational within the plan period may provide additions to the specified road network and supersede existing elements.

- 7.23 The Specified Road Network (SRN) includes the principal roads carrying the majority of traffic in the Borough. As identified the SRN currently receives the majority of new investment of highways in order to improve safety and capacity. This allows traffic calming and other environmental improvements to be introduced in other areas. In those cases where new road schemes supersede sections of the network currently identified the classification of relevant sections will be amended when the Plan is reviewed.
- 7.24 If traffic generated by any individual development or in combination with that from other developments gives rise to excessive congestion or delay on the Specified Road Network the transportation costs to business and commerce will be inflated and motorists will be inclined to seek out alternative routes. These secondary routes by definition will be of a lower design standard and therefore less capable of satisfactorily accommodating heavy traffic flows without undesirable environmental consequences and additional hazards to road users and affected communities.
- 7.25 Where roads or road improvements are proposed in addition to those included in the national road programme and the County Council's programme or in association with new developments, the Borough Council, when consulted, will consider their environmental impact, the need for the scheme including the likely levels of traffic relief and extra traffic generation, the means of funding and the implications for improving transport choice in the Borough. New schemes will be judged in relation to their capacity to:
- i) improve public safety;
 - ii) protect communities from large volumes of unnecessary traffic;
 - iii) provide relief in urban areas which enable environmental improvement such as pedestrian preference schemes;
 - iv) achieve significant and sustainable environmental benefits in terms of need, routing, scale, design and layout;
 - v) avoid prejudice to the implementation of other road schemes already programmed;
 - vi) contribute to the overall availability of transport choice and avoid inducing additional traffic and increasing pressures on other parts of the road network.
- 7.26 Over the plan period it is likely some existing traffic problems will worsen, or new problems emerge, as traffic flows increase. Higher volumes of traffic on inadequate roads, heavy lorries in sensitive areas, and pressure on particular junctions, will be the obvious signs of such problems.
- 7.27 Where road-related measures are proposed to tackle the most significant and pressing problems they may be considered favourably where a need is demonstrated, the anticipated benefits outweigh the environmental and economic costs and no other means is realistically available to remedy the particular problem.

Safeguarding Areas for Programmed Strategic Road and Highway Improvement Schemes

7.28 POLICY TR/2

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the construction of new roads or the improvement of the existing highway infrastructure within the reservations shown on the Proposals Map and listed below:

Road Schemes

- i) A6004 Epinal Way Extension to the A6 south of Loughborough;**
- ii) A6 Loughborough Inner Relief Road between Bridge Street and Barrow Street;**
- iii) A607 Rearsby Bypass.**

Highway Improvement Schemes

- iv) **M1 Widening;**
- v) **A512 Ashby Road, Loughborough (between J23 of the M1 and the A6004 Epinal Way roundabout);**
- vi) **A6004 Epinal Way/Warwick Way, Loughborough (between Ling Road and A6 Derby Road);**
- vii) **Greenclose Lane, Loughborough (north west of Ashby Road to the Rushes).**

(see also in particular Policy CA/5)

Road Schemes

- 7.29 The Local Plan identifies reservations to safeguard from development the land required for new road schemes proposed by the Highway Authority for which provisions are made in the Structure Plan.
- 7.30 The Epinal Way Extension scheme as approved by the County Council comprises a single carriageway design from the end of the Quorn/Mountsorrel Bypass to a roundabout junction with the distributor road that will serve the proposed south of Loughborough housing development. The section from this junction northwards to the Park Road/Shelthorpe road roundabout is of dual carriageway design. The overall scheme has related landscaping and noise attenuation measures, crossing facilities and a segregated, joint cycleway/footway. Its implementation should benefit Shelthorpe Road and the A6(T) south of Shelthorpe Road, start to remove primary route traffic from the A6(T) through the town centre, enable the introduction of measures to improve access to the town centre along the A6(T) for non-car modes and facilitate the proposed residential development south of Loughborough.
- 7.31 The Epinal Way Extension will be fully funded by the south of Loughborough housing development.
- 7.32 The Loughborough Inner Relief Road will not of itself solve the problems of traffic circulation and congestion within the town. The road is intended only to provide an alternative to the existing town centre section of the A6 and to this extent it may be more appropriately regarded primarily as a traffic management measure. Problems caused by existing traffic flows and any growth will need to be addressed in other ways including the A6004 Epinal Way Extension, related highway improvements and the encouragement of alternative modes of transportation.
- 7.33 At present too many uncertainties remain to permit the design of a detailed scheme for a Loughborough Inner Relief Road. However, it is envisaged that the majority of the length of the road should be of single carriageway with dualling only being necessary at Bridge Street and between Barrow Street and Pinfold Gate. It is considered that some element of dualling will be unavoidable in that the new road will have to cater for existing junction traffic, plus A6 diverted traffic together with traffic generated from the identified "opportunity sites". The detailed design of the scheme, including provision for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, will be the subject of further public consultation at the appropriate time. The Borough Council considers that it will be particularly important in finalising the design details for the Inner Relief Road to ensure that provision is made for cyclists and that frequent, adequate and safe pedestrian crossing facilities are provided to safeguard access for the benefit of those communities severed from the town centre by the new highway.
- 7.34 The scheme currently shows a very favourable rate of economic return which would suggest that it is deserving of a higher priority in the County Council's Roads Programme than it is presently assigned. A major attribute of the Inner Relief Road proposal is the very real prospect of attracting significant private sector funding through the enablement of potentially highly prestigious redevelopment initiatives within the identified opportunity sites and on other potential sites situated adjacent to the proposed road. Considerable redevelopment value is presently constrained by the twin disadvantages of severance from the core commercial area and inadequate vehicular access. In view of these factors the County Council may be persuaded to revise its roads programme in order to supplement any private sector contributions which may emerge over the plan period to enable the earlier implementation of the Inner Relief Road on a joint funding basis.

- 7.35 Planning permission was originally granted in 1992 for the approved route of an A607 Bypass of Rearsby extending from the eastern end of the Syston Northern Bypass to the existing A607 north east of Rearsby. The scheme is included in the Central Leicestershire LTP programme and construction should start in 2004.
- 7.36 The current A6006 through Wymeswold is of a poor standard and passes through a designated Conservation Area of high townscape value. Although the scheme is included in the adopted Structure Plan for construction by 2006 the County Council has not progressed the scheme. It is very unlikely to be funded publicly over the plan period. Given this context and the absence of development pressure along potential routes no corridor is safeguarded in this Plan.

Highway Improvements

- 7.37 In November 1996 the scheme to widen the M1 between junctions 21A and 23A was withdrawn from the Trunk Road Programme. Provision remains for hill climbing lanes on sections of this route, including for the southbound carriageway south of J23 in the plan area.
- 7.38 The principle and extent of the improvement lines along Ashby Road, Epinal Way and Warwick Way in Loughborough was established through the Loughborough Local Plan. These reservations give scope for improvements to the town's infrastructure consistent with the emerging TPP 'Loughborough/Shepshed' Package strategy. They could allow for bus lanes, even segregated bus ways, and cycle lanes rather than additional road capacity. Improvement works are currently dependent upon public funding but private sector contributions could emerge from related development.
- 7.39 The improvement of Greenclose Lane would enable traffic circulation to be improved and permit the implementation of priority measures for buses and cyclists as part of wider measures to improve the town centre. The reservation is intended to facilitate such improvement.

Local Highway Improvement Schemes in Loughborough

7.40 POLICY TR/3

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the implementation of the local improvement schemes listed below within the reservations identified on the Proposals Map:

- i) **Southfields Road (between Packe Horse Lane and Albert Street);**
- ii) **Empress Road (north east of the Little Moor Lane junction);**
- iii) **Swingbridge Road (west side).**

Where permitted by redevelopment proposals the opportunity will be taken to secure these local improvements to enable the highway to fulfil its local traffic function more effectively and/or make pedestrian circulation easier and safer.

- 7.41 Southfields Road forms part of the gyratory road system serving the town centre. The reservation along Southfield Road safeguards land which would enable improvements along the route consistent with more sustainable transport policies. This could include, bus priority measures, or cycle lanes. The reservation would be enforced where redevelopment opportunities arise during the plan period. The scheme merits a specific policy given Southfields Road's importance in Loughborough's town centre road system.
- 7.42 The Empress Road and Swingbridge Road schemes are seen as necessary improvements to the road network in Loughborough to accommodate the demands and requirements of modern motor traffic. Where frontages are proposed for redevelopment the opportunity will be taken to achieve highway improvements along the identified sections of road.

Roads and Highway Improvements to be provided in Association with New Development

7.43 POLICY TR/4

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the following road and highway improvements which are required in association with specific allocations for development:

- i) a local distributor road from a new junction north of No. 148 Cotes Road to Willow Way, Barrow upon Soar;
- ii) a local distributor road routed to the south of Dishley Pool between Bishop Meadow Road, Loughborough and the north of Dishley Grange, Hathern which allows for an independent access to the Astra Charnwood site routed to the north of Dishley Pool;
- iii) the diversion and re-alignment of the A6 to provide a dual carriageway section of road to the north-west of Dishley Grange, Hathern to include a roundabout link to the new distributor road;
- iv) a local distributor road between Meadow Lane and Nottingham Road, Loughborough.

(See also in particular Policies H/1(b)[re i]),, E/5(c)[re ii) and iii)] and E/10 [re iv)]

7.44 None of the schemes listed in this policy is provided in any programme for public investment but each is required in association with specific proposals for development advanced elsewhere in this local plan. It is expected that the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions from developers to fund these improvements, secured through planning agreements and in accordance with the rules governing planning obligations.

7.45 The new local distributor road at Barrow upon Soar (item i)) is required to service a new housing development (H/1(b) applies). The proposed employment area at Dishley Grange, Hathern will require provision of a new distributor road (item ii)) and diversion and re-alignment of the A6 (item iii)) to provide access. Design of a new distributor road must allow for the implementation of an independent access road to the AstraZeneca site. The independent access road will need to be designed to minimise impact on the environment in terms of noise and visual intrusion and to safeguard wildlife and ecological interest in the vicinity of Dishley Pool.

Transport Standards for New Development

7.46 POLICY TR/5

Planning permission will be granted for development which is, or forms part of a larger scheme, for 25 or more dwellings, in excess of 1 hectare (2.5 acres) of employment land, or other proposals likely to function as a major trip generator where the development:

- i) is in an urban location well served, or capable of being well served, by non-car modes and having short walking, cycling and public transport links to town and district centres or existing rail stations;
- ii) ensures that the needs of buses are met by provision of a road layout providing maximum penetration of the development by bus services with all parts of the site falling within approximately 400 metres of a potential bus route, with bus-shelters, bus lay-bys and information points provided at main stops;
- iii) ensures the needs and safety of pedestrians are met in terms of access to the site and the inclusion of an integrated public footpath system which avoids roads wherever possible and provides pedestrian friendly links between the main land uses within the site, linkages with the established network outside the site, and safe road crossings where needed;

- iv) **ensures that the needs and safety of cyclists are met in terms of access to the site and the inclusion of special features such as cycleways, cycle lanes, safe cycle crossings and direct links between land uses, and between the site and adjoining cycleway provision;**
- v) **makes adequate provision for vehicular access and circulation, highway design and layout and servicing arrangements. In approving detailed housing layouts the Borough Council will expect schemes to utilise the lowest order of road compatible with the scale of development to be served.**

7.47 This policy provides guidance on the road layout, public transport provision, footways and cycle access to be sought in new developments. It is complementary to sustainability and transport choice objectives, and is framed to ensure satisfactory access for all travel modes, and avoid over-dominance by provision for road traffic. Detailed guidance is contained in the 'Highway Requirements for Development' prepared by Leicestershire County Council and Borough Council's 'Supplementary Planning Guidance'. Consultations on planning applications will be undertaken with the Highway Authority prior to their determination.

Traffic Generation from New Development

7.48 POLICY TR/6

Planning permission will not be granted for development on non-designated sites where the impact of traffic generated by an individual proposal or the cumulative impact together with other committed and allocated development in the locality would:

- i) **result in unsafe and unsatisfactory operation of the highway system; or**
- ii) **have a significant adverse impact on the environment.**

Unless measures are proposed to overcome any harmful effects. Where such measures involve improvements to the transport system they will need to be environmentally acceptable, minimise land take and have a reasonable design life.

In all cases measures should help to reduce car use to and from development and contribute to genuine and effective transport choice facilities through the encouragement of walking, cycling and the use of public transport for occupiers jointly or separately.

7.49 New development must be acceptable in terms of its impact on the existing highway network. Solutions to identified problems will be expected to improve the overall transport system rather than merely pursue road-based solutions. Development proposals should ensure that the impact of traffic generated, access arrangements, related road schemes and improvements, and other transport infrastructure safeguards the environment. Proposals should not have a damaging impact on the character and appearance of a locality. Features such as country lanes, areas of historic, ecological or other interest should be safeguarded. Living and working conditions should be safeguarded from the effects of visual intrusion, noise, emissions and other disturbance.

7.50 Developments will not be permitted which would add unacceptably to congestion and delay, generate additional on-street car parking and manoeuvring, or damage local amenities particularly in residential areas. Sites which have good access to existing public transport systems will usually be favoured for new developments. In all cases the potential effects of traffic generation on road safety will need to be assessed and the adopted highway standards met in relation to matters such as access, visibility and junction design taken fully into account.

7.51 Traffic Impact Assessments will be required for any proposals for development which would in part, or in total, generate:

- over 250 vehicle movements per day or 50 vehicle movements in the peak hour; or
- traffic exceeding 10 percent of the traffic flows on the adjoining highway, or 5 percent where traffic congestion exists or will exist; or

- a large proportion of the additional vehicles as heavy good traffic.

Measures need to be implemented, particularly in peripheral locations to restrain commuter parking, reduce traffic generation and to encourage employees to think and act more environmentally in their choice of transport. Commuter Plans and travel plans have a role to play in reducing use of the private car. The Borough Council has resolved to prepare a Commuter Plan for its employees and wishes to see other employers undertaking similar exercises with their employees.

Public Transport

Buses

- 7.52 Public transport is a less environmentally damaging means of travel than the car. By increasing the number of people using bus and rail less people should need to use cars. This can help reduce congestion and delay on local roads particularly during peak hour movements into the main urban areas. A central part of the transport strategy of the Local Plan is to manage road space to give priority on key routes to those means of travel which cause least harm to the environment such as buses and bicycles.
- 7.53 A continued dependence on measures to accommodate cars is not sustainable in the long term as growth in car ownership will rapidly fill any capacity in the road network including that provided by new roads and highway improvements. Public transport will only become more popular if it is attractive and accessible to potential users. With greater patronage of public transport there is more likelihood of further investment in better services and facilities.
- 7.54 Increased investment in buses as a means of transport should lead to better financial returns from greater patronage, and over time, more investment to extend and improve the network.

Improving Bus Services and Facilities

7.55 POLICY TR/7

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the successful implementation of measures to secure high quality bus services. These measures include bus ways, bus lanes and other bus priority measures, bus lay-bays and passenger facilities to enable journeys to work, shopping trips and other trips for recreation, health, education and social activities to be made.

Measures will be focused on the following bus routes:

- i) **Loughborough town services;**
 - ii) **Leicester/Loughborough/Shepshed via the A6 and A512;**
 - iii) **Leicester/Melton Mowbray via the A46 and A607;**
 - iv) **Loughborough/Nottingham;**
 - v) **Loughborough/East Midlands Airport via the A6.**
- 7.56 Buses have an important role to play in the Plan's sustainable transport strategy. Greater use of buses, especially at peak periods, can help ease congestion. The 'Quality Bus Initiative' started in Central Leicestershire has now been extended to Loughborough/Shepshed. In October 1996 a 'Quality Bus Partnership' was launched between local authorities and the bus operators. This aims to provide better on-route facilities and information, bus priority measures, better termini, more lay-bays, shelters and stops. Operators are introducing high quality buses. It is intended to extend the initiative to the A6 transport choice corridor between Loughborough and Leicester to achieve and maintain a high level of accessibility.

- 7.57 The Soar and Wreake Valley sub areas have a total population of over 100,000 including Loughborough, living in close proximity to a network of bus routes serving Leicester and Loughborough and linking to other County Towns. There is considered to be great potential in these areas to secure modal shift away from cars to bus (and rail). Improved bus services and facilities are a key component of both the successful 'Central Leicestershire' package and the current 'Loughborough/Shepshed' package bid included in the highway authorities LTPs. The Borough Council will support the introduction of bus priority measures.

An Improved Bus Station in Loughborough

7.58 POLICY TR/8

Planning permission will be granted for proposals for the rationalisation and/or relocation of the bus station site at Fennel Street, Loughborough to provide an improved central bus station. This will be secured either by Borough Council funding and/or by seeking to negotiate funding from related redevelopment.

- 7.59 The current bus station is outdated, unsatisfactory and not attractive to bus users and service operators given its location, layout and appearance. Its image would be greatly improved by rationalisation, redevelopment or relocation to provide attractive passenger facilities. Any relocation would need to be centrally placed in relation to the town centre and potential users. In August 1996 the Borough approved a scheme to provide new stands with seating and wider lanes for possible implementation in 1997/98. The bus station would remain in broadly the same location.
- 7.60 This does not rule out other development related proposals. Discussions will be held with bus operators, prospective developers and other interested parties to secure an improved central bus station by negotiation sponsored by related redevelopment.

Bus/Rail Interchange next to Loughborough Station

7.61 POLICY TR/9

Planning permission will be granted for a bus/rail interchange next to Loughborough rail station in the location shown on the Proposals Map.

(See also in particular policies E/10,E/11)

- 7.62 The Town's railway station is located on the north-eastern edge of Loughborough, remote from many users, and separated from the town centre by busy roads. Links by bus are not well developed.
- 7.63 Provision of a bus/rail interchange next to the station would create a significant public transport node in the town. This would help increase the attractiveness of bus and rail to local people and bridge the gap between the potential users, the town centre and the rail station.
- 7.64 The successful 'Single Regeneration Budget' (SRB) bid provides for Phase 1 of a redevelopment scheme in the Burder Street area. This provides the impetus for creating a Ratcliffe Road relief road between Nottingham Road and Meadow Lane, wider redevelopment opportunities, and provision of the interchange. Details of the interchange will be negotiated with Railtrack and the bus operators. Improvements will also be sought for rail users arriving at the station by cycle, on foot, for taxis and for people with disabilities.

Rail

- 7.65 Improved local rail services are able to offer a fast and direct travel service and should attract current car-users. New stations provided by the County Council at Barrow upon Soar, Sileby and Syston as part of the development of the Leicestershire rail network operate on the new provincial service running between Nottingham, Loughborough, Leicester, Nuneaton and Coventry (The Ivanhoe Service). The service will eventually link Leicester to Derby via Coalville and Burton on Trent.

- 7.66 The County Council intends to provide additional stations at Thurmaston and East Goscote when resources permit to extend the suburban rail service.

Safeguarding Areas for New Railway Stations

7.67 POLICY TR/10

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the provision of a railway station at Thurmaston within the reservation shown on the Proposals Map.

- 7.68 Development proposals likely to prejudice the provision of a new station and related infrastructure at Thurmaston will be resisted. The Thurmaston station is intended to be primarily a “walk and ride” facility. Accordingly no provision is made in the safeguarded area for car parking. However, in the interests of promoting sustainable alternatives provision should be made for the secure parking of cycles in association with the development of the station.
- 7.69 At East Goscote because of technical difficulties in identifying a suitable location for a station and the likelihood that provision would not take place before 2006, the plan does not include a reservation for a station. This issue will be investigated further in the context of the review of the local plan.
- 7.70 Where improvements to car parking are desirable to alleviate problems, contributions may be sought from developers where this would be reasonably and directly related to the proposed development. This approach is not pursued in the case of the proposed Thurmaston Station as land allocations in the Plan in the vicinity are relatively small and there are other priorities for the lower level of contributions likely to be available.

