Transport Strategies To Enable Growth in the Borough of Charnwood

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1. Introduction

1.1. What is the purpose of this document?

- 1.1.1. This document sets out the broad contents of, and the framework for, Transport Strategies for Loughborough and Shepshed, the North of Leicester and the Soar Valley. These Strategies are intended to underpin the delivery of the new Charnwood Local Plan 2021 to 2037.
- 1.1.2. The document explains the rationale behind the Strategies, the context in which they are being developed, the work that has been done to date in preparing them and the work that is ongoing to inform the strategy documents that will eventually be approved by the County Council's Cabinet (including next steps to get to Cabinet). County Council officers have been working on the understanding that their implementation will ultimately be given effect through proposed Main Modifications to the policy framework of the Local Plan.
- 1.1.3. As this document sets out, the scale of work required to develop area Transport Strategies such as these goes way beyond what is proportionate for the development of a Local Plan. (In many cases, the scale of work is driven by Government policy and guidance.)
- 1.1.4. Thus this document forms part of an ongoing journey, one that started during the early stages of the Plan's development, and which will stretch beyond its adoption. Even when the actual strategy documents are approved by the County Council's Cabinet, they will not necessarily set out full and final details it is unlikely to be the end of the journey. For example:
 - the content and balance of measures may need to evolve in the light of evidence arising from their initial delivery;
 - changes might be required to reflect changes:
 - o to the order in which development sites come forward; or
 - o changes in Government policy; and
 - the implementation of actual measures will be dependent on design work, public consultations and the scale of funding available at any given time.
- 1.1.5. The content of the Strategies will also need to be reviewed and updated as necessary in response to future Charnwood Local Plans (i.e. extending beyond the 2037 end date of the current submission Local Plan).
- 1.1.6. Thus the Strategies will likely evolve in response to circumstances going forward.

1.2. Document structure

- 1.2.1. The remainder of this document is structured as follows:
 - Chapter 2 provides some wider context to the Strategies' development
 - Chapter 3 explains the scope and general nature of the Strategies
 - Chapter 4 sets out the work to date to develop the Strategies
 - Chapter 5 provides information about costs, funding sources and delivery
 - Chapter 6 sets out the next steps

2. Providing some wider context

- 2.1. The United Kingdom's population has grown and will continue to grow. Figures from the Office for National Statics estimated a 6.9% 4.3 million increase between 2010 and 2020 and forecast further growth of 2.1 million to the mid-2030s (giving a projected population total of 69.2 million).¹
- 2.2. Local communities often 'blame' new developments for generating additional traffic and clearly the location of development influences the distribution of traffic at a local level. However, the creation of new homes and jobs is a response to an increasing population, and it is the increasing population that generates additional demands for travel. If the UK's population continues to increase, so will travel demand. (And not just by individuals, but also, for example, through increased travel by businesses in order to meet the goods and services needs of a growing population.)
- 2.3. Considering the growth requirements of Charnwood and the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (LLHMA) as a whole, as well as supporting and related evidence (including work currently being undertaken to inform the development of the County Council's next Local Transport Plan (LTP4)), all points to one fundamental conclusion. The County Council cannot 'prevent' growth, so unless significant changes occur in societal behaviours and expectations, there are significant limitations as to the extent to which the impacts of growth on the County's transportation system can be mitigated in the future. The LLHMA will not be unique in this regard, given that levels of transport congestion are already more acute in other parts of the country, especially in the south east.
- 2.4. Significant changes in people's behaviour will be required if the impacts of growth on the County's transportation system (and on carbon levels) are to be lessened significantly.
- 2.5. In the meantime, the best opportunity to achieve a level of mitigation is via a Local Plan led approach; Plans that are supported by robust evidence bases and with their post-adoption delivery supported by Transport Strategies that provide a basis for seeking to maximise levels of developer and Government funding towards the delivery of highways and transportation mitigation.