Safeguarding the Midland Mainline and Leicester to Peterborough Railway Corridors

7.71 POLICY TR/11

Planning permission will not be granted for development on land alongside the Midland and Leicester to Peterborough Railway Lines where this would prejudice the provision of additional transport routes and facilities in the future.

- 7.72 The two railway corridors provide two of the three transport choice corridors identified in the Borough. Over the plan period there is the possibility of providing additional public transport facilities, cycle routes and freight facilities alongside the railways. Development will not be allowed if it would create a barrier to any such provision in the future.

Safeguarding the Great Central Railway Corridor

7.73 POLICY TR/12

Planning permission will not be granted for development on land along the Great Central Railway corridor where this would prejudice its operation as a railway, or its ability to provide additional transport routes and facilities in the future.

- 7.74 The Great Central railway presently provides a recreational railway route between Birstall and Loughborough. There is potential to eventually restore the link to the north between Loughborough and Ruddington.
- 7.75 In the future the use of Light Rapid Transport (LRT) could be considered along part of this corridor as a means to improve the quality and range of public transport facilities in the City.
- 7.76 There is also scope to extend the existing cycleway which runs alongside the trackside in Birstall.

- 7.77 The intention of the safeguarding policy is to ensure the future availability of this route is not removed in new development schemes.

Opportunities for Additional Rail Facilities along the Midland Mainline and Leicester to Peterborough Railway Corridors

- 7.78 The Borough Council will support new passenger rail stations, rail freight accesses or other rail-based facilities along the Midland Mainline and Leicester to Peterborough railway lines where there would not be problems because of proximity to existing rail-based facilities, the environmental impact of a proposal is sympathetic to the site and its surroundings and such proposals would conform with the policies of this Plan.
- 7.79 Higher use of railways for people's travelling needs and the movement of freight will reduce the levels of traffic on the road network. In addition to already proposed new stations there may be opportunities to provide additional rail-based facilities during the plan period. A new railhead is proposed at Barrow upon Soar to serve the British Gypsum development.

Cycling and Walking

- 7.80 The Plan seeks to provide a better and safer environment for personal mobility and to encourage the use of alternatives to the car. This applies in housing areas, at work, in town centre and recreational areas.
- 7.81 It is important that new development should provide for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and people with restricted mobility such as those with a physical handicap, the elderly, people with pushchairs and wheelchairs. This will be especially important for community and entertainment uses, housing areas, shops, hotel, guest houses and other holiday accommodation, recreation facilities and working areas of offices and factories.

Access for Cyclists and Pedestrians

7.82 POLICY TR/13

The Borough Council will seek to develop its strategy for a network of pedestrian and cycle routes by direct funding and through development proposals in this Plan. The Borough Council will also seek to negotiate contributions to secure off site connections into and improvements to the wider networks of footways and cycle routes where this is practicable and directly related to development schemes. Planning permission will not be granted for development schemes that fail to comply with briefs designed to develop the strategy or to meet the standards for footway and cycle routes contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Routes along which measures will be encouraged to make cycling safer and more attractive and which will be protected from development proposals likely to prejudice their use for cycling are shown on the Proposals Map.

The proposed routes for cycle measures are:

- i) Woodbrook Way, Loughborough;**
- ii) Burleigh Way, Loughborough;**
- iii) Blackbrook Way, Loughborough;**
- iv) Grand Union Canal Towpath, Loughborough;**
- v) Charnwood Water, Loughborough;**
- vi) Epinal Way extension, Loughborough/Quorn;**
- vii) Shelthorpe Road, Loughborough;**
- viii) Warwick Way, Loughborough;**

- ix) **A512 Ashby Road, between Shepshed and Loughborough;**
- x) **Baxter Gate, Loughborough;**
- xi) **Fairmeadow development to town centre via Park Road/Beacon Road, Loughborough;**
- xii) **National Cycle Network Millennium Route via Shepshed Loughborough and the Soar Valley/Charnwood Forest;**
- xiii) **Woodthorpe to Woodhouse;**
- xiv) **Land north of Birstall with linkages to the established network;**
- xv) **Syston to East Goscote along A607 corridor;**
- xvi) **Castle Hill Country Park in Leicester to Anstey and Thurmaston and Charnwood Forest;**
- xvii) **Alan Moss Road/Belton Road to railway station, Loughborough;**
- xviii) **Kirkstone Drive to Ashby Road to Gorse Covert, Loughborough;**
- xix) **Meadow Lane to town centre, Loughborough;**

Other schemes may be identified within the plan period as additions and extensions to the network.

(See also in particular Policies H/1, H/2 & E/5)

- 7.83 The Plan promotes the development of a comprehensive Boroughwide network of footways serving local and long distance movements. This will be based on the existing rights of way network and complement the network of cycle routes. Where it is appropriate and practical the Borough Council will allow joint use of routes by cyclists and pedestrians, and also investigate measures to enable better access for people with disabilities. The Borough Council in co-operation with the County Council and other funding agencies will direct available funding to improve and extend direct and safe routes for pedestrian users across the plan area. These will be routed between places of residence, employment, shopping, leisure and cultural activity as part of local footway and greenway networks and longer distance routes. Such routes may be for shared use with other vulnerable road users where conflict is not expected to arise.
- 7.84 The network will aim to create safer and more attractive routes improving access to places of work, shopping, leisure and other facilities for pedestrians. Improvements could be in the form of pedestrianisation as in Loughborough Town Centre, the widening of pavements, providing better walking surfaces and signage.
- 7.85 The Borough Council has approved a pedestrian strategy for the Borough as a framework to implement measures. Provision for pedestrians will be a key component of the Local Transport Plans being prepared for Leicestershire and Central Leicestershire. Footway standards will be developed to complement the Borough Council's existing cycleway standards.
- 7.86 The Borough Council will seek to safeguard, extend and improve cycle routes throughout the Borough. The aim will be to create a comprehensive cycle network. This will involve both on-road lanes and off-road routes. Some schemes will provide segregated provision for cyclists while in other locations cycleways will be shared with strategic pedestrian routes. The Epinal Way cycleway in Loughborough is an example of an effective dual use facility.
- 7.87 Provision will be focused on the likely areas of demand, usually on roads with high traffic volumes and at locations with poor cycling safety records. The main objective will be to link residential areas with education facilities, shopping centres, railway stations, and the main areas of employment, and to create strategic links into the countryside based wherever possible on green corridors. The Leicestershire and Central Leicestershire LTPs place an increased emphasis on cycling given the potential for this mode to provide an alternative to the car as part of a more sustainable transport policy.

- 7.88 The Borough Council in implementing its cycling strategy for Loughborough, will in co-operation with the County Council utilise available funding to develop a wider network of cycle routes based on the Epinal Way cycleway creating improved links within the town, and between the town and other settlements. Many short distance movements and recreational trips can be made by cycle if safe and pleasant conditions are available. To be most effective cycle routes should serve desire lines for cycle use, be attractive and inviting to would be users, and segregated from vehicular traffic movements.
- 7.89 The main emphasis will be in providing routes for commuter movements in Loughborough, the Borough's main urban area where the greatest conflict between cyclist and other road-users exists. New cycle routes will need to provide safe, well-lit corridors. The main demand for new routes appear to be to serve cross-town movements between the housing areas, education facilities, employment areas, town centre and to and from the railway station. It will involve the use of routes on, or alongside existing roads as well as the use of parts of the current footpath network improved to the necessary standards. The standards for the construction of cycleways approved by the Borough Council are included in the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 7.90 In March 1993 the County Council adopted a Countywide cycling strategy as part of the Transport choice Strategy, and is pursuing funding through the LTPs. The strategy emphasises the need for better facilities in Leicester and the County Towns. Investment will be directed to secure better cycling facilities and to promote a positive image for cycling. Improved provision for cyclists will be a key aim of the LTPs. Provision of cycle parking facilities is dealt with in Policy TR/18.
- 7.91 Implementation of this policy will involve discussions with the County Council, Parish and Town Representatives, landowners and cycle user groups to identify an overall network of cycle routes and other provision for cyclists consistent with the wider strategy for Leicestershire as a whole prepared by the County Council. The routes shown on the Proposals Map and listed in the policy are those along which measures will be encouraged to make cycling safer and more attractive.
- 7.92 Available public funding will be directed towards the implementation of new cycle routes, advisory routes, junction improvements and cycle parking with priority being given to the areas of greatest demand consistent with the strategy. Contributions will be required from developers where new provision for cyclists is reasonably and directly related to a proposed development while cycling will be promoted as a safe and attractive mode of transport.
- 7.93 The implementation of long distance routes which continue outside the plan area will require close liaison with other adjoining authorities and agencies. The Borough Council has supported the routing of the Inverness to Dover Millennium route through the Borough.

Safeguarding Disused Linear Routes for Transport Purposes

7.94 POLICY TR/14

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the continuity of disused railway lines within the areas shown on the Proposals Map for re-use as footpaths, cycle routes, and bridleways.

- 7.95 The Borough contains a number of disused railway routes which have potential for re-use as transport corridors, most likely for the creation of new pedestrian or cycle routes. The route of the former Charnwood railway from Loughborough westward via Shepshed forms part of a potential longer distance route into adjoining North West Leicestershire District.

Public Rights of Way

7.96 POLICY TR/15

Planning permission will not be granted for development affecting an existing right of way (footpath or bridleway) unless:

- i) **there is no adverse effect on the existing route; or**

- ii) **an alternative route can be provided which will not be substantially less convenient to the public nor substantially detract from the public's enjoyment of the path or way, which is safe and which protects the continuity of the wider route.**
- 7.97 The effect of development on public rights of way is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It is important for planning applications to clearly show proposals to divert or re-route any affected rights of way and to demonstrate safe and equivalent provision is made in lieu of the existing route. Only if a route along the existing line is not feasible should a diversion or stopping up be considered. New routes should be segregated from estate roads and footways and routed through public open space if this can be secured in the design and layout of development.
- 7.98 In order to avoid administrative delays and to resolve potential objectives it is important for applicants to secure agreement with parties affected by any alternative route at the earliest opportunity in the formulation of development proposals.
- 7.99 When applying for planning permission applicants will need to give detailed consideration to the effect of development proposals on any rights of way at the earliest possible opportunity. Where development affects a right of way the procedures laid down in planning legislation for stopping up or diversion of the right of way must be followed before development can take place.
- 7.100 Applicants are advised to apply for a 'Diversion Order' at the same time as submitting a planning application if it is proposed to stop up or divert a public right of way. They will be expected to secure the agreement of any landowners affected beyond the area owned or controlled by the applicant. The Borough Council may make a Diversion Order under Section 257 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act when appropriate, after planning permission has been granted. Where objections to the Order are received it will be referred to the Secretary of State for the Environment for determination. Applicants will need to undertake to meet all costs of making an Order, including all legal costs, the cost of works required, and payment of any compensation due to landowners.

Improvements to Public Rights of Way

- 7.101 Many existing rights of way are in need of improvements and better co-ordination to create attractive networks. The Borough Council will seek to secure improvements to the right of way network to ensure better access to rural areas. Improvements sought will be:
- better surfacing and drainage of paths;
 - way marking and interpretation;
 - creation or protection of wildlife habitats.

Improvements to this network should be linked to the re-use of disused linear routes (Policy TR/14) to provide a comprehensive and co-ordinated network linking settlements with the countryside and areas of interest. Scope exists to integrate routes with the bus network to provide 'bus-out-walk-back' trips, and similar initiatives.

Traffic Calming

7.102 POLICY TR/16

In the determination of planning applications the Borough Council will take into account the extent to which a development includes measures to reduce traffic speeds and assist in the creation of higher quality and safer living and working environments within, and in the vicinity, of the site, as well as the efficient movement of traffic. Traffic calming and management measures would need to address:

- i) **problems related to traffic congestion;**
- ii) **reduction of unnecessary traffic in areas of housing, near schools and other areas of intensive public activity;**

- iii) **creating safer conditions for cyclists and pedestrians;**
- iv) **access for buses, and other vehicles needing emergency access;**
- v) **problems related to on and off-street parking.**

The Borough and County Councils will continue to identify areas for the implementation of traffic calming and management measures to improve the safety, living and working conditions in areas experiencing significant traffic related problems.

- 7.103 Traffic management measures bring benefits to both vulnerable road users and the environment. The use of speed ramps, speed tables, narrowing of carriageways and other measures is beneficial in reducing traffic speeds where the safety and comfort of people is endangered in town and village centres, near schools and in residential areas. The emphasis will be on schemes covering areas rather than individual streets. Isolated measures on individual streets may simply divert traffic to adjacent roads. Traffic calming is as desirable in new development as well as it is within existing development.
- 7.104 The County Council has an assessment system for potential traffic management schemes. In Charnwood this applies to all areas outside Loughborough. A preliminary assessment is undertaken to identify the incidence of injury accidents over the previous three years where vehicle speed is a contributory factor. Where such accidents are present a scheme is subjected to a full priority assessment. In this assessment points are awarded for various aspects, namely:
- i) accident record over the previous three years;
 - ii) average traffic speeds;
 - iii) average traffic flows
 - iv) frontage development and land use. The presence of shops, libraries, health centres, schools, community facilities attracts a higher score.
- 7.105 On the basis of these assessments the relative priority of traffic management schemes is identified for inclusion in the County Council's capital programme. With regard to Charnwood, County Council traffic management schemes incorporating calming measures have been undertaken to date in the following locations:
- Forest Street/Loughborough Road, Shepshed;
 - High Street/Leicester Road, Quorn;
 - Market Place/Leicester Road, Mountsorrel; and
 - Melton Road, Thurmaston.
- 7.106 In Loughborough the Borough Council has implemented a scheme in the Storer Road area to help reduce the 'rat-running' of traffic between two principal traffic routes (Ashby Road and Derby Road), through a primarily residential area containing a primary school and various community facilities. A further scheme at Thorpe Hill has increased safety on roads outside the town's main concentration of schools.
- 7.107 Other schemes in Loughborough currently under consideration by the Borough Council for traffic management measures are listed below:
- Albert Promenade area;
 - Bottleacre Lane;
 - Burder Street area;
 - Cumberland Road;
 - Old Ashby Road;
 - Radmoor Road;

- Victoria Street area.

All schemes located in the plan area will be subject to full public consultation on their design and content.

The Impact of Traffic on Minor Rural Roads

7.108 POLICY TR/17

Planning permission will not be granted for development in locations where it would result in a significant change in the amount or type of traffic using rural roads or roads through villages, and:

- i) the safety of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders would be endangered; or
- ii) roads are of unsuitable width, alignment or structural condition; or
- iii) the increase in traffic and/or the improvements necessary to accommodate it would harm the rural character of the roads or residential areas alongside them.

Development generating lorry traffic will be located so as to discourage, as far as possible, traffic from using roads other than the Specified Road Network.

7.109 Traffic generated by development can have significant adverse environmental effects on minor rural roads in terms of noise vibration, visual impact, accidents and safety, pollution etc. It will be important to ensure that the impact of even modest new developments is minimised if the character of these roads is to be retained.

7.110 Of particular concern will be the impact of HGV traffic. The Borough Council will monitor the situation and support the County Council where it intends to discourage traffic, especially HGV's from travelling on minor rural roads by the use of traffic management and other measures including signing, width and weight restrictions, parking restrictions and road closures.

Parking Provision in New Development

7.111 POLICY TR/18

Planning permission will not be granted for development unless off-street parking for vehicles, including cycles, and servicing arrangements are included to secure highway safety and minimise harm to visual and local amenities. The adopted standards included as Appendix 1 will be used as the starting point in assessing the level of provision and represent the maximum level.

In the Central areas of Loughborough and Shepshed, District Centres, primarily employment areas and other areas of significant trip generation the quantity of parking within new development will be determined through negotiation based on containing car parking provision. The quantity of parking allowed will reflect the proposed use and the location of development, the availability of public off-street parking; the current, or potential accessibility by non-car modes; the feasibility for commuted payments; the scope for practical measures to significantly reduce the use of private car trips to and from a site; and the need to reduce existing levels of private non-residential (PNR) car parking.

(See also in particular Policies TR/19, 20 and 21)

- 7.112 Car parking policies should support the overall locational policies in the development plan. PPG13 at paragraph 4.5 indicates that standards of provision in local plans should be set as a range of maximum and operational minimum standards for broad classes of development. Control of parking provision can have a significant impact on modal choice. Over the plan period the intention is to encourage a gradual reduction in car dependency in favour of a shift to bus, rail, walking and cycling. Restraint based parking provision correctly applied can help reduce congestion and improve the area's attractiveness to investment.
- 7.113 The aim will be to secure a level of parking which as a minimum discourages reliance on the private car but provides sufficient off-street parking to allow development to proceed without creating traffic problems. If parking overflows on-street this can be detrimental to highway safety and the local environment because of the extra circulation and manoeuvring of vehicles.
- 7.114 In Central areas, District Centres, employment areas and other areas with significant trip generation lower levels of provision will be sought by negotiation. Reduced provision will be sought where, for example, the following circumstances prevail:
- a site is served, or is capable of being served, by effective public transport services along with provision for the safe, and direct movement of cyclists and pedestrians;
 - existing public off-street parking close to the site can cater for the development;
 - local environmental factors of acknowledged importance are worthy of protection;
 - a residential development is of a design and nature which ensures that car ownership will remain at a low level, or even car-free, in the long term.
- 7.115 In all such cases the Borough Council may seek to negotiate a legal agreement with the developer to secure commuted payments in lieu of part or all of parking provision related to a development scheme. This would be used to fund alternative measures which would comprise an appropriate balance of:
- off-street public car parking;
 - measures to improve access by public transport;
 - measures to improve access by cycle and on foot.
- 7.116 The effect of controls over parking associated with development will be less significant unless reductions can also be secured in the current levels of private non-residential parking (PNR) particularly in Central Areas. Where circumstances allow a reduction in PNR parking will be sought through development or redevelopment schemes.
- 7.117 In order to avoid on-street parking problems related to reduced levels of off-street street parking measures will need to be implemented to deter people from driving to and parking in the vicinity of a development. The submission of Travel Plans with applications would set out arrangements for reduced car-use from the outset of development. In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate contributions towards the implementation of on-street controls in the vicinity of a development where problems are anticipated. In less central sites contributions will be sought from developers to fund improvements to access for non-car modes and so upgrade that areas accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling.

Public Car Parking Provision Serving Loughborough Town Centre

7.118 POLICY TR/19

Planning permission will be granted for additional off-street public car parking facilities for shoppers and visitors serving the central area of Loughborough shown on the Proposals Map in circumstances where the Borough Council is satisfied the car parking is necessary to ensure a continuing and adequate supply of short-stay car parking.

In the case of car parks funded by development the Borough Council will seek to negotiate a legal agreement for the car park to be managed for short-stay users which does not generate significant peak hour traffic movements.

(See also in particular Policies TR/18, TR/20 and TR/21)

7.119 Additional short-term car parking will be needed in Loughborough town centre on a scale which both safeguards the centre's vitality and viability and helps meet the Plan's overall objective of gradually reducing car dependency. New parking will be needed to serve additional retail and commercial floorspace.

The Borough Council will identify the level of need for short-stay parking based on an assessment of:

- the replacement of existing long and short-stay provision lost as a result of the implementation of pedestrianisation, redevelopment and other traffic management schemes;
- an allowance for traffic growth associated with additions and improvements to the town centre;
- any reduction resulting from the successful implementation of measures to increase the use of bus, rail, cycling and walking as alternatives to the car; and
- any other relevant considerations.

7.120 A review of public car parking management pricing is being undertaken by the Borough Council complementary to the demand management measures included in the County Council's Leicestershire Local Transport Plan Submission. This is based on the following principles:

- charges for all-day parking in Council controlled car parks which are high relative to charges for short-stays;
- short-stay spaces to be more accessible than long-stay spaces;
- the implementation of complementary on-street parking restrictions to avoid problems transferring to other areas;
- enforcement against uncontrolled and temporary car parking;
- consideration of the role of park and ride in providing for parking needs for short-stay and, in particular, commuter trips.

7.121 This review will be followed by preparation of a 'Parking Study' to establish the scale and nature of parking provision in the town centre.

7.122 The approach adopted in this policy is complementary to the move to restraint based parking standards for new development set out in Policy TR/18.

7.123 The intention of this Plan's transport policies is to reduce car-based commuting over time. Any modification of current management and pricing of parking controlled by the Borough Council could increase pressure for on-street parking in areas around the town centre. Residents parking schemes have been implemented in the Frederick street and Victoria Street areas. Other areas for similar traffic management measures will be identified to try and ensure that problems are not transferred from one area to another.

Public Car Parking Provision Serving District and Local Centres

7.124 POLICY TR/20

Planning permission will be granted for new public off-street parking serving District and Local Centres where the parking is short-term and necessary to safeguard the vitality and viability of district and local centres.

The scale of provision will depend upon the accessibility of a centre in terms of bus, rail, cycling and walking.

(See also in particular Policies TR/18, TR/19 and TR/21)

7.125 In 1993 after consultation with Parish Councils, ten parishes were recognised as being in need of additional general car parking. These were the parishes of Anstey, Barkby, Birstall, Hathern, Mountsorrel, Rothley, Sileby, Syston, Thurmaston and Woodhouse Eaves. This previous assessment should provide a starting point for the assessment of future parking needs. The emphasis must now be on containing new provision to that needed for short-stay shoppers and visitors.

7.126 An adequate supply of public off-street car parking for shoppers and visitors is necessary in district and local centres to enable people to use them, particularly where catchments are not well served, or capable of being served, by non-car modes. In addition the lack of sufficient parking could encourage people to drive to larger centres. The Borough Council will monitor levels of car parking in district and local centres and pursue initiatives to improve the quality, and where justified, the scale of parking serving centres. In coming to a view as to the appropriate level of provision consideration will be given to the accessibility of a centre by non-car modes.

Planning Criteria for the Design and Layout of New Car Parks

7.127 POLICY TR/21

Planning permission will be granted for matters of detail relating to car parking proposals where all the following criteria are met:

- i) they are in locations convenient for the centre or feature they serve, and provide safe and direct access for pedestrians and people with disabilities to those destinations;
- ii) traffic generation by the car park would not create unacceptable congestion and conflict between pedestrians and vehicles on roads close to the development;
- iii) measures including signing and lighting are included to ensure easy access, internal circulation, safety and security for vehicles, bicycles and people using the car park;
- iv) extra wide spaces are provided for people with disabilities and people with small children;
- v) screening and landscaping is provided to safeguard the amenities of adjoining properties and land uses.

(See also in particular Policies TR/19, TR/20)

7.128 Many existing car parks have attracted problems because of their poor appearance, and levels of usage are depressed due to fears of injury to person and property. A well designed and maintained facility can provide a welcome feature in the streetscene with improved public confidence in security.

7.129 In assessing the details of proposals for car parks an important consideration will be for them to be conveniently placed for users and to provide safe and direct access to the intended destination. Car parks will not be allowed where the related traffic generation would lead to

unacceptable congestion and circulating traffic movements detrimental to pedestrian safety or local amenities.

- 7.130 In Loughborough Town Centre surface parking although apparently preferred by motorists is not an efficient use of land and is expensive to provide unless associated with wider commercial development. Therefore if further significant parking is justified multi-storey facilities may be needed. Strong design good management, signing and routing will be essential if such facilities are to achieve maximum use and overcome public resistance to their use.

Park & Ride Site on land adjacent to the A46/A6 Junction, Wanlip

7.131 POLICY TR/22

Planning permission will be granted for a park and ride site located to the east of the A6, north of Birstall on land adjacent to the A46/A6 junction, Wanlip as shown on the Proposals Map. The facility will be accessed from the A6, and of a scale which is viable and effective to serve Leicester City Centre via the A6 bus corridor. Careful consideration will need to be given to the access arrangements, design and layout, landscaping and screening measures to ensure that the scheme harmonises with the character and appearance of the locality and adjoining land uses.

(See also in particular Policies E/5(g), TR/13, TR/23, TR/29, CA/10, CF/8)

- 7.132 The CALTRANS draft strategy envisages a transport strategy for the Central Leicestershire package area of public transport enhancement. Major improvements to bus and rail services, cycling and walking, are envisaged alongside measures to manage the car. Included in the draft strategy are proposals for bus priority measures on radial routes and the development of two bus-based park and ride sites, one on the A6 north of Leicester.
- 7.133 The proposed site in operational terms would be acceptable to the highway authorities and is considered to represent the best location to meet the CALTRANS objectives. The scheme could come forward as part of the comprehensive development proposals in this Plan for land north of Birstall and west of the A6. The site is well related to the main road network and well placed to utilise the frequent and regular bus services into Leicester. It would form an integral part of the sustainable transport strategy envisaged in the Plan and should help integral part of the sustainable transport strategy envisaged in the Plan and should help reduce congestion along the A6 corridor. Detailed design and layout, related measures will need to ensure the scheme is assimilated in the landscape and harmonises with adjacent land uses.
- 7.134 Although this site is considered to be the best location for a park and ride site along the A6 north of Birstall, the selection of an alternative site through the CALTRANS study could not be ruled out at this time. Should CALTRANS identify a better site serving the Central Leicestershire area from the A6 this allocated site would not be needed. It would then be treated as part of the country park related to the north of Birstall development, or agricultural land if this scheme does not proceed. Use of the site will need to be monitored to establish patterns of usage and to see whether action is needed to further reduce trips to the site which could have been made by bus and rail in the first place.

Planning Criteria for Park and Ride Schemes to Service Loughborough and Leicester

7.135 POLICY TR/23

Planning permission will be granted for bus or rail based 'park and ride' provision adjacent to the Loughborough and Leicester urban areas provided that all the following criteria are met:

- i) **the site is strategically well placed on the road network and served, or capable of being served, by frequent and direct public transport links to central area destinations;**

- ii) **satisfactory access is provided to the main road network;**
- iii) **the highest standards of design, layout, landscaping and screening are provided to assimilate the site and access arrangements with its surroundings. Landscaping measures will soften the impact by structural planting around the site and access roads and planting within the parking area;**
- iv) **the scheme provides on-site facilities for security, information, shelters and “cycle and ride”.**

7.136 The provision of car parks at strategic points on the main road network allied to frequent and regular public transport services is proving in many parts of the country a very useful measure to help alleviate congestion and delay on main roads into the urban areas.

7.137 Park and ride sites should provide car parking immediately adjacent to provision for public transport and cycling. They can help reduce the volume and movement of traffic along urban roads and in central areas and so enable more efficient use of road space to the advantage of non-car modes and improved urban environments. Their effectiveness will be enhanced if complementary bus priority measures are in place.

Loss of Parking and Garaging Areas

7.138 POLICY TR/24

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss of parking or garage areas which are well-used in locations where demand exists for the facility, and where suitable alternative provision to cater for demand is not available elsewhere in the locality.

7.139 In older residential areas off-street car parking facilities are much in demand but usually limited in availability. The Plan seeks to achieve a gradual shift away from car dependency over the plan period. Whilst part of this approach may involve some reduction in car parking this should not happen where there is a clear need and the loss of parking and garaging areas could lead to excessive on-street parking and parking on verges.

Heavy Goods Vehicle Operations

7.140 POLICY TR/25

Proposals for new heavy goods vehicles operating centres and depots or proposals involving the additional development or extension of an existing site, which require planning permission, will not be permitted unless all the following criteria are met:

- i) **satisfactory access is provided to the road network;**
- ii) **adequate space is provided within the operational site to enable vehicles to manoeuvre off the public highway;**
- iii) **the road network serving the operational site is suitable for use by road freight traffic generated by the proposal;**
- iv) **the proposal does not unacceptably harm the character or appearance of a locality;**
- v) **the proposal does not unacceptably harm the amenities of residents in the locality of the operational site;**
- a) **specific provision is made for the parking of heavy goods vehicles which form part of the applicant’s fleet of vehicles. Suitable provision will need to be found within the development site or, by agreement, on a nearby specified site.**

- 7.141 Goods vehicle operating centres are licensed by the Traffic Commissioners. In cases where an operational centre is associated with, and subordinate to, the existing use of the site planning permission may not be required. The Borough Council will object to the issue of H.G.V operator's licenses in circumstances where a proposed operating centre is considered unsuitable environmentally.
- 7.142 In those cases where permission is required for a new site, or additional development at an existing site, proposals will need to be acceptable in terms of highway safety and environmental impact. If necessary permission may be conditional on a limitation on the number of vehicles in order to contain the adverse impact of development to an acceptable level.
- 7.143 Sites are more likely to be acceptable if they are adjacent to routes suitable for road freight. Where existing sites cause particular planning problems or are remote from main routes they will be encouraged to relocate to more suitable sites. The proposed roadside facility site next to the A46/A6 junction at Wanlip (Policy TR/29) will provide limited lorry parking to serve passing traffic. Should a need emerge for additional provision an assessment would be made of possible sites.
- 7.144 Lorries are very intrusive when parked on-street particularly in residential areas. It will be important to ensure any operational site accommodates parking for all H.G.V's related to it off street, preferably within the curtilage of the development site. Planning agreements may be appropriate to ensure provision of a separate site near to the proposal site.

Parking of Commercial Vehicles at Residential Properties

7.145 POLICY TR/26

Where planning permission is required for the parking of a commercial vehicle within the curtilage of a residential property such permission will not be granted unless:

- i) the site is sufficiently large and/or suitably screened so as to avoid injury to the wider streetscene or neighbouring occupiers by reason of overdominance, visual intrusion, noise or vehicle exhaust emissions; and**
- ii) safe vehicular access can be provided.**

Any planning permission for the parking of a commercial vehicle on a residential property will be:

- a) made personal to the applicant and will not run with the land;**
- b) conditioned to preclude the maintenance or repair of the vehicle and storage of any goods or materials associated with the vehicle's use;**
- c) initially be for a temporary period of 12 months, to enable the effect on the neighbourhood to be assessed.**

- 7.146 The parking of large vehicles in residential areas can become a source of nuisance to residents, giving rise to problems of smell, noise, safety and obtrusiveness. The Local Planning Authority, in dealing with such matters will require the submission of planning applications for off highway parking of commercial vehicles where this would create significant environmental problems or other nuisance.

Provision of Servicing, Loading and Unloading Facilities in Non-Residential Developments

7.147 POLICY TR/27

In granting planning permission for non-residential development the Borough council will require full provision within the application site for the manoeuvring of service vehicles, loading and unloading unless servicing from the street or estate road network could be achieved without obstruction to the highway or injury to local amenities.

- 7.148 In all new development of a commercial nature it will be appropriate to secure provision for servicing off the existing highway to avoid obstruction contributing to congestion and delay. However in the change of use of existing premises it may not always be practical to provide for servicing within the site. In these circumstances the Borough Council will take into account in the determination of planning applications the nature and frequency of servicing operations. Where it is considered that such operations would occasion unacceptable obstruction or impinge upon the quality of the environment, particularly in residential areas, planning permission will be refused.

Loss of Servicing, Loading and Unloading Facilities

7.149 POLICY TR/28

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would occasion the loss of existing on site space for the manoeuvring of service vehicles, loading and unloading unless alternative provision sufficient to meet operational needs in full can be provided elsewhere off the highway.

- 7.150 Where commercial operations already have the benefit of adequate servicing arrangements within the site it will be undesirable to allow development which would force such activities onto the adjacent highway with resultant obstruction, congestion and delay.

Roadside Service Area on Land Adjacent to the A6/A46 Junction, Wanlip

7.151 POLICY TR/29

Planning permission will be granted for a key roadside facility site to service the needs of passing motorists on about 2.7ha (6.7a) of land located adjacent to the A46/AA6 junction at Fillingate, north of Birstall, as part of the proposed major development allocation. To be acceptable a proposal must meet all the following criteria:

- i) it provides a full range of facilities for motorists for fuel, refreshment, toilets, car parking, limited parking for lorries, overnight accommodation and landscaped picnic areas;**
- ii) the siting and form of development in overall terms minimises the visual impact on the wider countryside, and adjoining development;**
- iii) vehicular access is via a new junction with the former A6 to be provided as part of the proposed development north of Birstall. Direct access from the A46 Bypass will not be permitted;**
- iv) substantial landscaping measures in the form of planting and mounding are provided along boundaries particularly the frontage with the former A6 and the A46, as well as the proposed distributor road, and the adjacent site proposed for a park and ride facility.**

(See also in particular Policies E/5(g), TR/22, CA/10, CF/8)

- 7.152 The facilities available to trunk road travellers could be improved if a suitable site can be identified within the plan area. The greatest area of need exists along the A46 and A6 corridors. Additional provision is not considered acceptable along the M1 which runs through environmentally sensitive areas within Charnwood. The 3 mile section of motorway, including Junction 23, runs through the constrained areas of Charnwood Forest and the Loughborough/Shepshed Green Wedge.

- 7.153 Along the A6 and A46 corridors the most appropriate location in terms of traffic movements appears to be the new Fillingate junction where the two roads intersect. A facility here could service the needs of a significant number of travel movements on one strategically well-placed site. In environmental terms this is a sensitive location located on and around a prominent ridgeline.

- 7.154 A site is proposed for a roadside service area on the south west quadrant of the junction as part of a comprehensive development area proposed on land north of Birstall and west of the A6. The site is considered acceptable in environmental terms as part of this overall scheme. The package as presented aims to provide a high quality development with supporting infrastructure and amenities, the full implementation of which will depend upon the availability of funding from the various commercial components. The proposed roadside service area offers the opportunity to assist in the implementation of the overall package as conceived and presented. It will not be acceptable in isolation.
- 7.155 The proposal is to meet the needs of passing trunk road traffic, and not for facilities likely to attract more local use such as a public house, restaurant, or formalised lorry park. There would be no vehicular access direct from the A46 Bypass or slip roads to the Fillingate junction. Careful consideration will need to be given to the design and layout, location of buildings, signage and illumination to harmonise the development in the local landscape.

Planning Criteria to Assess Proposals for Roadside Service Areas

7.156 POLICY TR/30

Planning permission will not be granted for new roadside facilities unless all the following criteria are met:

- i) there is an established need in terms of the spacing and location of facilities to justify additional provision;**
 - ii) the proposed site would provide for a full range of facilities to serve the needs of motorists;**
 - iii) the scheme is suitably landscaped to provide strong visual and acoustic screening;**
 - iv) the development provides a design and layout, materials, mass and height of buildings and structures, illumination and signage in keeping with the character and appearance of the locality;**
 - v) the site is not located in a designated Green Wedge and development would not be an unacceptable intrusion into an area of countryside, local separation, or recognised landscape value.**
- 7.157 This general guidance sets out the range of criteria to be taken into account in considering proposals to provide roadside facilities in the plan area. The allocation at the Fillingate A46/A6 junction should provide a full range of facilities to serve needs on these trunk roads. A full range of facilities normally will embrace the inclusion within a single site of parking and rest areas for all motorists including the drivers of cars, buses and lorries, toilets, refreshments, refuelling facilities, overnight accommodation, picnic areas, telephones and 24 hour operation. Elsewhere the scale of provision will be restricted to that necessary to meet gaps in provision. Advice included in DoT Circular 4/88 and PPG13, Annex A recommends that the minimum gap between motorway service areas should be 15 miles and service facilities on trunk roads should be located a minimum of 12 miles and a maximum of 25 miles apart. In addition, the means of access to and egress from the site and the internal road network will be based on the standards of the Highway Authorities and subject to their approval.
- 7.158 The intention is to avoid a proliferation of sites providing limited facilities. Concentration of facilities at a small number of key sites will reduce the need for drivers to use different locations for various activities. Proposals will be assessed in terms of their environmental impact and within the context of current Government Guidance.

CHAPTER 8: CENTRAL AREAS AND SHOPPING

Introduction

- 8.1 The traditional and familiar hierarchy of shopping centres in Leicestershire characterised by the City of Leicester at its head supported by the main market towns, district centres, villages and local shops is the product of many centuries of gradual growth and development. It is a pattern of distribution which is repeated throughout the country.
- 8.2 Each centre has attracted a range of shops and businesses proportional to the available market. In the larger centres office uses, additional services and facilities have congregated around the core area generating significant local employment opportunities. Around these centres there has been investment in infrastructure and other facilities to sustain and improve accessibility. In consequence most town and village centres have evolved as the focus for a complex range of interconnecting commercial, administrative, civic, cultural, recreational and social activities vital to the lives of the communities they serve.
- 8.3 However retailing is an innovative and dynamic industry. Over recent years considerable growth has occurred, particularly in the form of off-centre and out-of-centre developments for retail warehousing and supermarkets. These facilities have been encouraged by changes in the distribution of population, increasing affluence, greater personal mobility delivered by wider car ownership and the development of new markets and marketing techniques. New retail developments, both within the traditional centres and outside, have delivered advantages to the consumer in the form of wider choice, improved convenience and competitive prices.
- 8.4 Future growth rates will depend upon the strength and timing of the economic recovery, however recent indicators give cause for cautious optimism. National projections of annual average consumer retail expenditure suggest that very little growth, if any, was experienced over the period up to 1993. Thereafter long term based projections for all goods expenditure indicate growth rates of between 1.9% and 2.5% per annum. Any such growth may be expected to encourage investment in new developments and in the refurbishment or expansion of existing premises.

National and Strategic Policy

- 8.5 National planning policy guidance on town centres and retail developments is set out in PPG6 revised in June 1996. The guidance reaffirms that it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition, preserve commercial interests or to prevent innovation. Rather its purpose is to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, to promote a wide range of shops and services closely located to encourage efficiency, competition and innovation and to facilitate ease of access by a choice of means of transport.
- 8.6 In pursuit of these objectives considerable emphasis is given to the plan-led approach to promoting development in town centres through appropriate policies and the identification of specific sites. In support of this strategy the sequential approach now requires that in selecting sites for retail, employment, leisure and other key town centre uses, first preference is given to town centre sites, followed by edge of centre sites and only then by out of centre sites in locations which are or can be made accessible by a choice of means of transport.
- 8.7 Within town centres importance is attached to the promotion of mixed use development and the retention of key town centre uses. The production of an integrated town centre strategy embracing parking policy, environmental improvement and management coupled with high standards of urban design, has a major role to play in supporting land use planning in the revitalisation of traditional town centres.
- 8.8 In assessing the acceptability of all retail development the guidance clarifies the three key tests as:
- the extent to which the proposal would put at risk the vitality and viability of a nearby town, district or local centre;

- the provision of, or potential for, service by frequent, reliable convenient public transport, together with facilities for access by pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities; and
 - the extent to which the proposal would impact on overall car use by reference to its ease of access to all customers and its ability to facilitate more linked trips (ie. trips serving more than one purpose).
- 8.9 The Structure Plan aims to sustain and increase the role of central Loughborough through provision for retailing, allied services, offices, tourist facilities, improved transport systems and environmental improvements. In addition provision is to be made for residential development in central areas.
- 8.10 New retail facilities are to be encouraged to meet the local needs of new development and in existing areas where provision is deficient.
- 8.11 Strategic policies indicate that major new retail development outside existing centres should usually be permitted where it could not be more appropriately located in such a centre and where it would not undermine the vitality and viability of any town centre as a whole. Such schemes must also provide for easy and convenient access by realistic choice of transport and cause no significant harm to the environment.
- 8.12 It is apparent that retail development proposals in and around the City of Leicester will have implications which have no regard for administrative boundaries. To enable the development of a coordinated policy approach towards the management of retail development pressures within the central Leicestershire area the Borough Council in 1994, joined with a consortium of affected local authorities in engaging consultants to advise upon projected retail development needs. Following the completion of that study further work has been undertaken by the participating authorities to devise a Central Leicestershire Retail Strategy, to guide and coordinate local plan policies within the context of identified needs and current strategic planning guidance. The resultant strategy has been given considerable weight in the formulation of policies and proposals for retail development in the southern parishes of the Borough.