¹

3. Scope and general nature of the Strategies

3.1. Fundamental purpose of the Strategies

- 3.1.1. Work to develop the Strategies is being undertaken to support the delivery of the Charnwood Local Plan 2021 to 2037. Taken together, the three Strategies are intended to deliver the overall package of Local Plan/Borough wide highways and transport measures required to enable future growth in the Borough of Charnwood and to mitigate the impacts of that growth so far as is reasonably possible (given the general context of the predicted impacts of population growth as set out in Chapter 2).
- 3.1.2. The primary purpose of the overall package (and hence, by extension the Strategies) is to seek to mitigate so far as is reasonably possible the cumulative impacts of growth within the Borough of Charnwood, such impacts arising within the Borough or over the boundary in neighbouring authority areas (cross-boundary impacts). The cross-boundary dimension will be especially strong in respect of the North of Leicester Transport Strategy, given the sensitivities of the transport network in this area identified throughout the evidence building process and noting the growth proposed within this area through the City of Leicester's emerging Local Plan. An area strategy approach is a positive way to enabling growth to come forward, where otherwise the County Council as the Local Highway Authority would find itself in a position of not being able to support an allocated site coming forward as a planning application on the basis of cumulative impacts.
- 3.1.3. This is particularly important in the context of the approach to the distribution of housing set out in the submitted Local Plan. The new allocations are predominately made up of non-strategic sites and instead comprise a large number of relatively smaller developments across wider geographic areas, such that the cumulative impact of the developments causes the severe impacts identified since it is clear that no individual development will be able to deliver the necessary mitigation. This requires a coordinated approach to ensure appropriate infrastructure and other services can be funded. Managing impacts on an ad-hoc case-by-case basis through the planning process will not support sustainable development in this instance.
- 3.1.4. The Strategies are not intended to deal with more localised impacts of a particular development site. There will continue to be a requirement for developers to assess and determine their site-specific impacts and mitigation requirements. The onus will be on developers to demonstrate this through their transport assessments developed in support of planning applications, whilst the Plan-led mitigation strategy will provide the overarching framework

of prioritised and phased measures which mitigate the cumulative and crossboundary impacts of Plan-level growth.²

3.2. Why three Strategies?

- 3.2.1. The Borough of Charnwood has varying settlement characters, with Loughborough being the largest of the settlements in the County of Leicestershire and in close relationship with the Town of Shepshed. To the south of the Borough, settlements such as Birstall and Thurmaston are in effect northern suburbs of the City of Leicester. In between the Soar Valley contains ribbons of settlements, including Rothley, Mountsorrel and Quorn, and Cossington, Sileby and Barrow Upon Soar.
- 3.2.2. Reflecting the Borough's varying settlement characteristics; the Local Plan's spatial distribution of growth across the Borough; the findings of the most recent evidence work (See Chapter 4), and the nature of the mitigation package identified (see below and also Chapter 4), led to the proposal to develop three area Transport Strategies.

3.3. Geographical extent of the Strategies

3.3.1. The three areas are shown in Figure 1 overleaf.

² As the Local Highway Authority, Leicestershire County Council has made a submission to the Local Plan's Examination in Public, under Matter 6, proposing Main Modifications with regard to the coordination of site-specific requirements for adjacent/cluster sites.

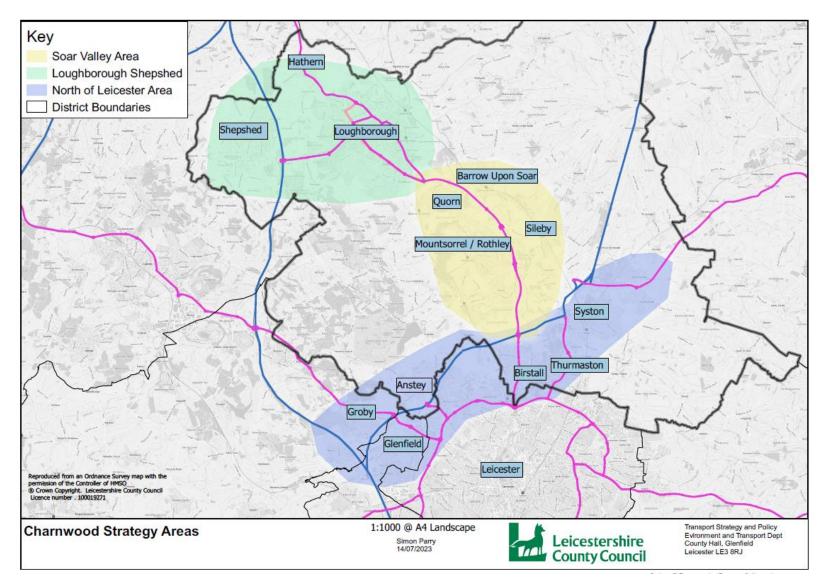


Figure 1- Geographical extent of the Strategies

3.4. Scope of measures covered by the Strategies

- 3.4.1. The principal basis of the overall package of Local Plan/Borough wide highways and transport measures mitigation is firstly to seek to reduce overall levels of carborne trips through maximising sustainable travel opportunities, and then to seek to focus remaining traffic on the highest class and/or 'most appropriate' routes available.
- 3.4.2. Reflecting the evidence work undertaken to underpin the Local Plan (see Chapter 4), the Strategies will be built around: improvements to sustainable modes of travel (i.e. walking, cycling and passenger transport); targeted improvements to the Major Road Network; and targeted improvements to the Strategic Road Network. Targeted road improvements mean that they are demonstrated as being required in the context of a multi-modal mitigation strategy which emphasises the importance of sustainable travel and are for the purpose of mitigating residual highway impacts of Plan development.
- 3.4.3. To expand, the proposed package is centred on three elements:
 - Enhancing sustainable transport measures across the Borough, including cycling, walking and wheeling³ (active travel) and passenger transport. The particular focus is on Loughborough and Shepshed, and areas boarding the northern edge of Leicester where there is a greater potential to offer genuine alternatives to the car over relatively short journey lengths; conversely outside such areas, for example inter-urban journeys, it will be much more challenging to develop viable and attractive active travel alternatives to private car usage.