The Charnwood Perspective

- 8.13 The established shopping hierarchy in Charnwood is headed by Loughborough Town Centre. Although the town centre provides a wide range of shopping and related facilities its potential has been limited by the presence within a 24 kilometre radius of three regional shopping centres in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. However the centre has recently attracted significant private sector investment in the refurbishment and expansion of the town's major shopping precinct (Carillon Court) while the Borough Council's commitment to the continued vitality and viability of the central area is evidence by the erection of the Woodgate Multi-storey car park at a cost of some £3 million. Elsewhere in this Local Plan related policies and proposals are set out to achieve town centre traffic relief and environmental improvements.
- 8.14 The central function of Loughborough Town Centre is underpinned by a network of district shopping centres. Typically these centres also provide a broad range of shops and services, are usually anchored by at least one supermarket or superstore and benefit from associated off street car parking. Such centres fulfil an important function as a focus for the community and are well served by existing public transport routes. They have traditionally served their surrounding communities well and have attracted investment in associated and dependent development. These centres include the Gorse Covert and Shelthorpe District Centres in Loughborough and those servicing the Borough's larger settlements at Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Birstall, Shepshed, Sileby, Syston and Thurmaston.
- 8.15 At the foot of the shopping hierarchy are various local facilities including linear frontages such as parades of shops usually located in housing estates, small village centres and individual shops.
- 8.16 Complementing the established shopping hierarchy are substantial "out of centre" shopping developments in Loughborough, primarily in the form of retail warehousing.

- 8.17 The stated aims of the overall strategy of the Local Plan towards town centres and shopping are to:
- i) sustain and enhance the role of Loughborough as the principal centre within the Borough for shopping and allied services; and,
 - ii) maintain the vitality and viability of established town and district centres throughout the Borough with additional provision of shops and services to contemporary standards in areas of need.
- 8.18 These broad aims translate into the following specific policy objectives:
- i) to encourage investment in new and improved shopping facilities within existing shopping centres;
 - ii) to provide for diversification and change within established shopping centres while preserving their primarily retail function;
 - iii) to promote new shopping and related central area development through the identification of specific opportunity sites;
 - iv) to harness the economic advantages presented by commercial development opportunities to enable the achievement of planning and highway related improvements of benefit to the wider community;
 - v) to improve the attractiveness of existing shopping centres through effective management and measures designed to relieve congestion, ease pedestrian movement, encourage the use of public transport and cycles, improve amenities and upgrade their general environmental quality; and,
 - vi) to resist development which would:
 - have a damaging impact upon the vitality and viability of a nearby town, district or local centre;
 - fail to benefit from frequent, reliable and convenient public transport services or to provide for ease of access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities;
 - encourage continued reliance on the car as opposed to facilitating multi purpose trips; and/or
 - be out of scale with the centre it seeks to serve.

CENTRAL AREAS

8.19 POLICY CA/1

In locations outside Loughborough Town Centre and its associated business and commercial service areas, designated district centres and local centres, proposals for shops (Class A1), financial and professional services (Class A2), non-residential institutions (Class D1) and places of assembly and leisure (Class D2) will only be permitted if the development is small in scale and primarily intended to service a highly localised or rural community need.

In all other cases proposals for shops and leisure uses on out-of-centre or edge-of-centre sites will only be permitted if:

- i) **the need for additional facilities can be demonstrated;**
- ii) **the site's selection meets with the sequential approach;**
- iii) **the development would not, either individually or cumulatively with other development, occasion an impact upon any nearby town or district centre seriously detrimental to its long term vitality and viability;**

- iv) **the development would not undermine the development plan strategy, including that to attract private sector investment in the Loughborough Town Centre Opportunity Sites and the related enablement of the inner relief road;**
 - v) **the development can be accessed conveniently by a choice of means of transport including frequent and reliable public transport and safe and direct provisions for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities;**
 - vi) **the development would ensure easier access to all customers, facilitate more linked trips and assist overall in reducing reliance on the car;**
 - vii) **the development would not cause serious injury to local visual or residential amenity by reason of its design and appearance or operational activities; and**
 - viii) **the scale of the development is well related to the centre it seeks to serve.**
- 8.20 Existing centres have grown with their communities over many generations and provide a wide range of shops, services, public amenities and leisure facilities easily accessible to those communities by a choice of transport modes. The policy aims, in the first instance, to direct development which gives rise to significant numbers of visits by the public, towards established centres in order that they might remain the focal point for the communities they serve and drive the maximum advantage from public investment in supporting infrastructure and private investment in shops and businesses. In furtherance of the overall objective to sustain and enhance established centres, specific opportunity sites for mixed development have been identified in Loughborough town centre underlining PPG6 preference for development within such centres. Elsewhere district centres have been defined so as to include land which might usefully be developed or redeveloped in such a way as to expand or enhance their roles as multipurpose, accessible centres.
- 8.21 Provision is already made for certain large scale “public buildings” in non central locations. Specific examples include educational establishments, the Loughborough Hospital and sports facilities. However, while other large scale out of centre development could impact adversely upon established centres, it is equally apparent that small scale development, typically new buildings or conversions to provide local convenience stores in urban areas or rural shops and services in those villages where there is no discernible local centre, could have no such impact. Indeed such facilities could assist in fostering a more sustainable distribution of shops and services reducing the need to resort to the car for convenience shopping and supporting the rural economy. What constitutes a shop serving a highly localised need will depend upon the type and range of goods sold in relation to the circumstances in any one locality. If a proposed shop would be likely to serve a wide catchment and would compete with established centres it would not be a local shop. As a general guide shopping developments in excess of 400 sqm. net sales area would not fall within this definition and criteria (i) to (viii) of Policy CA/1 would apply.
- 8.22 The policy proceeds to set out the government’s latest approach that requires proposals which would be located at an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location and which are not in accordance with an up to date development plan strategy to demonstrate both the need for additional facilities and that a sequential approach has been applied in selecting the location of the site. Developers will need to demonstrate that all town centre options have been thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered for development for key town centre uses. The first preference should be for town centre sites, followed by edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres and only then out-of-centre sites in locations accessible by a choice of means of transport. In the application of criterion (ii), and what will constitute an edge-of-centre site, it is considered inappropriate, given the diversity of centres in the Borough, to refer to an absolute measurement. In each centre a judgement must therefore be made to arrive at what constitutes an attractive walking distance. The ease and convenience with which the connecting route can be negotiated, the character of the link and the commercial strength of the centre are all likely to be material factors. For general guidance a distance of approximately 300 metres is likely to prove acceptable in Loughborough, but 200 metres is likely to represent the absolute maximum in relation to the district centres.
- 8.23 In considering the potential impact of out-of-centre and edge-of-centre development upon an established centre the Borough Council will take into account the extent to which trade diversion would be likely to harm the continued vitality and viability of that centre. PPG6 produces guidance for the measurement of vitality and viability including:

- diversity of uses;
 - retailer representation and intentions to change representation;
 - shopping rents;
 - proportion of vacant street level property;
 - commercial yields on non domestic property;
 - pedestrian flows;
 - accessibility;
 - customer views and behaviour;
 - perception of safety and occurrence of crime; and
 - state of the town centre environmental quality.
- 8.24 These factors are to be the subject of regular monitoring and review in the main centres with the involvement of the Loughborough Town Centre Manager. The Council will be particularly anxious to ensure that public investment in central area improvement is not put at risk before the dividends of that investment can reasonably be realised.
- 8.25 In granting planning permission of out-of-centre and edge-of-centre retail development the Borough Council will attach conditions where necessary to ensure that the development cannot change its composition and character over time to the extent that it would injure the vitality and viability of a nearby town or district centre. Typically such conditions will restrict the subdivision of units into a larger number of smaller shops and/or limit the range or types of goods which might be sold. Limits on the sale of goods will be determined by local circumstances but it is apparent that particular care must be exercised in the protection of those sectors which provide the main stay of town and district centre vitality and viability: ie; the sale of food for consumption off the premises (other than confectionery), clothing (including sportswear), shoes, toys, fashion accessories, books, computer software, recorded music, video and audio tapes.
- 8.26 In all cases where retail development proposals exceed 2,500 square metres gross floorspace, and in other cases where development might be anticipated to have a large impact on a nearby centre, the Borough Council will expect the submission of a supporting statement defining the applicant's approach to site selection, the likely retail impact of the scheme, accessibility by a choice of means of transport, consequent travel patterns and any significant environmental impacts. Such studies are commonly provided by developers but their conclusions are frequently regarded as less than impartial, having been commissioned by the applicant to justify his proposals. To ensure that such studies are impartial prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss their proposals with the Council at an early stage in order that measures can be agreed to secure the preparation of a reliable report upon which potentially far reaching retail development decisions can be confidently based. Ideally developers might usefully agree to the funding of studies conducted by independent consultants selected by the Borough Council to avoid allegations of bias.
- 8.27 Out-of-centre and edge-of-centre development should be accessible by a choice of means of transport. Criterion v) attempts to provide further guidance in indicating that public transport, in order to meet the test of accessibility, is to be frequent and reliable. In the absence of services to an appropriate standard there will be no genuine choice of transport for shoppers and visitors leading to continued dependence upon car based trips. Accordingly, shopping development (usually more than 2,500 square metres gross) and uses attracting comparable visitor numbers, will be expected to be located within 200 metres of a bus route providing a service at 15 minute intervals during the working day (Monday to Saturday, 7am to 7pm) and will be encouraged to provide bus laybys and waiting facilities within the development site. Out of centre and edge-of-centre development of a lesser scale should be located within 200 metres of a bus service providing a service at 30 minute intervals over the same period.

Loughborough Town Centre

8.28 Loughborough Town centre accommodates a wide variety of uses which combine with shopping to create the diversity of interest and activity necessary to maintain the overall attraction of the centre recognised in its vitality and viability. However the primary role of the centre is retailing and care must be exercised in the control of development to protect and enhance this function without prejudice to the overall ability of the centre to diversify in response to changing trends in the market. To assist in exercising this control two broad designations have been identified within the Town Centre:

- a) a Core Area, where the principal function is retailing supported by other related uses such as financial and professional services and premises for the sale of food and drink; and,
- b) an Outer Area, where additional uses including places of assembly and leisure, non-residential institutions, and hotels and hostels are found, and where the overall shopping function is weaker.

Acceptable Uses in the Loughborough Core Area

8.29 POLICY CA/2

Planning permission for ground floor development within the Loughborough Core Area, falling within the following uses (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987), will be granted subject to satisfactory design and adequate provision for related vehicular requirements:

- i) shops (Class A1);
- ii) financial and professional services (Class A2); and
- iii) food and drink uses (Class A3).

Financial and professional services (Class A2) and food and drink uses (Class A3) will not be permitted where they would:

- a) result in the loss of a shop use in a key location, such as a prominent corner plot or link position;
- b) isolate a significant shopping facility from the remainder of the retail frontage;
- c) exceed 20% of the total frontage or form a continuous frontage of more than 3 shop units or 15 metres within the following frontages:
 - a) The Carillon Court Shopping Centre;
 - b) all frontages to Market Place;
 - c) 1-21 and 35-72 Market Street;
 - d) all frontages to Cattle Market;
 - e) all frontages to Devonshire Square;
 - f) 1-7 Swan Street; and
 - g) 5-20 and 46-65 Church Gate.

All ground floor frontage development within the Core Area, will be required to include a shop window frontage.

- 8.30 The consolidation of shopping and related services within the Core area of the centre will conserve and enhance its function and sustain its overall vitality and viability. Banks, building societies and other financial and professional services make an important contribution to the attractiveness of the centre but it is important that they should not overwhelm the retail frontage. Adequate opportunities for the provision of such businesses are afforded within the secondary frontages of the Outer Area. The maintenance of a retail frontage along the principal pedestrian routes will improve the overall interest and attraction of the centre and confirm its role as the principal shopping centre in Charnwood.

Acceptable Uses in the Loughborough Outer Area

8.31 POLICY CA/3

Planning permission for ground floor development within the Outer Area of Loughborough Town Centre, falling within the following uses, (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) will be granted subject to satisfactory design and adequate provision for related vehicular requirements and provided the amenity of nearby residents is not adversely affected:

- i) **shops (Class A1);**
- ii) **financial and professional services (Class A2);**
- iii) **food and drink (Class A3);**
- iv) **hotels (Class C1);**
- v) **non-residential institutions (Class D1);**
- vi) **places of assembly and leisure (Class D2); and**
- vii) **theatres.**

Shop window display frontages will be required where appropriate, having regard to the established character and appearance of the street scene and adjacent uses.

- 8.32 The Outer Area of the town centre can accommodate a greater variety of uses without harm to the overall vitality and viability of the town centre. Indeed they can provide for a range of complementary trades and services which will increase the diversity and attraction of the town centre overall. Shop type frontages may not always be present but where a continuous shop style frontage survives any new development should complement the established pattern.

Opportunity Sites for Development

- 8.33 Over the plan period various opportunities may arise for redevelopment or the refurbishment of commercial property within the town centre. The level of investment in such initiatives is likely to be determined by national economic performance and commercial confidence in Loughborough. Locally it is considered that the scale of new housing development now being proposed around Loughborough must attract interest in the improvement and expansion of the town centre to service adequately a growing market. No detailed studies have been undertaken to quantify the volume of additional floorspace which might be supported; rather the Borough Council's approach has been one of attempting to encourage qualitative improvements through investment in the public infrastructure.
- 8.34 Opportunities for new development in the Town Centre are severely constrained by important parkland and areas of housing which closely crowd the commercial centre. These characteristics also ensure that the town retains its market town intimacy and appearance. However there are immediately adjacent to the town centre pockets of underused and vacant land and blocks of property which are likely to become available during the plan period for operational or relocation reasons. The Borough Council aims to take advantage of these redevelopment opportunities in order to achieve qualitative improvements in town centre shops and facilities and to enhance the overall environment, while taking the opportunity to assist in the delivery of the Inner Relief Road.

- 8.35 The evolution of a comprehensive strategy for the promotion and development of the central area of Loughborough has been founded upon two fundamental concerns:
- i) the town centre does not offer the size and quality of shopping units in prime locations necessary to attract the range and variety of retail representation befitting the role and status of the town; and
 - ii) the town centre does not offer the quality of environment or pedestrian friendly provisions now regarded as standard in competing high street locations and purpose built shopping centres.
- 8.36 The common factor bearing upon both areas of weakness is the presence of the A6 trunk road through the heart of the town which discourages investment in the severed portion of the central area and introduces noise, fumes, pollution and attendant risks of accidents into areas of major pedestrian activity.
- 8.37 Ideally the A6 and the through traffic associated with it should be diverted away from the town centre as an exercise in traffic management. Successive local plans since 1971 have sought to provide a solution in reserving land around the town centre variously to allow for the eventual construction of an Inner Circulatory Road or an Inner Relief Road. The Structure Plan makes provision for an Inner Relief Road and elsewhere in this plan the necessary reservation is the subject of a specific policy.
- 8.38 Funding of the Inner Relief Road remains uncertain; currently no provision is made in any programme of public schemes. Public funding might be encouraged if private contributions can be secured from related development. All four opportunity sites might be expected to attract greater volumes of traffic to the town centre and all four might be expected to benefit commercially from an environmentally attractive well serviced town centre. On that basis it is not unreasonable to seek to negotiate contributions provided the obligations are related to the development and reasonable in scale and proportion to the scheme.
- 8.39 Site assembly may well present difficulties on certain Opportunity Sites but the Borough Council has shown itself to be a willing partner in the use of its own land holdings and in the exercise of its powers of compulsory purchase. Incremental development of the opportunity sites is not unacceptable provided the potential of the remainder of the site is neither prevented nor seriously prejudiced. However, the Borough Council will use its best endeavours to facilitate or enable comprehensive redevelopment to maximise the economic advantage to the town centre as a whole.
- 8.40 Any development must respect the market town traditions and character of Loughborough, Despite the colonisation of the central area by national multiple traders the town retains in the fabric, style and scale of its buildings an independent tradition evolved over several generations, some of which contribute a unique sense of place by virtue of their individual character or setting. The open spaces too conserve Loughborough's medieval market town traditions which must be preserved and complemented in any new development.
- 8.41 Over recent years most new development in town centres has failed to make positive use of upper storeys to the detriment of the overall vitality of those centres. In particular housing has been displaced by new commercial development resulting in the de-population of town centres. The Council is anxious to reverse this trend and will expect proposals for the development of the Opportunity Sites to make positive use of upper storeys with particular encouragement for housing and other uses which will contribute to a lively town centre.
- 8.42 Staff and visitor car parking provision will be required, but may be provided in an accessible off-site location either directly or indirectly through the payment of a commuted sum. Alternatively the scale of related car parking might reasonably be reduced where the development is able to assist in the delivery of improved public transport facilities or amenities to encourage walking and cycling.
- 8.43 Two of the Opportunity Sites include public off-street car parking facilities, the capacity of which the town centre as a whole currently can ill afford to lose. However these facilities are owned and managed by the Borough Council which may negotiate appropriate terms and conditions for their disposal having regard to its overall car parking and town centre transportation strategy, using the capital receipts from any sale to acquire and develop alternative car parks as and when opportunities arise or to fund alternative initiatives to encourage greater use of public transport or walking and cycling.

- 8.44 Design briefs will be prepared for each Opportunity Site to indicate to prospective developers the most sensitive elevations and preferred orientation of the primary aspects of any development, having regard to the shape, size and location of the site concerned. The Borough Council will be anxious to encourage higher standards of design throughout such schemes with a view to avoiding the traditional neglect of service areas and car parking. Particular attention will be paid to siting, access, scale, materials, design of openings, roof space and setting within the streetscene. Implementation will be achieved through negotiations with developers and normal development control procedures.

Opportunity Site – Devonshire Square, Loughborough

8.45 POLICY CA/4(a)

Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of the Devonshire Square Opportunity site provided the ground floor uses fall primarily within the following classes (as defined by the Town and Country (Use Classes) Order 1987):

- i) shops (Class A1);**
- ii) financial and professional services (Class A2); and**
- iii) food and drink uses (Class A3).**

And provided the development would:

- a) avoid partial redevelopment where such an approach would prevent or seriously prejudice the redevelopment of the remainder of the defined Opportunity Site;**
- b) orientate primary frontages towards pedestrian preference areas where possible;**
- c) retain buildings which make an individually important contribution to the existing townscape;**
- d) create new areas of open space for repose and public interaction with pedestrian links to Queens Park;**
- e) screen from wider view service areas and storage compounds;**
- f) respect through design, scale, mass and materials, the local tradition of individual buildings sharing common building lines enclosing Devonshire Square; and**
- g) make a positive contribution to the vitality of the town centre; in particular elements of housing should be provided wherever possible and preferably at first floor and above.**

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to assist in the provision of those elements of the Loughborough Inner Relief Road necessary to service adequately the redevelopment proposed.

(See also in particular Policies ST/3, EV/16, TR/2, TR/5 TR/18)

- 8.46 The Devonshire Square site extends over approximately 1.2 hectares sandwiched between Queens Park and Devonshire Square. The site already enjoys the benefit of a primary retail frontage to the Core Area within the more firmly established sector of the town centre lying to the south of the A6 corridor. As such the retention of the site for primarily retail and allied uses is important to permit the consolidation of shopping uses within a compact and well defined centre in the event that attempts to realise the opportunity sites to the north of the A6 corridor should prove difficult.
- 8.47 Housing and office uses could be appropriate on elevations fronting the park and above ground floor level. A high quality design solution is called for including the achievement of a satisfactory relationship with Queens Park and appropriate treatment of the principal frontages having regard to the character of neighbouring property. In any scheme the

opportunity will be taken to rationalise car parking provision and associated traffic circulation. The Borough Council has indicated its willingness to commit its own landholdings to the achievement of a successful solution.