By reducing the need to travel by car, in turn this will help best to minimise the traffic impacts of growth on the Borough's Strategic, Major and Local Road Networks (See Appendix A that identifies these networks).

 Targeted improvements to the Major Road Network (MRN). This includes the County Council's second priority corridor, the A6/A6004 (as agreed by the Cabinet in April).

Whilst evidence works shows that enhancement of sustainable transport alternatives help to mitigate the impacts of growth, it also suggests that this will not be sufficient in and of itself. Focused investment will be required at key points on the MRN in and serving the Borough. This will be required in order to ensure that as much traffic as possible is able to use the MRN as effectively, efficiently and safely as possible, thereby reducing impacts on

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³ An equivalent alternative to foot/pedestrian-based mobility. Includes wheeled mobilities such as manual selfor assistant-propelled wheelchairs, including wheelchairs with power attachments or all-terrain attachments, powered wheelchairs, and mobility scooters (three and four-wheeled). Definition sourced from https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/walking-wheeling-and-cycling-definitions/

much lower standard routes in the Borough (e.g. across the Charnwood Forest).

Targeted improvements to the Strategic Road Network (SRN): Evidence
demonstrates that works to (or affecting) the SRN will also need to form
part of the overall mitigation package. Once again, this is to seek to ensure,
so far as is reasonably possible, that journeys across the Borough (and
beyond) take place on the most appropriate networks for their purpose.

These are most likely to be relatively localised improvements. Conversely, the overall package does not include delivery of the Government's relevant Road Investment Strategy (RIS) Pipeline Projects—"M1 Leicester Western Access" and "M1 North Leicestershire Extra Capacity" — which were identified within RIS2 as potential future RIS schemes requiring further investigation and development by National Highways. These projects have been omitted due to their likely scale and uncertainties over any timeframe for delivery. Furthermore, the M1 North Leicestershire Extra Capacity scheme has recently been removed from the RIS Pipeline Projects programme as a consequence of the Government's cancellation of the smart motorways programme, reducing the likelihood of any major improvements to that section of the M1 over the lifetime of the Local Plan.

4. Strategies' development work to date

4.1. Evidential work – overview of approach

- 4.1.1. Development of the Transport Strategies to date has been driven by evidential work undertaken in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) and National Highways (NH) and in discussion with neighbouring local authorities including Leicester City Council (LCiC) as the Local Highway Authority for the City of Leicester.
- 4.1.2. It has been informed by the most up-to-date data and transport modelling forecasts available at the time the work was commissioned. The approach has been iterative, the objective being to increase the level of detail and refinement in parallel with and cognisant of the Local Plan's spatial strategy.
- 4.1.3. In summary a sequence of broad steps has been followed, as outlined below.
- 4.1.4. Step 1: Informing a preferred development strategy for the Local Plan:

 The purpose of this step was to support the identification of an appropriate spatial strategy for development in the Borough. Modelling assessments were undertaken and highlighted a range of key challenges that would continue to represent important themes running throughout subsequent steps in the evidence building process. These include congestion and delays at main gateway junctions on radial routes leading into Loughborough; on the key A6 and A6004 routes which traverse Loughborough (and are part of MRN); on the A512 in Shepshed; and in areas to the north of Leicester such as Birstall, Syston, Anstey, Thurmaston and Rothley; in addition to key roads including the A46 and M1 (part of the SRN). This initial step informed CBC's sifting and selection of a preferred spatial option.
- 4.1.5. Step 2: Building a greater understanding of Borough-wide impacts from growth arising from the preferred spatial strategy: Additional evidential work was undertaken with the purpose of assessing the transport impacts of the preferred spatial strategy. The assessment approach identified broad locations and corridors around clusters of transport impacts (or hotspots) which were estimated to occur as a result of Plan development and where potentially mitigation would be needed. Those broad locations are:
 - Loughborough urban area;
 - Shepshed (including M1 Junction 23):
 - Barrow upon Soar (in the Soar Valley); and
 - Syston and East Goscote, Birstall and Anstey (settlements around the north of Leicester).
- 4.1.6. These areas broadly align with areas of interest identified at Step 1.