Opportunity Sites – Fennel Street, Baxter Gate and Leicester Road, Loughborough

8.48 POLICY CA/4(b)

Planning permission will be granted for the redevelopment of the identified Opportunity Sites at Fennel Street, Baxter Gate and Leicester Road provided the ground floor uses fall within the following classes (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987):

- i) shops (Class A1);**
- ii) financial and professional services (Class A2);**
- iii) food and drink uses (Class A3);**
- iv) office (Class B1(a));**
- v) hotels (Class C1);**
- vi) residential institutions (Class C2);**
- vii) dwelling houses (Class C3);**
- viii) non-residential institutions (Class D1);**
- ix) assembly and leisure (Class D2);**

And provided the development would:

- a) avoid partial redevelopment where such an approach would prevent or seriously prejudice the redevelopment of the remainder of the defined Opportunity Site;**
- b) orientate primary frontages towards pedestrian preference areas where possible;**
- c) retain buildings which make an individually important contribution to the existing townscape;**
- d) create new areas of open space for repose and public interaction;**
- e) screen from wider view service areas and storage compounds; and**
- f) make a positive contribution to the vitality of the town centre; in particular elements of housing should be provided wherever possible and preferably at first floor and above.**

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate reasonably related contributions to assist in the provision of those elements of the Loughborough Inner Relief Road necessary to service adequately the redevelopment proposed.

(See also in Particular Policies ST/3, EV/16, TR/2, TR/5, TR/18)

- 8.49** The Borough Council is anxious to encourage development which could assist in the early delivery of an Inner Relief Road and permit the expansion of the town centre into the less favoured areas lying to the north and east of the A6 corridor. The combined effects of blight, uncertainty and severance from the central focus of shopping activity around the Market Place have resulted in a degree of under-investment which is reflected in the poorer environmental quality of this sector of the town centre. However the three identified Opportunity Sites are strategically ideally located and hold considerable potential for urban regeneration. Accordingly a flexible policy context is considered appropriate to enable a wide

range of uses in any suitable configuration which might assist in the delivery of the Inner Relief Road and associated environmental improvements.

- 8.50 The Fennel Street Opportunity site extends to approximately 2.8 hectares largely based upon the central bus station and adjacent multi-storey car park. Other significant land holdings include the former National Grid depot and stores the County Education Authority's Limehurst School Annexe. The balance of the site comprises a number of individual commercial and residential interests. The commercial viability of the site would be considerably enhanced by the implementation of the proposed Inner Relief Road which could be in part enabled by the redevelopment itself. With the prospect of good vehicular access and ample space for surface car parking the site has considerable opportunity for the development of a successful food store. In any scheme adequate provision will be required for a rationalised or relocated bus station facility commensurate with the future level of service and operational requirements which must be provided before the existing facility is removed.
- 8.51 The Baxter Gate Opportunity Site extends to approximately 1.2 hectares and is largely in the ownership of the Fosse Health Trust. When resources permit it is intended to relocate existing health services to a new unit to be built alongside the Loughborough Hospital off Epinal Way leaving the Baxter Gate premises surplus to requirements. The prospect of direct access from the proposed Inner Relief Road and improved links to the Market Place through pedestrian preference measures greatly enhances the commercial redevelopment potential of the site. It is apparent that Loughborough's image and relative attraction as a major shopping venue is particularly disadvantaged by the limited representation of national department stores and accordingly the Borough Council is anxious to encourage and promote such development. The Baxter Gate site is considered to be particularly well placed to accommodate such a prestigious shopping facility, although alternative development options are not excluded.
- 8.52 The Leicester Road Opportunity site comprises 0.6 hectare of mixed industrial and commercial uses largely held within a single ownership. Vacant and derelict property within the site detracts from local amenities to the detriment of adjacent residential properties and the image of the town centre overall. The potential for beneficial redevelopment is much enhanced by the prospect of an inner relief road. A range of alternative uses will be appropriate provided the necessary environmental improvements are secured.

Town Centre Services

- 8.53 Adjoining the main shopping areas of Loughborough's Town Centre are a number of areas containing a variety of uses which require or benefit from an edge of Town Centre location:
- i) Southfield Road;
 - ii) Forest Road;
 - iii) Rectory Place;
 - iv) Nottingham Road; and,
 - v) Leicester Road

These areas have differing characters and contexts which are reflected in the range of acceptable uses.

Town Centre Business Areas

8.54 POLICY CA/5

The following uses (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) will be permitted within the Southfield Road, Forest Road and Rectory Place Town Centre Business Areas as identified on the Proposals Map:

- i) financial and professional services (Class A2);
- ii) offices (Class B1(a));

- iii) **hotels (Class C1);**
- iv) **residential institutions (Class C2);**
- v) **non-residential institutions (Class D1); and**
- vi) **dwelling houses (Class C3).**

Provided that in the case of any proposals fronting Forest Road:

- a) **the existing building line and walls to the street frontage are retained;**
- b) **provision is made for off-street parking to the rear;**
- c) **a shop window frontage is not included; and,**
- d) **no harm is occasioned to the residential amenities of remaining dwellings by reason of noise intrusion, traffic movements or other disturbance.**

8.55 These service areas represent the major business and professional concentrations within the town and are somewhat detached from the shopping centre. The spread of retail development into these areas would conflict with the objectives of consolidating and improving shopping facilities in and around the Core Area and in particular would undermine the viability of attracting major retail development to the identified Opportunity Sites.

8.56 The spread of office and professional uses into Forest Road has to date been achieved without detriment to the established mature residential character of the street scene. Careful control exercised over the form and content of any further development will ensure the retention of this character and protect the residential amenities of remaining occupiers.

Town Centre Commercial Service Areas

8.57 POLICY CA/6

The following uses (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) will be permitted within the Nottingham Road and Leicester Road Town Centre Commercial Service Areas as identified on the Proposals Map:

- i) **shops (Class A1);**
- ii) **financial and professional services (Class A2);**
- iii) **food and drink (Class A3);**
- iv) **retail uses falling outside the definition of “shop” (Class A1);**
- v) **business (Class B1);**
- vi) **hotels (Class C1);**
- vii) **residential institutions (Class C2);**
- viii) **dwelling houses (Class C3);**
- ix) **non-residential institutions (Class D1); and,**
- x) **assembly and leisure (Class D2).**

Provided that:

- a) **any retail development would not unacceptably harm the retail character of the town centre;**
- b) **no material harm is occasioned to the residential amenities of adjacent buildings; and**
- c) **in the case of any new built development, a built frontage is retained to the back of the pavement to retain or replace the traditional pattern of development and associated street enclosure.**

- 8.58 The Nottingham Road and Leicester Road Service Areas are characterised by a wide diversity of land uses with no overall pattern discernable in their distribution. Typically many uses have occupied and adapted buildings to suit their particular purpose with minimal outlay in achieving a sensitive conversion. The shopping function is fragmented with a high turnover of occupancy and high vacancy rates. Those shops which survive are primarily involved in specialist or niche retailing sectors. The retailing function, already showing evidence of serious decline, is likely to be further isolated by the consolidation of shopping activities to the west of the proposed Inner Relief Road.
- 8.59 These areas will continue to provide a seed ground for new businesses with their supply of relatively inexpensive accommodation but vacancy rates, particularly in Nottingham Road, indicate an urgent need for new investment and this may bring a need also for new uses for land and buildings. A flexible planning approach is likely to lend maximum support to urban regeneration initiatives. In particular the areas are well placed to serve those retail uses excluded from the Core Area but which nonetheless benefit from an edge of Town Centre location. Any new retail use must not, however, harm the retail character of the town centre.
- 8.60 Both Service Areas abut and contain areas of housing and in these localities particular care will be exercised to protect standards of residential amenity enjoyed by occupiers in the assessment of development proposals. Furthermore the current evidence of decay and neglect will not provide an excuse for poor or inappropriate design in any new development: rather it poses a challenge to the restoration and improvement of the town's principal approach route from the east.

Pedestrian Preference in Loughborough Town Centre

8.61 POLICY CA/7

Measures will be introduced to limit vehicular access and traffic movement in order to give greater preference to pedestrians and to enable improvements to the pedestrian environment within the following streets:-

- i) Baxter Gate (between High Street and Lemyngton Street);**
- ii) Devonshire Square;**
- iii) Biggin Street;**
- iv) The A6 Corridor (between Derby Square and Woodgate);**

Subject to the provision of an alternative route for trunk road and cross town centre traffic, measures will be taken to close the A6 at Market Place to all motor vehicles with the exception of buses.

In the development of specific schemes the Borough Council will have regard to the particular needs for vehicular access for the emergency services, essential maintenance, people with disabilities, the servicing of shops and businesses, and to private car parks. In addition provision will be made for cycling consistent with pedestrian safety and comfort.

(See also in particular Policies TR/7 & TR/13)

- 8.62 Shoppers in Loughborough since the mid 1970's have been able to enjoy the traffic free environment afforded by the Carillon Court shopping centre. In 1979 Church Gate was pedestrianised with considerable success and more recently Market Place, Market Street and Cattle Market have been transformed to provide an attractive pedestrian friendly town centre during core shopping hours. These schemes will make a major contribution to the continued vitality and viability of Loughborough's town centre in partnership with related initiatives to improve access by a choice of transport modes, town centre management and special events.

- 8.63 As well received as pedestrian schemes undertaken to date have been, new purpose built supermarkets and shopping centres continue to establish higher standards of customer care and environmental quality which traditional town centres must match, or preferably exceed, if they are to remain competitive. To survive and prosper the town centre must emerge as the area where people want to shop rather than remain the area where they have to shop. Further improvements to the pedestrian environment will go some considerable way towards achieving that objective.
- 8.64 Improvements to provide for pedestrian preference and associated environmental enhancements may be undertaken at any time as and when resources permit but will be more effective when opportunities arise through proposals set out elsewhere in this plan to reduce on-street parking and remove unnecessary traffic movements.
- 8.65 Pedestrian preference measures may take various forms but will typically involve a combination of traffic management and calming schemes directed towards minimising the opportunity for pedestrian/vehicular conflict to deliver an environment within which people can move about the town centre freely in a sense of safety and comfort.
- 8.66 Ultimately the provision of the Inner Relief Road will deliver the prospect of closing the existing A6 to through traffic to bring together the two halves of the town centre opening up at one and the same time the commercial potential of the land currently lying on the “less favoured” side of the A6 corridor.
- 8.67 It is however abundantly clear that the closure of all streets at all times to all traffic is simply not possible, nor indeed desirable. Provision must be made to permit access for emergency vehicles and deliveries, while bus services must be afforded the maximum degree of town centre penetration compatible with the wider objectives of the plan to ensure that they enjoy a competitive advantage in the form of passenger convenience and attractive journey times. Special provision is also likely to be required by town centre businesses whose customers require vehicular access, central area residents and the disabled.
- 8.68 The improvements to the pedestrian environment will typically include the provision of coordinated street furniture, sympathetic lighting, directional signposting, appropriate surfaces and complementary elements of hard and soft landscaping. The overall objective will be to create a town centre environment which is accessible and comfortable for all sections of the community including people using push chairs and wheelchairs and the ambulant disabled. Streetscaping schemes will address such issues as the provision of adequate and convenient car parking, the creation of important footpath links marked by reasonably even surfaces and improved access to all publicly used buildings.
- 8.69 It is not intended that all improvements for pedestrian preference should be implemented at once, but rather incrementally as and when opportunities and resources permit, using experimental periods where appropriate. Before implementing any scheme the Borough Council will invite full consultation with all interested bodies including the traders, Civic Trust, Disability Forum, taxi companies and bus operators.

Town Centre Management

- 8.70 Shopping centre management is an accepted practice in the private sector and is a key element in achieving the popular image projected by the contemporary malled shopping centre. The traditional town centre presents an infinitely more complex system being divest of singular ownership and overall executive control and therefore more demanding of sensitive management.
- 8.71 The Borough Council is persuaded of the need to provide a focal point for the management of Loughborough’s town centre and has appointed a town centre manager in partnership with the local business community. The duties and responsibilities of the post embrace contributions to:
- better communication between the private and public sectors;
 - effective liaison and consultation with all town centre users groups and service providers;

- research into retail trends;
 - improved identification and use of resources;
 - coordination of the promotion of the town centre; and
 - more effective achievement of local plan objectives.
- 8.72 The role of Loughborough Town centre as the primary shopping centre in the Borough is supported by a tier of district centres. These comprise the following village and purpose built centres;
- i) Gorse Covert District Centre, Loughborough;
 - ii) Shelthorpe District Centre, Loughborough;
 - iii) Anstey Village Centre;
 - iv) Barrow upon Soar Village Centre;
 - v) Birstall Village Centre;
 - vi) Shepshed Town Centre;
 - vii) Sileby Village Centre;
 - viii) Syston Town Centre; and
 - ix) Thurmaston Superstore and adjacent units.
- 8.73 These centres are anchored by a large supermarket and provide a broad range of services for their immediately surrounding communities and those of outlying smaller settlements benefiting from only minimal shopping facilities. All are served by frequent, regular bus or rail services and as such form an important component in encouraging a distribution of shopping and related services which is both convenient and sustainable. The established town and village centres have long served as a focus for the communities they serve and patterns of land use are emerging around Loughborough's planned district centres which build upon their interdependence and convenience.
- 8.74 The extent of the existing district centres is shown on the Proposals Map. Consolidation and improvement of these centres will ensure that they retain and enhance their overall vitality and viability for the benefit of the communities they serve.

Acceptable Uses in District Centres

8.75 POLICY CA/8

Planning permission for development within the designated district centres falling within the following uses (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) will be granted subject to satisfactory design and adequate provision for related vehicular requirements:-

- i) shops (Class A1);**
- ii) financial and professional services (Class A2);**
- iii) food and drink uses (Class A3);**
- iv) business (Class B1);**
- v) dwelling houses (Class C3);**
- vi) non-residential institutional uses (Class D1);**
- vii) assembly and leisure (Class D2).**

Any development proposal should serve to protect or enhance the vitality and viability of the centre, be of a scale appropriate to the centre and not result in the marginalisation or fragmentation of the retail function of that centre.

- 8.76 A variety of uses will be appropriate in district centres to serve the needs of local communities, including shops, financial and professional services, food and drink, business, residential, non-residential and leisure uses. But, whilst a range of uses can help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of a centre the result of too many non-retail uses can be a serious decline in a centre's overall health and vibrancy. What constitutes a healthy balance of retail and other uses will be dependent upon the circumstances of that particular centre. When applications, are submitted for new uses within district centres, account will be taken of the current mix of uses and how this has shifted over time, including the number and proportion of under-used and vacant premises. Permission for new uses will only be granted if they would help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of a centre and would not marginalise or fragment its retail function. Any proposals must also be acceptable in design and access terms.

Local Centres

- 8.77 Local centres comprise small urban shopping parades and minor village centres which primarily serve the day to day needs of the local community. Their local role is such that a high proportion of customers will tend to shop on foot.
- 8.78 Several villages have experienced already a severe contraction in the retail function of their centres. Although the remaining shops serve an important purpose, particularly for people without access to private transport, their future viability will depend upon the extent to which local people continue to patronise them. Development which will support local centres will normally be permitted. Policy CA/1 will apply to proposals to change the use of a local shop to other uses.

Acceptable Uses in Local Centres

8.79 POLICY CA/9

Planning permission for development within the designated local centres falling within the following uses (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) will be granted subject to satisfactory design and adequate provision for related vehicular requirements:-

- i) **shops (Class A1);**
- ii) **financial and professional services (Class A2);**
- iii) **food and drink (Class A3);**
- iv) **business (Class B1);**
- v) **dwelling houses (Class C3); and**
- vi) **non-residential institutions (Class D1).**

Provided that:-

- a) **sufficient shops remain to serve the daily needs of the locality;**
- b) **a shop window frontage is included or retained where the appearance of the overall frontage is primarily retail in character;**
- c) **any non shopping element does not prejudice the viability and attractiveness of the local centre as a shopping centre; and**
- d) **the scale of the development is well related to the size of the centre.**

In the case of food and drink uses (Class A3) planning permission will not be granted where the development would have an adverse impact upon neighbouring residential amenities by reason of cooking odours, noise or other disturbance particularly during unsociable hours.

Assembly and leisure uses (Class D2) will be permitted only where they comply with the above requirements, avoid any adverse impact upon neighbouring residential amenities and can be shown to serve the needs of the immediate community alone and would not attract significant patronage from outside the locality.

- 8.80 Many local centres are typified by a loose grouping of shops and related services, local surgeries, community buildings and housing. Especially in the villages there is little consolidation of retail uses. While planning policies must allow for this variable diverse pattern of land use care must be exercised to protect residential amenities. In local centres development should be well related to the centre in terms of its scale in order that it does not encourage more and longer journeys, especially by car.

New Local Centres

8.81 POLICY CA/10

Planning permission will be granted for the provision of new local centres in association with major housing commitments and allocations in the following locations:

- i) land south of Hazel Road, Loughborough; and**
- ii) land north of Harrowgate Drive, Wanlip.**

In each case the development concerned will be required to meet the following criteria:

- a) the overall scale, content and character of the local centre should not have any detrimental impact upon Loughborough town centre or any of the Borough's designated district centres;**
- b) the local centre must be designed as an integral and focal part of the wider development scheme on a site easily accessed by pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists, and adjacent to public transport routes;**
- c) the local centre must be located in close association with other community buildings such as schools, meeting halls and leisure facilities; and**
- d) car parking areas must be landscaped to enhance amenity and afford natural screening from wider view;**
- e) an area within the local centre, easily accessible from the main concourse but screened from wider view must be laid out and retained for the purposes of providing for a waste materials recycling collection bay.**

(See also in particular Policies ST/3, TR/5, TR/18)

- 8.82 The present distribution of shopping provision in the Borough is generally adequate in relation to the needs of the various settlements within the Plan Area. However, where major new housing development is to take place there is likely to be a need for additional local shopping provision.
- 8.83 The majority of Charnwood's outstanding housing requirement is to be provided by means of two major residential developments. The Proposals Map identifies broad locations for the provision of new local shopping centres in association with these developments but their precise location will be determined following the preparation of detailed site layouts. It is essential that any new shopping proposal should only be of a scale necessary to serve local needs so as to avoid any detrimental impact upon the vitality and viability of Loughborough Town Centre or any district centre.

Use of Upper Floors

8.84 POLICY CA/11

Within Loughborough Town Centre and its associated service areas, district centres and local centres planning permission will be granted for the following uses (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) of upper floors, subject to the retention of residential amenities where adjacent property continues to be occupied:

- i) shops (Class A1);
- ii) financial and professional services (Class A2);
- iii) food and drink uses (Class A3);
- iv) offices (Class B1(a));
- v) dwellings (Class C3);
- vi) non residential institutions (Class D1); and
- vii) assembly and leisure uses (Class D2).

Planning permission for new built development within the centres listed above will be granted provided that the development is of a scale appropriate to the centre it seeks to serve, and subject to the provisions set out above and to the inclusion of positive proposals for the use of premises at first floor and above which will contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre. In particular elements of housing should be provided wherever possible.

- 8.85 Within many commercial centres space above the ground floor is often vacant or underused, especially in shops which have formerly been dwellings. This property represents an underused resource and the neglect of upper storeys is often evident in the deterioration of the fabric of buildings above the fascia level to the detriment of the overall townscape quality.
- 8.86 The positive use of upper floors has economic, environmental, social and financial benefits since it can supplement the income from ground floor uses to permit investment in the property overall and thereby promote urban regeneration.
- 8.87 The use of upper floors for residential purposes in particular offers a source of affordable housing for the repopulation of central areas returning life and activity outside normal business hours and encourages the natural surveillance of property. The Borough Council has sought to actively pursue the reoccupation of vacant upper floors in partnership with property owners and local Housing Associations under the "Living over the Shop" campaign. However in pursuing the policy the Borough Council will be mindful of the need to avoid conflict with security and servicing of ground floor businesses. In particular it is recognised that in some circumstances the provision of housing above banks, buildings societies and other financial services would be unsuitable where adequate security measures cannot be incorporated into the overall design and construction.
- 8.88 New housing provision above ground floor uses will be specifically sought in the development of the Opportunity Sites identified in Loughborough Town Centre in compliance with Structure Plan policies to make provision for residential development in central areas.

Shop Front Design

8.89 POLICY CA/12

In granting planning permission for shop fronts in new buildings the Borough Council will require that they be designed as an integral part of the overall frontage having regard in particular to the style, materials and proportions of the building and to the overall character of the area.