- 4.1.7. Step 3: Developing an initial Borough-wide list of potential mitigation options: The third step of evidence building comprised development of Borough-wide mitigation measures in response to the hotspot locations identified at Step 2. In assessing potential mitigation measures, consideration was given to key travel movements along corridors within and between settlements across the Borough as well as existing infrastructure and services including cycle and bus routes. This process culminated in a long list of potential measures.
- 4.1.8. In identifying mitigation measures consideration was given to:
 - alignment with national and local policy, in particular mode hierarchy with active modes and passenger transport measures having greater priority over measures encouraging private vehicle travel;
 - whether mitigation measures would be proportionate to the type/scale of impacts forecast;
 - whether measures were considered feasible; and
 - and very indicatively how much they could cost (See Chapter 5 for further information about costs).
- 4.1.9. This step provided a Local Plan perspective of what multi-modal transport measures could be required to mitigate the impacts of growth in 2037. It did not however consider the potential phasing and scalability of transport interventions prior to 2037 in line with the phasing of development to determine what mitigation would be needed during the early years of the Plan period.
- 4.1.10. Step 4: Building a more detailed understanding of mitigation requirements, prioritisation and phasing to form an overarching Planlevel mitigation strategy: Building upon the work undertaken in Steps 2 and 3, modelling work was undertaken to test the impacts and benefits of four transport scenarios, i.e.:
 - Scenario 1 focusses on representative sustainable transport solutions, largely as identified at Step 3;
 - Scenario 2 focusses on a combination of targeted MRN improvements and sustainable transport solutions (as per Scenario 1);
 - Scenario 3 focusses on a combination of targeted SRN improvements, plus targeted MRN improvements and sustainable transport solutions (as per Scenario 2); and
 - Scenario 3b is the same as Scenario 3 but contains additional, largerscale, Road Investment Strategy (RIS) pipeline schemes on the SRN (specifically the M1).
- 4.1.11. This step was also intended to aid the identification and assessment of mitigation measures needed to support growth coming forward during the

early stages of the Local Plan period, therefore distinguishing them from measures which are either required at a later date or are of a scale and form which present greater deliverability challenges that would mean they cannot be implemented until a later stage in the Local Plan period.

4.2. Evidential work – key conclusions drawn

4.2.1. The scenarios have enabled a sequential approach to assessing the cumulative effects with additional interventions layered on top of the previous scenario, therefore highlighting the level of mitigation achieved by each.

4.2.2. The key findings are that:

(NB: These findings need to be read in the light of the wider context set out in Chapter 2.)

- Sustainable measures alone will not be sufficient to mitigate the Plan's impacts.
- However, a combination of sustainable and targeted MRN interventions would be capable of sufficiently mitigating the Plan's shorter term impacts.
- In the longer term, the above measures would need to be supplemented by targeted SRN interventions, to help address the Plan's full impacts (to 2037).
- However, even with all of these interventions in place, there would still be a residual impact on the network.
- Additional delivery of the RIS pipeline schemes has the potential to mitigate
 most of the residual impacts, albeit their strategic scale means that there
 can be no reliance on them coming forward, due to uncertainties about their
 delivery (including likely timescales) and given that they are of a cost
 beyond which the Plan/developments could afford.
- 4.2.3. The evidential work and the key findings arising from it highlight the considerable challenges faced in seeking to mitigate the impacts of future population growth, challenges that are unlikely to be unique to the LLHMA.
- 4.2.4. Nevertheless, reflecting the principle of approaches taken with other Local Plans in the LLHMA, the development of evidenced-based area Transport Strategies provides the best opportunity for coordinating and to seeking to secure funding for highways and transport measures required to mitigate the impacts of growth so far as in reasonable possible (without significant changes in societal behaviour and expectations).

4.3. Developing the measures – Cycling, Walking and Wheeling (active travel)

- 4.3.1. In publishing its document 'Gear Change' in summer 2020⁴, the Government set out a bold ambition for walking and cycling, an ambition to make these options obvious and attractive everyday travel choices for far more people and in a greater range of circumstances, including through the provision of significantly improved infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 4.3.2. The process for identifying and developing such infrastructure improvements and by which national funding is secured for delivery is now driven by the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). LCWIPS were introduced in the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017)⁵ as a key part of increasing the number of trips made by active modes. They are a strategic approach to identifying priorities for active travel improvements in local areas and enable a long-term (10-year) approach to developing local cycling, walking and wheeling networks that will provide the greatest benefit to the most people, to encourage and enable them to travel more actively. LCWIP's are a key mechanism to aid in meeting the Government's latest CWIS2⁶ objectives to:
 - increase the percentage of short journeys in towns and cities that are walked or cycled to 50% in 2030 and to 55% in 2035; and
 - deliver a world-class cycling and walking network in England by 2040.
- 4.3.3. The process for developing LCWIPs has six stages and is heavily driven by evidence and public engagement. Accordingly, they represent significant undertakings to develop, both in time and resource.
- 4.3.4. However, demonstrating its commitment to the promotion of and betterment of cycling, walking and wheeling, the County Council has committed is own funding to the development of a programme of LCWIPs, covering the urban areas of the County adjoining the City of Leicester and the main County Towns. This programme includes the development of two LCWIPs that will form key components of the area Transport Strategies.
- 4.3.5. Loughborough Area LCWIP (see Figures 2-2.2). This infrastructure plan document covers Loughborough, Shepshed and Quorn settlements and is now at an advanced stage of development and is due to be presented to the County Council's Cabinet in Autumn 2023 for approval. Ahead of this, a final round of public engagement is being undertaken during August and September 2023 (following on from extensive previous engagement exercises). More information on this engagement, including a draft of the LCWIP document can be found on the County Council's 'Have Your Say'

⁴ Gear Change, Department for Transport, 2020

⁵ Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, Department for Transport, 2017

⁶ Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2, Department for Transport, 2023

webpage. The document, developed through the evidential process set out in the Government's technical guidance, identifies the priority cycling, walking and wheeling networks for improvement encompassing Loughborough and Shepshed. It also provides illustrative concept proposals for the priority corridors, the selection of which have in part been informed by the locations of proposed growth in Loughborough and Shepshed.