Replacement shop fronts will be permitted provided they maintain or improve the appearance of the frontage into which they will be placed and relate well to surrounding buildings and the wider street scene. Shop fronts will be required to reflect the architectural composition of the existing frontage, particularly where a commercial ground floor user crosses several facades of differing character.

(See also in particular Policy EV/16)

- 8.90 Poorly designed and unsympathetic shop fronts can substantially damage the character and appearance of shopping areas. In other policies of this plan the Borough Council is seeking to improve, through pedestrian preference and other measures, the visual attractiveness of the Borough's shopping areas. These policies aim to ensure that the design of new and replacement shop fronts does not detract from these wider initiatives. Where older shop fronts, designed as an integral part of the building, survive intact in a good condition, they should normally be retained.

Shop Front Security

8.91 POLICY CA/13

Planning permission for the fitting of roller shutters and security grills will be granted provided that all the fittings are colour coated to match the shop front, designed to be unobtrusive during hours of business and allow visibility into the shop when in place.

- 8.92 Proposals for security fittings which would have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of a listed building or conservation area will normally be refused.
- 8.93 Whilst the need for security is recognised, the Borough Council is concerned about the visual impact of externally fitted shutters and grills on the streetscene. Poorly designed, they can be particularly obtrusive and can have a deadening effect on the character and vitality of shopping areas.

Amusement Centres

8.94 POLICY CA/14

Amusement centres will be permitted only within Loughborough Town Centre, the town centre service areas off Nottingham Road and Leicester Road and within district and local centres provided that:

- i) they are not located within the primary frontages of the Town Centre Core Area;**
- ii) they would not exceed the non-shopping frontage allowances specified in relation to the relevant policy area;**
- iii) they would not cause any detriment to the amenities of adjacent housing, schools, churches, hospitals or hotels by reason of noise, or other disturbance particularly after 6pm and during weekends and public holidays; and,**
- iv) a shop window frontage is provided and a window display of visual interest is maintained.**

Amusement centres will not be permitted in other locations.

- 8.95 Amusement centres will normally be acceptable in areas of mixed commercial development where noise and other disturbance generated by the use and its clientele will not result in any nuisance to neighbouring residential or institutional premises. They will not be acceptable in locations where the juxtaposition of residential and commercial uses would not be conducive to the integration of an amusement centre. Nor will they be acceptable in the primary shopping frontages listed in Policy CA/2 or in other locations where they would fragment or marginalise the retail function to an unacceptable degree.

Farm Shops

8.96 POLICY CA/15

Planning permission for the establishment of farm shops will be granted provided:

- i) the shop is ancillary to the main agricultural enterprise;
- ii) the shop is accommodated within an existing building, or where this cannot be achieved for reasons of limited space, hygiene or operational safety, any additional development is located adjacent to buildings on the site;
- iii) adequate site access arrangements can be made;
- iv) adequate provision is made within the site for customer car parking and servicing;
- v) the development would not undermine the commercial viability of an existing village shop which is better placed to service the needs of its surrounding community; and
- vi) the development would not by reason of its scale or character give rise to additional traffic on local roads to the detriment of rural amenities or generate significant single purpose trips by private car.

8.97 Planning permission is not required where farm produce is sold from the holding on which it is produced. In other circumstances planning permission will be required. Farm shops can help to meet demand from consumers who want fresh produce at the point of production and contribute to diversity in the rural economy. However farm shops should be associated with existing agricultural enterprises and buildings and should not appear as overtly commercial in a rural setting. Nor should farm shops be permitted to undermine the viability of existing village shops which are otherwise well located to serve local communities without the need to rely on the private car for local shopping trips.

8.98 While farm shops can encourage diversity of economy activity in rural areas they may, if not carefully controlled, give rise to excessive traffic movements on rural roads. Such traffic is likely to be seriously damaging to the character and ambience of the countryside and represents a profligate use of non renewable energy resources, contrary to the aim of encouraging sustainable development and growth.

Out of Centre Retailing

8.99 Over recent years there has been significant growth in the out of centre retail sector as evidenced by the development of retail warehouses and suburban supermarkets. In previous local plans the Borough Council has sought to make provision for such development through the allocation of specific sites which have subsequently been granted planning permission.

8.100 In Loughborough the demand for out of centre supermarkets has been harnessed successfully to enable the development of an entirely new district centre at Gorse Covert and to revitalise an ageing district centre at Shelthorpe. Each centre is designed to service major areas of residential growth at the margins of the County Town. A new district centre has similarly been achieved at Thurmaston with the intention of servicing the growing communities within the Wreake Valley.

8.101 Retail warehouse development has been concentrated primarily within Loughborough, initially in the form of free standing units on industrial estates and more latterly in purpose built retail warehouse parks. Some 9,000m² (gross) have been developed within the Willowbrook Retail Park and a further 11,000m² (gross) has been developed on a 3ha site situated at Jubilee Drive. The Borough Council has sought to impose conditions restricting the sub division of units and the range of goods which might be sold in order to protect the vitality and viability of nearby shopping centres.

- 8.102 These developments have undoubtedly improved the range and choice of goods available to the consumer and provided for convenient and efficient shopping facilities, particularly for those with access to the private car. Furthermore it is clear that Loughborough and the other traditional shopping centres within the Borough simply could not have accommodated growth on this scale.
- 8.103 However the whole thrust of government advice is now directed towards the promotion of new shopping development within town centres and support for local and neighbourhood centres. These objectives and the principles of the sequential approach to site selection for retail development are incorporated in Policy CA/1. All proposals for new out of centre retail development and for the change of use or variation of conditions in respect of existing facilities will be evaluated against that policy.

CHAPTER 9: RECREATION & TOURISM

Introduction

- 9.1 Because the Borough includes a mix of quite large settlements and attractive rural areas, the majority of residents enjoy access to a wide range of built, formal and informal recreational opportunities. The main built facilities, including a well used Leisure Centre, are focused on Loughborough, recognised worldwide as a centre of sporting excellence due to the presence of the University. The Charnwood Forest, the Rivers Soar and Wreake and developing attractions such as Watermead Country Park also provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation. The Charnwood Forest, and especially Bradgate Park continue to be a major recreational attraction for Leicestershire residents and people from further afield. The Great Central Steam Railway is also a major tourist attraction.
- 9.2 Whilst a first glance at recreational opportunities in the Borough would suggest few problems, a closer look reveals inadequate facilities in many of the smaller villages, a lack of indoor facilities in the larger settlements, low levels of amenity open space within existing housing areas, and over-use pressures on the more popular, informal countryside facilities, most notably in the Charnwood Forest.

National & Strategic Policy

- 9.3 PPG17 emphasises the Government's commitment to the promotion of opportunities for sport and recreation and the important role it sees for planning to ensure that adequate land and water resources are available to meet the needs for both organised sport and informal recreation. The guidance note recognises the important amenity as well as recreational value of many open spaces, particularly within urban areas.
- 9.4 The strategy of the County Council for recreation in Leicestershire is set out in the Structure Plan together with the Recreation Strategy for Leicestershire. This strategy establishes a series of aims and priorities for the safeguarding and enhancement of recreational facilities and opportunities in the County.

The Charnwood Perspective

- 9.5 Within Charnwood a careful balance needs to be struck between the promotion of further recreational opportunities to meet identified deficiencies and the management of recreational pressures in the more sensitive areas to safeguard their special character. In this context the Local Plan aims to:
- i) protect and improve urban open spaces for sport, recreation and amenity in accordance with defined standards, together with the establishment of new outdoor and indoor facilities for recreation and entertainment in current areas of deficiency and in association with new development;
 - ii) develop and support tourist facilities and attractions in the Borough for the purposes of diversifying the rural economy and bringing about environmental improvements for the benefit of both residents and visitors to the area.
- 9.6 These broad aims translate into more specific objectives relating to facility provision and the protection of existing facilities.

The key objectives of the Plan for recreation and tourism are to:

- i) encourage and, where resources allow, initiate schemes for the provision of additional recreational facilities to meet identified need;
- ii) encourage recreational developments in the countryside in keeping with the areas landscape character, particularly focusing on opportunities in the National Forest area;

- iii) ensure that all new housing developments make provision for well designed and located play spaces in keeping with the Borough Council's specified open space standards;
- iv) encourage the development of a network of linear routes within the Borough for informal recreation;
- v) support further small scale initiatives for informal recreation and tourism development in the river valleys in keeping with their special environmental character;
- vi) ensure that suitable sites within the Borough are identified to meet the demand for noise generating sports activities.

Formal Recreation Facilities

9.7 POLICY RT/1

Planning permission will be granted for the expansion of existing or the development of new formal recreation facilities within or adjoining built up areas provided that:

- i) **satisfactory car and cycle parking can be provided;**
- ii) **the site is accessible by a range of means of transport;**
- iii) **the form, scale and design of any proposed buildings is in keeping with the character of the area;**
- iv) **the proposal is well related to existing community and recreation facilities wherever possible;**
- v) **the proposal has no adverse impact by reason of noise, impact of floodlighting or other nuisance;**
- vi) **the site is adequately screened and landscaped and existing on-site features including trees and hedgerows, are retained as far as possible;**
- vii) **the proposal includes full details of any intended floodlighting, covering the height of columns, shielding, hours of use and method and intensity of illumination, so that the impact on surrounding residential amenities can be adequately assessed.**

9.8 The Charnwood Recreation Strategy published in 1984 noted the concentration of formal facilities for recreation on the Loughborough area and the presence of quite significant deficiencies in terms of both built facilities and playing fields in many of the larger villages. Many of these identified deficiencies remain, although the recreational facilities proposed as part of the Soar Valley Centre at Mountsorrel will help "plug the gap" in available facilities in this area. The Borough Council will continue to liaise with the Parish Councils on the opportunities for further provision to meet identified deficiencies.

9.9 For part of the Borough there continue to be deficiencies in available playing fields. Improving the quality of existing facilities and supporting increased dual use at schools and other sites may help to resolve some of these problems. This policy seeks to encourage the provision of further recreational facilities to meet these identified deficiencies as opportunities arise.

Informal and Land Extensive Facilities

9.10 POLICY RT/2

Planning permission for informal recreation facilities and land extensive uses such as golf courses will be granted on the fringes of built up areas and elsewhere outside the defined Limits to Development provided:

- i) **the proposal does not include environmentally damaging or visually obtrusive built development;**

- ii) **any buildings proposed are necessary and ancillary to the recreational activity and are located and designed so that their impact on the surroundings is minimised;**
- iii) **adequate parking and access can be provided;**
- iv) **the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape would not be adversely affected;**
- v) **the site is suitably landscaped and screened and existing natural features within the site are retained wherever possible;**
- vi) **the proposal would not result in the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land;**
- vii) **sites of ecological, archaeological and geological significance would not be adversely affected;**
- viii) **any existing public rights of way are safeguarded.**

Proposals for large scale recreational development adding unacceptably to recreational pressure on the Charnwood Forest will be resisted.

- 9.11 Recreational needs and opportunities are not restricted to the main urban centres. Many of the smaller communities in the rural part of the Borough have limited access to formal recreation facilities. Sensitively designed and located, recreational uses can have a place in the countryside. PPG17 also emphasises the opportunities for the location of recreational facilities on the urban fringe where such uses can act as physical and visual buffers between agricultural and urban uses.

Play Spaces in New Development

9.12 POLICY RT/3

In granting planning permission for housing developments of more than 10 dwellings for primarily family occupation the Borough Council will require the provision of equipped play areas for children on the basis of the following standards:

- i) **75 sq. metre per 10 dwellings for children's equipped playgrounds; and**
- ii) **125 sq. metre per 10 dwellings for other children's play spaces.**

For developments of less than 10 dwellings, where the proposal would result in or add to a deficiency in play space in an area, the Borough Council may require the payment of a commuted sum in scale with the development as a contribution to improving local recreational deficiencies.

- 9.13 Without adequate open space provision, new developments proposed in the Plan could place unacceptable pressure on existing recreational facilities. It is difficult to "add back in" open space once a site has been developed. It is therefore important that the standards of open space provision are met in all new housing developments at the outset. In areas of existing or potential deficiency in open space provision, even small scale developments could put unacceptable additional pressure on existing available recreation facilities. In these instances a payment, in scale with the development, may be sought as a contribution to the improvement of nearby sport and recreation or open space facilities.
- 9.14 In the provision of children's play areas it has been common practice for developers to leave the equipping of facilities to the relevant Parish or to the Borough Council. Inevitably this has resulted in a delay in the installation of equipment until after the completion of the development and the subsequent adoption of the open space by the managing agency, by which time new homeowners have often developed a resistance to the provision of play areas close to their properties. The requirement upon the developer to equip any facility will ensure the delivery of appropriate play areas in the locations intended with the full knowledge of prospective home buyers. The range of equipment required will be subject to negotiation with the Borough Council.

Youth/Adult Play in New Development

9.15 POLICY RT/4

In granting planning permission for residential development, the Borough Council will require the provision of appropriate recreational facilities on the basis of 425 sq metres of recreational space per 10 dwellings. Where the necessary land is not immediately available within or adjacent to the site, the Borough Council will seek to negotiate the payment of a commuted sum in scale with the development as a contribution to the provision of recreational facilities.

- 9.16 The Borough Council is anxious to provide adequate recreational facilities for the population of the Borough, particularly where the recreation space provision falls well below the NPFA's recommended minimum standard. The minimum standard for facilities for youth/adult use is 1.6-1.8ha per 1,000 population, which equates to 425 sq metre per 10 dwellings. Where there is an identified need, new residential development will be required to provide the minimum standard of youth/adult play space.
- 9.17 Where the proposed development site is within the National Forest, the Borough Council will allow the developer to provide tree planting in line with National Forest guidelines in place of youth/adult play space where it is appropriate.

Amenity Open Space In New Development

9.18 POLICY RT/5

In addition to the provision of areas of play space, the Borough Council in granting planning permission for all new housing developments of more than 10 dwellings, will require suitably landscaped areas of amenity open space to a standard of 38 sq. metre per 10 dwellings.

- 9.19 As well as space specifically designed for children's play, new housing developments should also include areas of amenity open space well related to the proposed footpath networks. Well designed amenity space planned as an integral part of the development can make a significant contribution to the character of new housing areas.
- 9.20 Where the proposed development site is within the National Forest the Borough Council will allow the developer to provide tree planting in line with National Forest Guidelines in place of amenity open space where it is appropriate.

Design of Play-Areas

9.21 POLICY RT/6

In the determination of planning applications for development giving rise to the need for related play spaces, the Borough Council will take into account the need for such areas to be designed so that they:

- i) **can be accessed safely and conveniently by all sections of the community. All properties should be within 400m of an equipped play area and 200m of smaller incidental play areas;**
- ii) **are well related to any existing or proposed local community facilities;**
- iii) **form a focal part of the development, sited in prominent positions open to public view;**
- iv) **are not detrimental to the amenities enjoyed by nearby residents;**
- v) **can be easily maintained with convenient access for mowing machinery;**
- vi) **successfully accommodate existing ecological interests and encourage the establishment of new wildlife habitats.**

- 9.22 It is not just the total amount of play space provided in new developments that is important. Attractive, well used and safe play areas need to be carefully designed as an integral part of new housing developments, fitting in to an overall network of neighbourhood and district open spaces and play areas. The detailed design of play spaces should also take account of the vital role these areas play as part of the network of wildlife habitats in urban areas. The NPFA '6 Acre Standard' of 1992 provides further information on the design of the play spaces.

Safeguarding Existing Recreational Land and Buildings

9.23 POLICY RT/7

Planning permission for the development of land or buildings currently or last in use for recreational purposes will not be granted unless:

- i) an equivalent range of replacement facilities are provided well located to serve the local community; or**
- ii) the recreation facilities can be retained or enhanced through redevelopment of a small part of the site; or**
- iii) the land or buildings have been the subject of a local authority appraisal and have been confirmed as unnecessary for recreational purposes having regard to the existing and predicted requirements of the community supplemented by an assessment of local circumstances. For recreational land the NPFA minimum standard of 2.4ha per 1,000 population will be applied on the following basis:**

- 0.6-0.8ha children's playing spaces;**
- 1.6-1.8ha for outdoor sport with at least 1.2ha being sports pitches.**

and provided significant trees, open spaces, or other features important in defining the amenities of the locality would not be lost.

- 9.24 It is important that existing recreational sites, including playing fields, children's play areas and built facilities such as leisure centres are retained wherever possible as once lost to other development they are often hard to replace. This is particularly the case with playing fields. In exceptional circumstances where replacement facilities will be provided or there is a surplus in recreational facilities in the locality, development may be acceptable provided that the site does not make an important contribution to the character of the settlement.

Replacement Derby Road Playing Fields, Hathern

9.25 POLICY RT/8

Planning permission will be granted for the development of playing fields on land adjacent to the proposed Dishley Grange employment site, as indicated on the Proposals Map, provided any associated development is:

- i) ancillary to the use of the land for outdoor sport and recreation;**
- ii) small in scale and located so as to retain the open and undeveloped character of the landscape; and**
- iii) suitably landscaped in order to screen built features, structures and areas of car parking from wider view.**

- 9.26 The development of the existing Derby Road playing fields for employment purposes will displace three cricket squares, four football pitches and four hockey pitches and remove from public use the landscape margins of the formal playing areas. Minimum disruption to sporting interests and casual recreation needs will be best served by the relocation of these facilities to a suitable site within the same general locality.

- 9.27 The line of the distributor road proposed in association with the employment allocation marks a logical and obvious limit to the northern expansion of Loughborough. The land between Hathern and the employment site is variously designated as Green Wedge or countryside and throughout falls within the Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value. Recreation use is entirely in keeping with these policies provided any accommodation for changing, clubrooms and maintenance can be designed and located so as to be unobtrusive in order to preserve the open and undeveloped character of the landscape. Landscape planting may mitigate the impact of development and add to the amenity of the countryside within an area of modest tree and hedgerow cover.

Recreation Land, Lanes Close, Sileby

9.28 POLICY RT/9

A site of about 5.2ha (12.8a) off Lanes Close, Sileby as shown on the Proposals Map is allocated for recreational purposes provided:

- i) vehicular access is taken from Lanes Close;**
 - ii) significant block planting and landscaping is provided along the northern and eastern boundaries;**
 - iii) an area of open space is created along the eastern edge extending the existing open space network along the Sileby Brook corridor;**
 - iv) an area is landscaped and laid out to provide a car parking area;**
 - v) pedestrian access is from Lanes Close and the Sileby Brook corridor;**
 - vi) a safe pedestrian route is provided to the Highgate County Primary School.**
- 9.29 An assessment of recreation provision in Sileby against the NPFA standards indicates a significant deficiency of space for outdoor sports and children's playing space. The Parish Council has for some years sought improvements in recreational facilities and is concerned about the number of teams playing outside the parish.
- 9.30 A previous proposal of the adopted 'Soar Valley Local Plan' to use land off Cemetery Road has proved impracticable to implement. Land to the east of the village off Mountsorrel Lane is within the washland of the river Soar and forms part of the defined Soar Valley Area of Local Landscape Value. The site now proposed to the north of the Heathcote Drive estate is close to the local school. It provides the opportunity for new sports pitches and general recreational space to serve the village's needs.
- 9.31 The new recreational area must be of a design and layout which reflect a location at the edge of the village, close to a school and housing areas. The opportunity should be taken to create strong links into the wider footpath and open space networks. Vehicular access must be from Lanes Close. There shall be no pedestrian access from Parsons Drive and Barnards Drive. A safe, direct footway link to the local school must be provided.

New Recreation Land, South of Hazel Road and Manor Drive, Loughborough

9.32 POLICY RT/10

Land shown on the Proposals Map adjacent to the eastern edge of the proposed housing site to the south of Hazel Drive and Manor Road is allocated for recreation purposes. Proposals for such development will be permitted provided that:

- i) any built development is ancillary to the enjoyment of the open space;**
- ii) vehicular access is taken from the proposed distributor road;**
- iii) landscaping is provided on the site's northern and eastern boundaries;**

- iv) **pedestrian and cycle routes are created linking into housing areas and the proposed linear park; and**
- v) **a landscaped car park is provided.**

(See also in particularly CT/1, CT/2 & CT/6)

- 9.33 There is a need to secure new public open space on the south side of Loughborough to cater for both formal and informal recreation, and this provision will become even more necessary as the population expands. A site of 3.3ha, has therefore, been allocated for this purpose at the eastern edge of the proposed new housing development where it can be readily accessed by both existing and new residents through a network of footpaths and cycle routes linking into the nearby proposed linear park.
- 9.34 The allocated site forms part of the designated area of local separation that covers the gap between the proposed southern edge of Loughborough urban area and Woodthorpe village. The new recreation area must therefore be designed and laid out in such a way as to maintain the degree of separation between the existing and planned built-up areas of these settlements. Any new built development must be ancillary to the enjoyment of the open space and well located in terms of its impact on the character of the area. Policies CT/1, CT/2 and CT/6 will also apply.
- 9.35 In order to avoid recreation trips through residential streets the sole vehicular access to the site must be from the proposed distributor road serving the new housing development. Car parking will also need to be provided and should be well landscaped in order to respect the site's countryside setting.
- 9.36 The developer will also be required to make arrangements for the long term maintenance of the open space. The Council will, however, be prepared to accept responsibility for maintenance provided that the design and construction are to a satisfactory standard and an adequate commuted payment is offered by the developer. This will be secured through planning conditions or if necessary a legal agreement under Section 106.

Natural Green Space

9.37 POLICY RT/11

Planning permission for development which would have a detrimental impact upon natural green space within or adjoining the defined Limits to Development of settlements will be refused.

The Council will encourage the establishment of natural green spaces as part of the open space provision in all new housing developments.

- 9.38 As well as the more formal areas of open space within urban areas, natural green spaces, those areas of land and water which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals, are much valued both for their ecological interest and as informal recreational areas. Often, through careful and sympathetic design, areas of open space in new housing development can be established as more informal natural green space. The Council will encourage developers to include areas of natural green space as part of their open space provision and will safeguard existing areas from damaging development.

Structural Open Space Provision In New Development

9.39 POLICY RT/12

In granting planning permission for the development of sites allocated in this Plan the Borough Council will require the associated provision of areas of open space for recreation, amenity, structural landscaping and natural green space in the general locations shown on the Proposals Map.

- 9.40 All new development will be expected to provide open space for recreation and amenity in accordance with the standards set out in policies RT/3 to RT/5 of this plan. Structural landscaping will also be required to ensure that all new development remains compatible within the wider landscape and is supported by a proper balance of land uses. Specific requirements are set out in respect of each site allocated for development and are shown on the Proposals Map for the avoidance of doubt. The importance of these areas of structural open space is such that without their provision development would not be considered appropriate and planning permission could not be granted.

Allsopps Lane, Loughborough – Recreation and Amenity Area

9.41 POLICY RT/13

Planning permission will be granted for landscaping, recreation and amenity purposes on approximately 18ha (44 acres) of reclaimed land off Allsopps Lane, Loughborough.

(See also in particular policy H/8)

- 9.42 The former domestic refuse tip off Allsopps Lane extends to approximately 19ha (47 acres). Tipping activities have ceased and the site has been capped with imported material in readiness for its restoration. Settlement and land fill gas emissions preclude the possibility of permanent built development.
- 9.43 The site is particularly well located to provide for the informal recreation needs of neighbouring communities where the dense pattern of Victorian housing has resulted in little public open space provision and access to the surrounding countryside is limited. Continuing settlement will render impractical the use of the site for formal playing fields. However restoration to informal parkland, community woodland and wildlife habitats is both beneficial and achievable with the assistance of grant aid and the voluntary agencies. The site may also be suitable for the development of an Ecology Park with visitor facilities. Any scheme will need to include fencing to prevent trespass onto operational railway land.

Linear Recreation Routes

9.44 POLICY RT/14

Planning permission will be granted for development enabling informal recreation and tourism use of the following linear routes:

- i) River Soar/Canal Corridor;**
- ii) River Wreake;**
- iii) Great Central Railway;**
- iv) footpath/cycleway link between Charnwood Forest and Watermead Country Park;**
- v) a link between Shepshed and Loughborough.**

Provided that any related built development remains in conformity with the other policies of this Plan.

- 9.45 There are a number of linear routes in the Borough that provide opportunities for recreational and low key tourism development, including the river corridors. Some of the routes form part of long-distance routes passing through the Borough such as the Dover to Inverness cycle route. The Great Central Steam Railway is already a very successful tourist attraction. Initiatives to consolidate the steam railway operation will normally be encouraged. Many of these linear routes provide attractive links to the main urban centres and could help to divert pressure away from destinations in the Charnwood Forest. Where it does not create conflict, linear routes should be suitable for a variety of users.

Allotments

9.46 POLICY RT/15

Planning permission for development occasioning the loss of allotment land within the defined Limits to Development will not be granted unless:

- i) adequate replacement provision is made to meet demand in a location accessible to potential users; or**
- ii) the site is not required to meet an identified deficiency in open space or recreational facilities in the area;**

and provided the site does not function as a valuable amenity open space or include areas of ecological interest.

- 9.47 Gardening continues to be a popular activity and allotments provide a valuable opportunity for people to pursue their hobby, particularly where they do not have access to a garden. Allotment land is therefore an important recreational resource and can also be an attractive amenity as open space. PPG3 makes it clear that planning policies should recognise the need to retain valuable amenity open space within urban areas including allotment land. It is important that allotments are protected from alternative uses where there is a proven demand or where they function as an important open space in the local landscape (see Policy EV/18). Where sites include areas of ecological interest proposals will be judged against policies EV/22-EV/26.

Dual Use

- 9.48 The Borough Council will encourage educational and other suitable establishments to allow the dual use of recreational facilities wherever practicable. As well as the provision of new facilities, encouraging the opening to wider community use of existing school and other recreational facilities can make a significant contribution to meeting some of the existing deficiencies in recreational provision in the Borough. This is recognised by the County Council in their Recreation Strategy, where it is noted that the Borough's identified shortfall in indoor facility provision could be overcome by full shared use arrangements at Shephed Hind Leys, Syston Wreake Valley and Quorn Rawlins Colleges.

Water Recreation

9.49 POLICY RT/16

Planning permission for informal recreation and tourism development in association with the River Soar and Wreake, the Grand Union Canal and areas of open water will be granted where:

- i) the proposal is compatible with the countryside and nature conservation policies of the plan;**
- ii) satisfactory access to the site can be provided;**
- iii) the design, scale and location of any development conserves and where possible enhances the visual qualities of the locality.**

- 9.50 The river valleys of the Soar and Wreake are a major landscape feature of the Borough. Although development pressures have and will continue to be focused on these areas, they still retain much of their special character and are a valuable resource both in terms of their wildlife and conservation interest and their recreational and tourism potential. Similar potential exists along the Grand Union Canal and to a more limited extent on the major areas of open water including Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs. The Borough Plan seeks to ensure that the recreational potential of these water areas is realised whilst at the same time safeguarding their special environmental character.

Watermead Country Park

9.51 POLICY RT/17

Within Watermead Country Park planning permission will be granted for the development of:

- i) a caravan and camping site with ancillary buildings on approximately 5ha of land immediately accessible from and adjacent to the Wanlip Road entrances;
- ii) a Country Park Information Centre with warden's accommodation centrally located and easily accessible from the principal car park;
- iii) footpaths, cycleways and bridleways with bridges and accommodation works as necessary; and
- iv) buildings and structures of a minor scale designed for the purposes of supporting leisure and recreation uses within the Country Park.

Provided:

- a) the development through sensitive siting, design and construction makes a positive contribution to visual amenities without appearing as intrusive within the wider landscape;
- b) suitable landscaping measures are undertaken to screen from wider view areas used for camping and caravans and service areas; and
- c) measures are undertaken to avoid adverse impact, either directly or indirectly, upon habitats of greater value locally to the conservation and enhancement of wildlife.

9.52 Watermead Country Park is the product of the restoration of an area of worked out sand and gravel pits in the Soar Valley. Under the management of the County Council, with the support of the Borough Council, a major leisure and recreation facility has been developed to rival the attractions of Charnwood Forest and other heavily visited sites, relieving pressure in those areas. The further development of the site is guided by an adopted management plan which defines the aims of the Country Park as being:

- to provide a close and accessible facility for people from urban areas who may otherwise not visit the countryside at all or not so often;
- to provide a facility capable of absorbing a large number of countryside visitors, thus relieving pressure on more sensitive or over-used countryside elsewhere; and
- to protect and where possible enhance the wildlife.

9.53 The Country Park has recently achieved the level of maturity necessary to attract enhanced visitor numbers and to withstand the resultant pressures. However the park lacks a focal point for visitor facilities and information and for on site management and administration. Accordingly a visitor centre, which could also serve as a countryside centre for Leicestershire is proposed for a central location. The County Council is currently exploring sources of funding for such a facility.

9.54 Market research has identified a need for a caravan and camping site in the area to the north of Leicester. Derelict land adjacent to the Wanlip Lane entrance to the park with convenient connections to the A46 would appear to be well placed to satisfy this requirement. In combination with an area of paddock land to the east of the access road an attractive and viable facility may be developed. In the layout and landscaping of the development particular measures will be required to protect from harmful disturbance an adjacent Heronry and nesting bank for Sand Martins.

- 9.55 To the south of the Borough boundary the Country Park continues under the administration of the City Council providing a seamless wedge of countryside penetrating the urban area, consistent with the purpose of Green Wedge policy. The unified character of the Country Park is however hindered by the presence of a substantial tract of private land situated between the “County” and “City” components. Efforts are continuing to negotiate public access over this land with river crossings as necessary.

Wanlip Country Club

9.56 POLICY RT/18

Planning permission will be granted for the development of land within and adjacent to the site of the former Wanlip Country Club for the following uses:

- i) **Public house, cafe, restaurant;**
- ii) **Hotel;**
- iii) **Club house;**
- iv) **Conference facilities;**
- v) **Self catering holiday accommodation;**
- vi) **Indoor and outdoor sports facilities; and/or**
- vii) **Marina.**

Provided:

- a) **the development through sensitive siting, design and construction makes a positive contribution to visual amenities without appearing as intrusive within the wider landscape;**
- b) **the site is comprehensively landscaped so as to screen partially the built components of development and to break up the mass of any large buildings;**
- c) **vehicular access is taken from Wanlip Road.**

In addition the Borough Council will seek to negotiate with the developer contributions towards:

- **the Watermead County Park Visitor Centre;**
- **improvements to access to all areas of Watermead Country Park; and**
- **the enhancement of the canal corridor.**

- 9.57 The land lying between Skiing Lake and Pavilion Lake is largely derelict having been damaged by previous mineral extraction activities. The former Wanlip Country Club similarly stands derelict and neglected. Immediately alongside mineral processing continues together with the recycling of builders’ rubble. Planning permission for these operations expired in 2001.
- 9.58 The site is further degraded by the need for access for vehicles carrying infill materials for the restoration of mineral workings at Birstall and Wanlip.
- 9.59 With the blighting influence of these operations likely to be removed soon, the potential is created for a redevelopment of the site with related benefits to the Country Park.
- 9.60 The previous use as a country club provides a basis for future development within the hotel/leisure sector. The site derives considerable advantage from its association with water areas, both as an amenity and as a resource for recreation. Visitors might also be expected to enjoy the attractions and benefits offered within the Country Park.

- 9.61 Any development must necessarily respect the essentially countryside character of the site. Accordingly any built components should be designed so as to minimise their intrusion into the landscape; fragmented development with lodge type chalets separated by landscaping and open air recreation uses is more likely to be successfully integrated in such a setting than large scale buildings more urban in character. Where buildings of a non domestic scale are necessary for central facilities, indoor sporting or leisure purposes the impact of their height and mass may be broken up by design with complementary landscape planting to complete the effect. Particular advantage may be derived from the opportunities to exploit views over Pavilion Lake, Skiing Lake and the Grand Union Canal although care should be exercised to protect the rural amenities of the adjacent Country Park.
- 9.62 The commercial viability of the Country Club site is likely to be influenced significantly by the accessibility of Watermead Country Park with its opportunities for quiet recreation, nature study, sailing and fishing, providing a foil for the potentially more intensive sporting and leisure pursuits anticipated in association with the development proposed. In view of these factors it is considered appropriate to negotiate with the developer to assist in the funding of remaining development proposals within the Country Park, the benefits of which would enhance the prospects for a successful business while aiding the completion of the Country Park itself.

Noise and Sport

9.63 POLICY RT/19

Planning permission will not be granted for development related to noise generating sports activity unless all of the following criteria are met:

- i) **the proposal does not generate unacceptable levels of noise, dust, fumes, smell or other nuisance to the detriment of neighbouring uses;**
- ii) **adequate visual and acoustic landscaping and screening is provided;**
- iii) **the proposal, including any ancillary buildings or structures, does not appear as intrusive in the landscape; and**
- iv) **the proposal does not adversely affect sites of ecological or geological interest.**

(see also in particular policy TR/18)

- 9.64 PPG17 emphasises the need to accommodate noise generating sports where a clear demand is identified. The County Council will assist in the identification of appropriate sites. Whilst the provision of sites for these activities would ease the unauthorised and damaging use of sensitive areas, they need to be carefully located to ensure problems of visual intrusion, noise and other nuisances are minimised.
- 9.65 In principle, countryside areas on the urban fringe are ideal locations for noisy sports, being close to large areas of population, the potential source of participants. Often, locating noisy sports near to existing noise generators such as roads and industrial areas will lessen any unacceptable impacts. The proposals for woodland planting on the Leicester fringe and in association with the National Forest may provide opportunities to accommodate noisy sports so that any noise and visual intrusion is minimised.

Tourism

9.66 POLICY RT/20

Planning permission for the development of tourist accommodation and visitor facilities will be granted provided the following criteria are met:

- i) **the development would not harm the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring uses;**
- ii) **any new buildings or alterations to existing buildings are of a scale, design and appearance sympathetic to the site and its surrounding area;**

- iii) **existing features on site including trees, hedges, walls are retained wherever possible.**

(See also in particular Policies ST/1 and TR/18)

- 9.67 Much of Charnwood's attractiveness as a tourist destination stems from its natural features, including the Charnwood Forest and the river valleys. It is also attractive as a tourist location because of its proximity to nearby tourist attractions such as Snibston Discovery Park and Leicester. This policy seeks to ensure that new tourism facilities are provided without having an unacceptable impact on the special character of Charnwood. The Charnwood Tourism Strategy works in partnership with other agencies to implement projects that will develop Charnwood's attractiveness as a tourist destination.

Grand Union Canal Opportunity Site

9.68 POLICY RT/21

Land around the Grand Union Canal, Loughborough is identified on the Proposals Map as a major opportunity site for redevelopment. In determining applications for development of the site the Borough Council will permit a range of compatible uses such as shops, offices, business, residential, leisure, entertainment and tourism facilities which would maximise the recreational and tourism potential of the canal and be appropriate to a town centre location.

- 9.69 The spur of the Grand Union Canal terminating at Bridge Street is an area with great potential for redevelopment to secure significant environmental improvements to one of the key "gateways" to the town centre. The southern portion of the site may be marginally affected by the line of the inner relief road. This presents the opportunity to consider the options for comprehensive development in this area.
- 9.70 The Tourism Action Programme prepared for the Borough Council by the East Midlands Tourist Board identified the canal as a key but highly under utilised tourism resource in the town. The County Council is currently pursuing the designation of the length the Grand Union Canal in Leicestershire as a conservation area in recognition of its historic interest. Redevelopment of the land around the canal provides an opportunity to strengthen the physical and visual presence of the canal in relation to the town centre through improved public access and the possible extension or enlargement of the water area to make it a key feature in the town centre. Compatible uses in any mixed scheme might reasonably include shops, offices, business, residential, leisure, entertainment and tourism facilities suitable to a canalside location.

Tourist Caravan and Camping Sites

9.71 POLICY RT/22

Planning permission for the development of tourist caravan and camping sites will be granted provided:

- i) **the site would not represent an unacceptable visual intrusion into an area of countryside;**
- ii) **the site is well related to the specified road network and adequate access to cater for the type and volume of traffic likely to be generated can be provided;**
- iii) **there would be no adverse effect on local amenities through noise, smell, dust or other nuisance;**
- iv) **there would be no detrimental impact on areas of nature conservation and landscape value.**

- 9.72 The Leicestershire Structure Plan and the County Council's Recreation Strategy both recognise the opportunities for further tourist camping and caravan site provision within the County, particularly in the longer term. With the Charnwood Forest, the Borough is a popular tourist destination in its own right and is also well located for other attractions in the region. The resulting pressures for further tourist provision must be balanced against the need to safeguard what is for the most part a sensitive landscape of particular character.

Soar Valley Centre, Mountsorrel

9.73 POLICY RT/23

Planning permission will be granted for the development of a recreation and community centre on land to the rear of Mountsorrel Memorial Hall, provided:

- i) the building through attention to its scale, mass, layout and design, makes a positive contribution to local visual and residential amenities;**
- ii) any lighting associated with the illumination of outdoor sports areas is positioned and orientated to avoid the effects of light pollution upon adjacent areas of housing land;**
- iii) the site is comprehensively landscaped to screen service areas and to enhance the amenity of the development overall.**

- 9.74 The site has been a long-term commitment through a proposal of the adopted Soar Valley Local Plan. The original proposal included a retail development as well as recreation and community facilities. The lack of retail interest in the site has led to a review of the situation and the proposal now focuses on the recreation and community facilities for the Soar Valley Centre. A financial contribution towards a recreation and community facility has been secured from the developer of the adjacent housing development. It is also the intention that money for a scheme will come forward through a National Lottery Fund Bid.

CHAPTER 10: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Introduction

- 10.1 Charnwood's main social, community, religious, education, health facilities and utilities infrastructure are focused on the main centres of population along the Soar and Wreake Valleys. The main responsibility for the provision of these facilities rests with the County Council's Social Services and Education departments, the Health Authority and the various statutory undertakers. However, the Local Plan is an important vehicle for coordinating service provision and providing a firm basis for the programming of service development.

National and Strategic Policy

- 10.2 PPG12 confirms that local plans have a vital role to play in co-ordinating new development with the infrastructure it requires. The Local Plan can help to ensure that existing deficiencies in service provision are identified and tackled and that the requirements arising from new large scale developments are planned for in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The guidance also emphasises the need for local plans to fully consider the impact of its proposals on different groups of the population, including ethnic minorities, religious groups, the elderly and disabled and single parent families.
- 10.3 Through policies to control the location of new community facilities the plan can also ensure that decisions on additional facility provision are grounded in the concept of sustainability. PPG13 on Transport outlines the role that the local plan can play in reducing the need to travel, especially by car. One element of this approach is seeking to ensure the availability of a range of community facilities in local centres easily accessible on foot, bicycle or public transport.
- 10.4 As part of its strategy for transport choice, the Leicestershire Structure Plan supports the concentration of community, primary health care and social facilities close to district and local shopping centres which are usually well located to serve reasonably large catchment populations – thereby encouraging energy and time efficient multi-purpose trips.

The Charnwood Perspective

- 10.5 Because of the distribution of the population in the Borough, the majority of community facilities are focused on the main river valley settlements, with most of the large scale facilities located in Loughborough. This facility distribution tends to create problems of excess demand for facilities in the larger villages coupled with difficulties of access to facilities from the more rural parts of the Borough.
- 10.6 Indicators of need derived from the 2001 Census (including the distribution of children under 4, pensioners, the long term ill, lone parents and lone pensioners) tend to confirm that the existing health and other community facilities are well located to serve the main areas of "demand". For example some 46% of the Borough's lone parents live in the main urban areas of Loughborough and Shepshed. The Census also reveals that some of the smaller settlements in the more rural areas like the Forest and the Wolds do have quite high proportions of groups likely to be in need of health care and other community services, albeit the total populations involved are relatively small. 15% of residents in the Forest Bradgate Ward are lone pensioners compared with the County average of 12.9%.
- 10.7 Apart from Leicester and Oadby and Wigston, Charnwood is the only other district in Leicestershire with significant numbers of residents from ethnic minority groups. At the time of the 2001 Census, 12,788 of Charnwood's residents, some 9% of the total population were from ethnic minority groups. The majority, nearly 60%, live in Loughborough. This spatial concentration extends to Ward level where Census data shows a concentration of ethnic minority groups particularly in the Hastings and Lemyington Wards of the town.