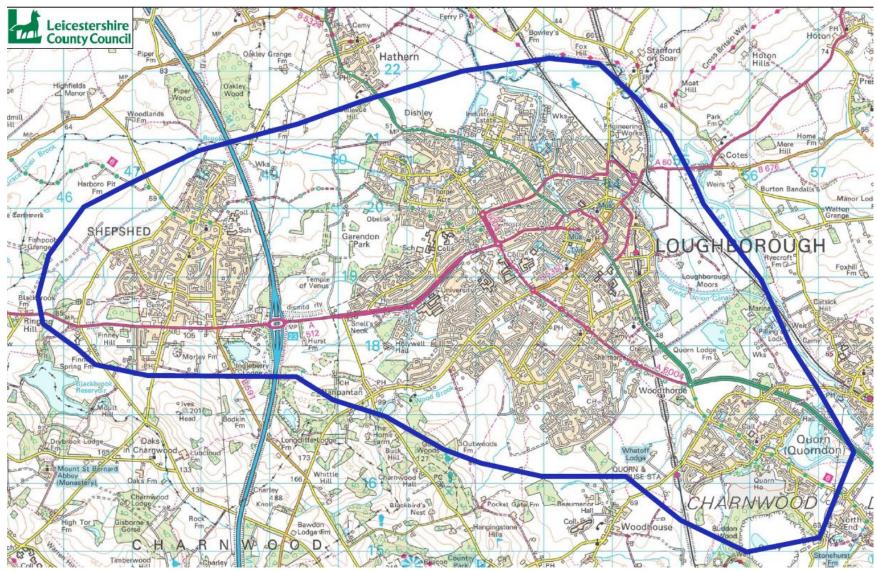


Figure 2 - Loughborough area LCWIP boundary

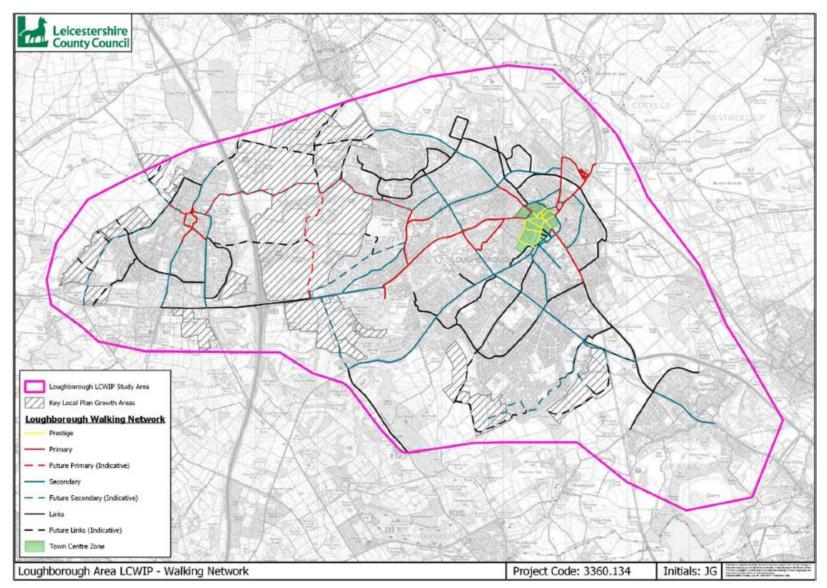


Figure 2.1 – Loughborough area LCWIP: Walking Network

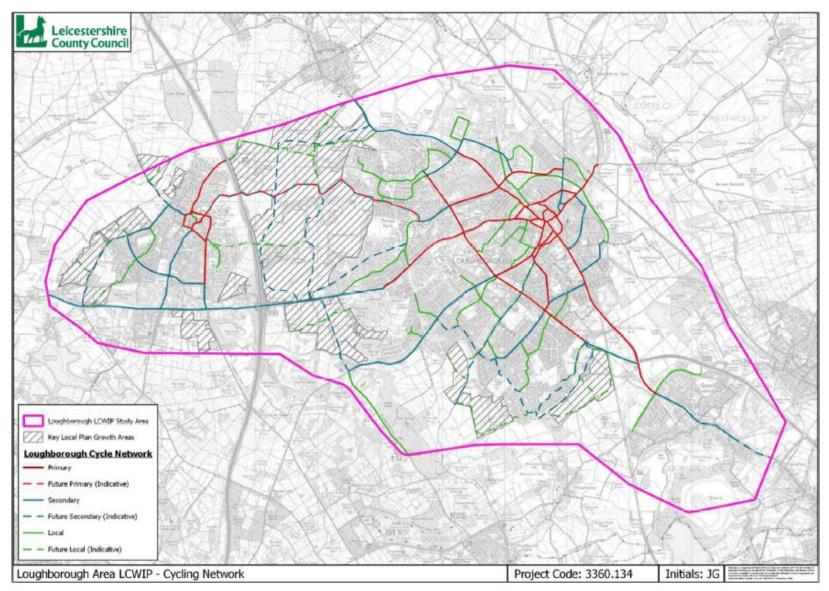


Figure 2.2 – Loughborough area LCWIP: *Cycling* Network

- 4.3.6. **North of Leicester Area LCWIP (see Figures 3-3.2).** This document is at an earlier stage of development. Initial evidence work has been undertaken to identify draft networks and they have been subject to initial key stakeholder and public engagement exercises.
- 4.3.7. This area in particular is where evidence shows cumulative and cross-boundary impacts, both from growth in the Borough of Charnwood impacting on adjoining areas, such as the City of Leicester, and vice-versa. We are therefore working closely with Leicester City Council to ensure that this LCWIP aligns with the projects that it has been and is continuing to deliver in the north-west area of the City, especially those funded by Transforming Cities Fund monies. In that way, the intention is to deliver a seamless ('boundary blind') network that supports sustainable growth across this area.
- 4.3.8. This LCWIP is due to be presented to the County Council's Cabinet for approval in early 2024.