- 10.8 This concentration of ethnic minority population can generate special needs and requirements in relation to community and other facilities that often have implications of relevance to land-use planning.

Existing Facilities and Future Needs

- 10.9 On the whole, the existing levels of community facilities cater adequately for the needs of Charnwood's population, with the majority of the larger settlements having a range of education and health facilities serving their communities.
- 10.10 No additional facility requirements over the Plan period have been identified by either the Education Officer or Health Authority. The Chief Fire Officer has pointed to the need for an additional fire station to serve the north Leicester area and this is addressed in Policy CF/8.
- 10.11 The additional housing development identified in this Plan inevitably creates pressure on existing, and demands for additional community facilities. The Plan can help to ensure that the necessary community facilities are planned and provided for as an integral part of all new developments.
- 10.12 The Local Plan therefore aims to:
- i) facilitate the provision of the full range of buildings and amenities for education, health, public services, community centres, and places of worship necessary for the social and cultural well being of all sections of the community;
 - ii) ensure that all new residential development includes adequate provision for community facilities to meet the needs of future residents.

Retention of Existing Community Facilities

10.13 POLICY CF/1

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would result in the loss in small or isolated communities of established community facilities and services including places of worship, local shops/post-offices, village halls/community buildings and public houses unless:

- i) **it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed by the community; or**
 - ii) **it is no longer viable to maintain the provision of the facility or service on economic grounds; or**
 - iii) **an acceptable alternative provision is made.**
- 10.14 The Borough Council recognises the importance of retaining local community facilities, particularly in the more rural parts of the Borough. They provide convenient, accessible facilities helping to reduce dependency on the private car. The Council will seek to encourage the retention of these community facilities and services where possible.

Proposals for New Community Facilities

10.15 POLICY CF/2

Planning permission for new community facilities, including new buildings or changes of use, will be granted provided that;

- i) **the proposal is well related to existing community, primary health care and social facilities, and existing or proposed public transport services;**
- ii) **the proposal would not adversely affect the amenities enjoyed by occupiers of nearby properties due to design, noise or potential traffic generation;**

- iii) **the layout of the development facilitates access for people with disabilities and impaired mobility;**
- iv) **any new buildings or alterations to existing buildings are in keeping with the scale and character of the surroundings.**

(See also in particular Policy TR/18)

- 10.16 There is a continuing demand for community facilities throughout the Borough and particularly in some of the smaller and remoter villages. The Borough Council will support the provision of additional community facilities, especially for ethnic minority groups, children and young people, the elderly, single parent families and other groups who might be socially disadvantaged, where they do not conflict with neighbouring uses or create traffic problems and are well located in relation to existing centres and public transport infrastructure.
- 10.17 An important consideration in assessing proposals will be the degree to which the design, layout and use of building facilitates multi use consistent with the original purpose of the building.

Education Land and Buildings

10.18 POLICY CF/3

Planning permission for the development of existing educational land and buildings for educational purposes will be granted provided that:

- i) **any proposed buildings are in keeping with the scale and character of the surroundings; and**
- ii) **significant trees, open space or other features important in defining the amenities of the locality would not be lost.**

Development for purposes other than education will only be permitted if:

- a) **it would not result in, or remove an opportunity to rectify, a local deficiency in recreational space or community land and buildings; and**
- b) **the criteria (i) and (ii) are met.**

(See also in particular Policy TR/18)

- 10.19 For the most part additional school buildings which may be needed to cater for an increase in pupil numbers over the plan period will be provided on existing school sites. The proposed development north of Birstall may generate a requirement for the provision of a new school.
- 10.20 Development for education purposes on existing school sites will normally be acceptable. Development for other purposes will only be considered where the Council is satisfied that the land is surplus to educational requirements, would not result in a deficiency in recreational space or community land and buildings in the area, or involve the loss of an important area of open space of amenity value.
- 10.21 The recreational requirements of an area will be determined by reference to the NPFA standard detailed in Policy RT/7 along with the consideration of any relevant local circumstances.

Loughborough University and College Campuses

10.22 POLICY CF/4

Planning permission will be granted for University and College developments for academic and ancillary uses (Class D1) and for student accommodation (Classes C1, C2 and C3) within the campus area identified on the Proposals Map provided:

- i) **segregated facilities are provided for cyclists and pedestrians affording attractive and direct linkages into the cycleway and footpath network;**

- ii) **the overall design and layout of the development remains compatible with the established character and appearance of the campus as defined by the massing, scale and form of any neighbouring development;**
- iii) **complementary hard and soft landscaping measures are employed to define and contain the development within a high quality environment; and**
- iv) **significant trees, open space or other features important in defining the amenities of the locality would not be lost.**

Development for other purposes within the campus will not be permitted unless it can be shown to satisfy the above requirements and provided it would not:

- a) **unreasonably constrain opportunities for the further expansion of the University or College; or**
- b) **result in, or remove an opportunity to rectify, a local deficiency in recreational space.**

(See also in particular Policy TR/18)

- 10.23 Loughborough University, Loughborough College, Loughborough College of Art and Design and the Royal National Institute for the Blind's Vocational College combine to form a major educational complex in the town vitally important to its economic base, status and reputation. The ability of these institutions to respond to the new commercial imperatives which govern development and growth in the educational sector will determine their future standing and influence, and in no small measure, that of Loughborough as a whole.
- 10.24 Loughborough University has increased student numbers to approximately 11,300 while the Loughborough College provides for some 8,000 full time and part time students.
- 10.25 The importance of these institutions to the local economy is enhanced by their contribution to local amenities in the form of playing fields, open space and landscaped areas. The overall impression is one of an assemblage of large buildings set in extensive open grounds enabling the penetration of a green and pleasant landscape deep into the urban area. While some further development within this extended campus area will be unavoidable it will be desirable to maintain a balance to safeguard the amenities of both the colleges and the town.
- 10.26 The availability of undeveloped land within the urban area is a diminishing resource. Such land, whether in public ownership or not, is often used by surrounding communities as an informal recreation area. Once developed the opportunity to secure adequate provision to meet the needs of local people is lost for ever. Therefore before permitting development on remaining open land the Borough Council will have regard to the need for public open space to properly serve the surrounding community. In applying these tests the Council will apply the standards set out in Policy RT/7.

Loughborough Hospital, Epinal Way

10.27 POLICY CF/5

Planning permission will be granted for development for medical and ancillary uses (Class C2) within the site reserved for the Loughborough Hospital identified on the Proposals Map provided:

- i) **the overall design and layout of the development remains compatible with the established character and appearance of the existing hospital as defined by its mass, scale, form and material; and**
- ii) **complementary hard and soft landscaping measures are employed to define and contain the development within a high quality environment.**

(See also in particular Policy TR/18)

- 10.28 It is intended to consolidate hospital facilities in Loughborough in modern purpose built premises off Epinal Way. The first phase of the development has now been completed enabling the closure and redevelopment of the former Regent Street Hospital. Sufficient land has been reserved within the Epinal Way site to permit the development of a second phase when resources are available, to accommodate health care services to be relocated from the Town Centre Baxter Gate site. Policy CA/5 acknowledges the redevelopment potential of the Baxter Gate site in its designation as one of four town centre Opportunity Sites.

Cemeteries and Crematoria

10.29 POLICY CF/6

Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals at the cemetery and crematorium sites shown on the Proposals Map which would detract from their predominantly open character, and/or diminish the amenity value and general visual character of the locality.

- 10.30 There are several existing cemetery sites in the Borough which contribute to the open character of built-up areas. Some sites such as Loughborough Cemetery, contain buildings of historic importance. Such areas will be safeguarded from development which would damage their special character, or which would harm the amenity of neighbouring land uses.

Extension to Cemeteries

10.31 POLICY CF/7

Planning permission will be granted for extensions to cemeteries outside the defined Limits to Development provided the scale and visual appearance of the extension would not damage the amenity and general visual character of the locality.

- 10.32 There may be occasions when existing cemeteries reach capacity and extensions are required which could encroach into areas of countryside, Green Wedge or local separation. Such proposals will be acceptable where the impact would damage neither the amenities of the area, nor the general character and appearance of the locality.

Fire Station Site A6/A46 Junction, Wanlip

10.33 POLICY CF/8

Some 0.6ha of land within the employment allocation north of Birstall is reserved for the development of a new fire station. Planning permission for the development of the fire station will be granted provided the following requirements are met:

- i) **the station is located close to the proposed junction on the A6 with direct access to the new local distributor road forming part of the proposal for major development north of Birstall;**
- ii) **the heights of any associated buildings, including any necessary training buildings, are carefully controlled to minimise the impact on the wider landscape, particularly to views from north of the A46 bypass and from Birstall. The provision of a training tower would not be appropriate in this sensitive location.**

(See also in particular Policies E/5(g), TR/22, TR/29, CA/10)

- 10.34 In response to the draft Plan the Chief Fire Officer pointed to the need to identify land for the provision of an additional fire station to the north of Leicester. Locationally, because of the need to service communities in the Soar Valley as well as those on the north Leicester fringe, the A46/A6 junction represents a logical location that meets the Fire Services requirements for ready access to the principal road network.

- 10.35 In the context of major development proposals north of Birstall proposed in this Plan, the fire station, in land-use terms could be located within the proposed employment area close to the A6. One of the critical issues for development in this location is its visual impact. Because of the sensitive nature of the location and the likely impact on the wider landscape, a drill tower would not be appropriate, and should not form part of the proposal.
- 10.36 The suitability of the site for the provision of a fire station has been considered in the context of the major development proposals for land north of Birstall presented in this Plan. The development of a fire station in isolation in this location would not be permitted.

VEHICLE PARKING STANDARDS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Almost half of all pedestrian accidents and a quarter of all vehicular accidents involve the presence of a parked vehicle. Stationary vehicles can cause hazards by masking pedestrians, particularly small children, from drivers and by masking moving vehicles from each other. The aim of adopting these standards for development is to minimise the use of carriageways for parking and to prevent on-street loading or off-loading of service vehicles.

These standards will be used as the starting point in assessing the level of parking provision and represent the maximum requirements for off-street parking. The actual level of parking provision will be assessed in accordance with these standards and the guidance set out in Policy TR/18 of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan.

Any land uses or types of development which are not specifically mentioned will be subject to consideration on an individual and site-specific basis, as will combinations of types of developments which are treated individually in this document. Where adequate and readily available free public car parking is situated close to the development, the public car parking standards may be slightly reduced at the discretion of the highway authority. Operational parking requirements will not be reduced in such circumstances.

As far as possible, the following maximum parking standards have been related to the land uses in the Use Classes Order 1987. All areas are gross floor areas unless otherwise stated. For all types of development, suitable provision should be made for disabled persons parking in accordance with the requirements set out in section 14.

2. CLASS A1 – SHOPS

Stores above 3,000 sq.m.	1 car space per 9 sq.m. 1 goods bay or space per 750 sq.m. for stores 5,000 sq.m 1 goods bay or space per 1,000 sq.m. for stores in excess of 5,000 sq.m.
Stores between 1,000 and 3,000sq.m	1 car space per 12 sq.m. In critical locations on the highway network, the higher standard (1 per 9 sq.m.) may be required for stores between 2,500 and 3,000 sq.m. Provision shall be made within the site for deliveries and unloading.
Stores between 300 and 1,000 sq.m.	1 car space per 30 sq.m. In critical locations on the highway network, the higher standard (1 per 12 sq.m.) may be required for stores between 750 and 1,000 sq.m. Provision shall be made within the site for deliveries and unloading.
Stores below 300 sq.m.	2 spaces up to 100 sq.m. 1 car space per each additional 100 sq.m. thereafter.

3. CLASS A2-FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Offices One car space per 35 sq.m.

4. CLASS A3 - FOOD AND DRINK

Restaurants If the layout is defined, one customer car space per 4 sq.m. public area plus one staff car space per 20 tables or 40 sq.m. Space shall be provided for loading and unloading or service and delivery vehicles clear of the public highway.

Public Houses and licensed clubs There shall be 1 customer car space per 3 sq.m of public area (excluding services, lobbies, toilets, cloakrooms, etc.). In addition, staff parking will be required at the rate of 1 car space for each residential member of staff, plus 1 car space per 40 sq.m. of public area for non-residential staff. Space shall be provided for loading and unloading of service and delivery vehicles clear of the public highway.

5. CLASS B1 - BUSINESS

Offices One car space per 25 sq.m

Research and Development One car space per 30 sq.m. One lorry space per 500 sq.m. Provision should be made within the site for the possibility of future conversion of offices, with their consequently higher parking requirements.

Light Industry One car space per 50 sq.m. Where there is a substantial element of offices this shall be considered separately. One lorry space per 400 sq.m. Any loading bays will be considered as parking spaces for the purposes of assessment. Provision should be made within the site for the possibility of future conversion to offices, with their consequently higher parking requirements. If such provision cannot be made then restrictions on future changes of use will be required.

6. CLASS B2 - GENERAL INDUSTRY

Industry	One car space per 50 sq.m. Where there is a substantial element of offices this shall be considered separately. One lorry space per 400 sq.m. Any loading bays will be considered as parking spaces for the purposes of assessment.
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7. CLASS B8 - STORAGE OR DISTRIBUTION

Warehouses	One car space per 100 sq.m. and, for units in excess of 9,300 sq.m., one car space per 150 sq.m. Special consideration as to the applicable standard shall be given to developments of between 8,500 and 9,300 sq.m. One lorry space per 400 sq.m. Any loading bays will be considered as parking spaces for the purposes of assessment. For smaller units, provision should be made within the site for the possibility of future conversion to offices, with their consequently higher parking requirements. If such provision cannot be made then restrictions on future changes of use will be required.
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8. CLASS C1 - HOTELS

Hotels	One car space per bedroom. Additional parking shall be provided in respect of restaurants and public bar areas in accordance with the standards in Section 4, and where conference facilities are provided there shall be additional provision in accordance with section 11. Staff parking shall be provided in accordance with the standards in section 4.
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9. CLASS C2 - RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS

Nursing Home	One car space per three bedrooms plus one car space for each staff member on site. Restrictions on future changes of use to schools will be required.
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Residential homes for the elderly with communal facilities	One car space per four bedrooms, plus one car space for each staff member on site. Restrictions on future change of use to schools will be required.
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10. CLASS C3 - DWELLING HOUSES

Dwellings with 4 or more bedrooms	3 spaces.
Dwellings with 3 or less bedrooms	2 spaces.
Local Authority & Housing Association developments, flats, with 2 bedrooms or less, with communal parking	3 spaces per 2 dwellings.
Retirement dwellings for occupation by over 55's and dwellings with off-site warden assistance	One car space per dwelling plus one visitor space per four dwellings.
On-site warden controlled	Communal parking of one car space per 2 bedrooms plus wardens accommodation parking as per dwellings above.

11. CLASS D1 - NON-RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS

Surgeries and clinics (Doctors, Dentists, vets, etc)	One car space per member of staff employed plus two car spaces per consulting room/surgery
Conference Centre	Two car spaces per three seats where there is fixed seating. Where there is a flexible layout there shall be one car space per 3 sq.m. of conference areas.
Exhibition Halls	One car space per 6 sq.m.
Libraries	One car space per each member of staff plus one car space per 25 sq.m.
Schools	One car space per member of teaching staff plus three additional spaces. Where a community wing is to be provided for daytime use 5 additional spaces shall be provided. Provision for access to hard surfaced play areas will be required to provide additional parking for 'out of hours' functions.
Day Nurseries	One car space per member of staff plus an additional space to allow for shift changes.

12. CLASS D2 - ASSEMBLY AND LEISURE

Sports grounds and clubs	Parking will be required to cater in full for the maximum expected usage of the facility assuming an occupancy rate of 2 persons/car. Also, in the case of football, cricket, hockey pitches etc, parking and manoeuvring areas will be required for coaches at the rate of one coach per two
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pitches (minimum provision to be made for one coach). Thus the following examples may be used:-

1 cricket pitch - 22 players + 2 umpires = 12 car spaces + 1 coach.

Tennis/Squash courts - 2 car spaces per court.

Rugby club with 3 pitches - 36 players, coaches, referees, substitutes, etc, per pitch, therefore 54 car spaces plus two coach spaces.

2 soccer pitches - 30 players, coaches, referees, substitutes, etc, per pitch, therefore 30 car spaces plus one coach space.

Golf Courses

100 spaces per 18 hole course.

Other sizes of course will be considered on their merits, not pro-rata to the above.

Note:-Licensed club facilities within sports grounds (including golf clubhouses) will require additional parking spaces in accordance with the standards given in Section 4.

13. SIZE OF PARKING SPACES

The minimum acceptable dimensions for a car parking space will be:-

length	5.0 metres
width	2.4 metres
headroom	2.0 metres

Lorry parking spaces shall be a minimum of 18m by 5m.

Where 50 or more car parking spaces are to be provided, a reduction in length to 4 m may be permitted in up to 10% of parking bays which will then be for the use of small cars only.

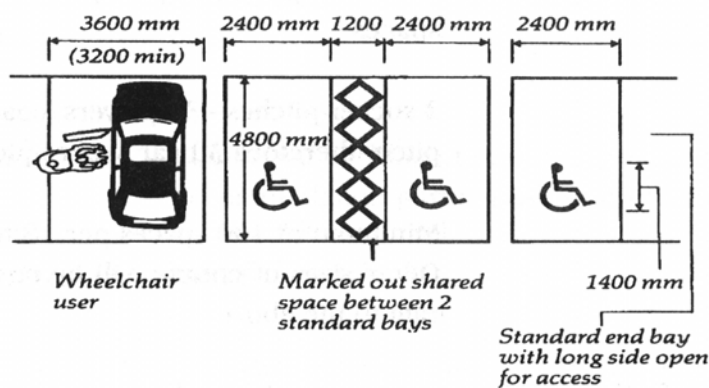
Where parking spaces are laid out at right angles to the access aisles a minimum aisle width of 6m will be required. Non rectilinear layouts will be assessed individually.

Car parking areas will be laid out so that no vehicle has to be reversed for a distance exceeding 25m.

14. PARKING FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

For many disabled people and others with limited mobility, the private car is their only means of travel. It is very important therefore that adequate provision is made both in terms of the type and position of parking spaces. Any parking provision should be made within 50m of the destination. Spaces should be 3.6m wide or have a transfer area of 1.2m to one side of a standard size space. 3.2m wide spaces may be acceptable where space is limited. Parking spaces should be clearly marked with the British Standard "Disabled" symbol in accordance with B.S. 3262 Part 1 and any parking fee concessions should be stated clearly at the parking space.

CAR PARKING SPACE FOR DISABLED PERSONS VEHICLE



15. CYCLE PARKING STANDARDS

These standards of cycle parking will be required for new development proposals, in addition to the vehicle parking standards:

LAND USE CLASS

STANDARD

Classes A1 and A3 (Shops, food and drink)

1 space for every 500 sq.m. up to 4,000 sq.m. gross to be under cover and secure for staff and operational use.

1 space for every 1,000 sq.m. gross for customer use to be in the form of Sheffield racks (or similar) and in a prominent and convenient location.

Classes A2 and B1 (Financial and professional services, light industry and offices)

1 space for every 400 sq.m. gross to be under cover and secure. Customer parking to be provided merit.

Classes B2 to B8 (General and Special Industry)

1 space for every 400 sq.m gross to be under cover and secure

Class C3 (Dwelling Houses), High density developments e.g. flats with common facilities

1 space per 5 dwellings to be under cover and secure.

Classes D1 and D2 (Non-residential institutions, assembly and leisure convenient)

Enough Sheffield racks (or similar) should be provided in a prominent and location to park the cycles of 5% of the maximum number of people expected to use the facility at any one time. Secure and covered parking for staff to be provided on merit."