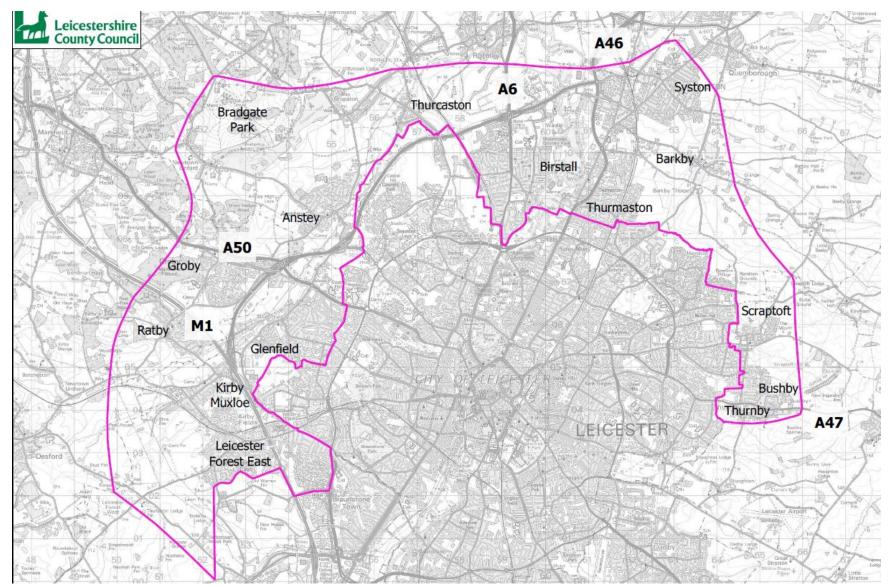


Figure 3 – Initial North of Leicester area LCWIP boundary

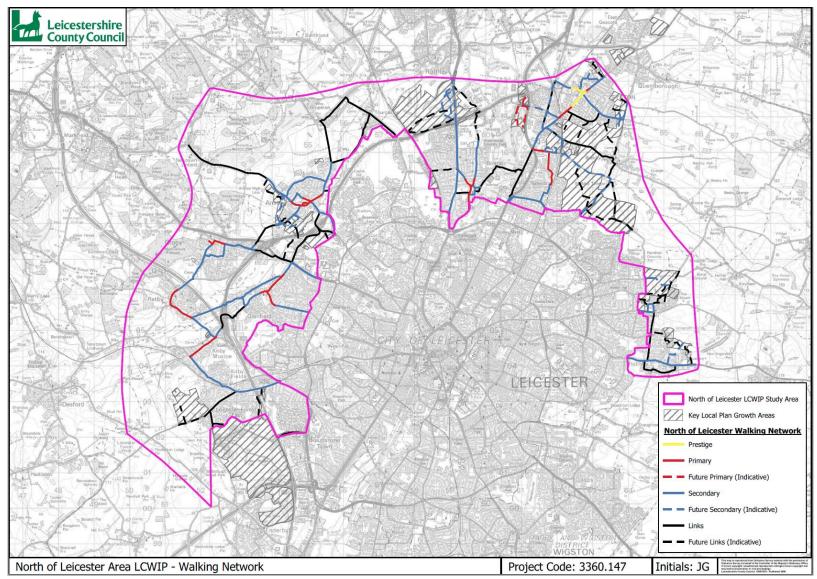


Figure 3.1 – North of Leicester area LCWIP: Draft Walking Network

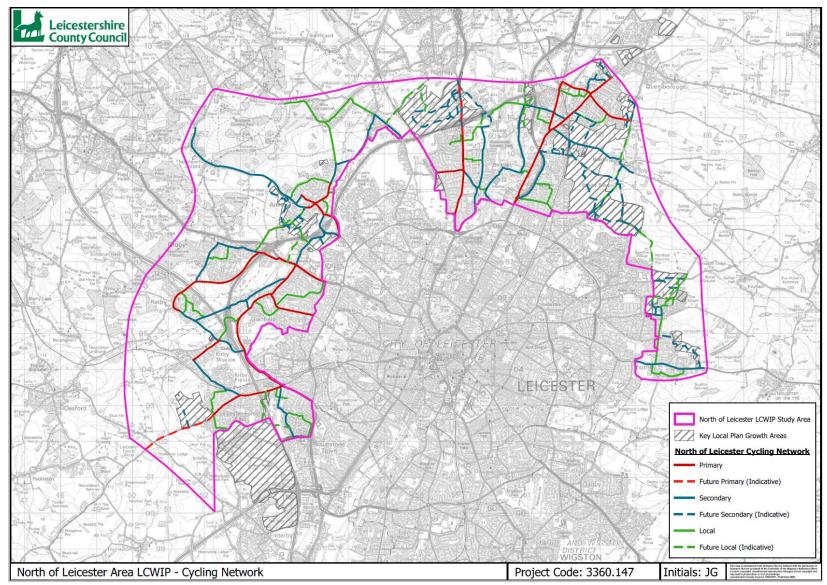


Figure 3.2 – North of Leicester area LCWIP: Draft *Cycling* Network

- 4.3.9. Having these LCWIPs in place provides a robust basis for seeking to secure funding to deliver enhancements to walking cycling and wheeling infrastructure across the two areas, both from public and private (developer) sources. In this respect, it should be noted that their delivery is scalable, e.g. particular routes can be delivered in conjunction with development sites as they come forward. (See Chapter 5 for more information on costs and funding.)
- 4.3.10. LCWIPs will form a fundamental component of the area Transport Strategies (likewise for other existing and future strategies elsewhere in the County).
- 4.3.11. No equivalent LCWIP work has yet been undertaken in respect of villages in the Soar Valley (save for Quorn). However, as part of the evidential work developed for the Local Plan, a number of potential conceptual schemes were identified. These are set out in Table 1 below, which is based on the Local Plan, Appendix 3 Infrastructure Schedule, as submitted.

| Barrow Upon Soar | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Transport package comprising sustainable travel interventions including footway and cycle route improvements | Footway improvements to the railway station from key development site(s) | | | |
| | Cycle route improvements to the railway station from key development site(s) | | | |
| | Cycle parking facilities at the railway station | | | |
| Sileby | | | | |
| Transport package comprising sustainable travel interventions including footway and cycle route improvements | Footway route improvements to the railway station from key development site(s) | | | |
| | Cycle route improvements to the station from key development site(s) | | | |
| | Cycle parking facilities at the railway station | | | |

Table 1: Extracts from Local Plan Appendix 3, Infrastructure Schedule as submitted

4.3.12. Whilst these schemes have been identified through evidential work proportionate to the development of a Local Plan, they have not been identified through a process that aligns to the requirements of developing an LCWIP (and thus would make then ineligible for public (Government) funding). Nor can they as yet be considered against the outcomes of other work that the County Council is undertaking, including in respect of its next Major Road Network (MRN) priority corridor, which is the A6/A6004 from Birstall to Kegworth (and which for a large part runs through the Soar Valley). (See section 4.5 for further information on the MRN work.). Thus, as part of the ongoing development work for the Strategies, the conceptual schemes will be reviewed to ensure that they align with the wider LCWIP

work and the outcomes of the MRN work and the definitive list of measures confirmed.

4.4. Developing the measures – passenger transport

- 4.4.1. Publication of 'Bus Back Better' in spring 2021⁷ was a key step in the Government seeking to deliver on its ambition to transform bus (passenger transport) services across the Country.
- 4.4.2. Flowing from its publication, Local Transport Authorities were required to take actions to put in place arrangements and plans for delivering improved services in their areas. As a result, in autumn 2021 the first <u>Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)</u> was published and in spring 2022 the Leicestershire Enhanced Bus Partnership came into being in line with the mandated Government timelines.
- 4.4.3. BSIPs are now the route via which capital funding is awarded from Government for measures such as bus lanes or upgrades to bus stops and shelters. Revenue funding can also be secured to support bus services that do not operate on a commercial basis (i.e. are not quite profitable enough for operators to run, but still provide value for money in the transport offer for high priority journeys they provide to communities, and therefore warrant subsidy support under the Council's Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy (PTSP)). In that regard, the impacts of the pandemic, combined with a shortages of drivers and the inflationary effects of the war in the Ukraine have had a profound and continuing impact on the bus industry nationally.
- 4.4.4. Patronage on local bus services across the Leicestershire network remains at approximately 80% of pre-Covid levels. Patronage on Park & Ride services for the first half of financial year 2022/23 was just under a third (37%) of the figure for the same period in 2019/20, as a result of changing travel to work behaviour and the greater availability of city centre parking in Leicester. Concessionary patronage is around 62% of pre-pandemic levels. Accordingly, some operators have curtailed the routes of certain commercial services in the wake of reduced passenger numbers and driver shortages. Others have removed services which were partially supported by the County Council as they are no longer considered commercially viable.
- 4.4.5. Against the backdrop summarised in paragraph 4.4.4., ever greater uncertainties arise from seeking to secure one-off developer contributions towards site specific bus services; the risks that those services will cease to operate as and when the developer funding ends have increased markedly.
- 4.4.6. Long-term planning of passenger transport services is equally challenging.

 Nevertheless, through the Leicestershire Enhanced Partnership, the County

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⁷ Bus Back Better, Department for Transport, 2021

Council has committed to undertaking the following studies to feed into the updated Leicestershire BSIP to be published in autumn 2023:

- Identification of next digital demand responsive transport (DDRT) area(s):
 Based on experiences and evidence gained through the current south east
 Leicestershire FoxConnect service, which is a pilot project part funded by
 the Government's Rural Mobility Fund, this feasibility study aims to identify
 further area(s) in Leicestershire where, subject to the availability of funding,
 further DDRT could be rolled out. A potentially suitable area could be within
 Charnwood; for example, a service providing links to key settlements,
 places of employment and local rail stations would mimic the nature of the
 current FoxConnect service.
- Supporting the transition to zero-emission buses: This feasibility study aims
 to understand which parts of the Leicestershire bus network have the
 greatest propensity for electrification and the infrastructure challenges,
 requirements and costs involved. As a large scale settlement, with a
 relatively stable bus network, Loughborough might be a potential area
 where subject to funding the early electrification of buses might be possible.
- Priority infrastructure to support services: The aim of this feasibility study is
 to identify locations on the Leicestershire bus network where bus services
 are delayed due to 'road conditions', for example because of traffic
 congestion or restricted widths caused by on-street parking. It will identify
 measures to address the delays, such, as perhaps, sections of new bus
 lane or the introduction of parking restrictions, and the time-saving benefits
 of and the costs of the measures.
- 4.4.7. These commitments build on from existing BSIP measures being delivered through the current Enhanced Partnership Schemes, such as aligning bus service timetable change dates across all operators and services in the county, and defining high quality bus stop infrastructure, standardising the offer for passengers.
- 4.4.8. The continued evolution and delivery of the Leicestershire BSIP measures in collaboration with the Enhanced Partnership with bus operators will inform the passenger transport content of the three area transport Strategies (and other existing and future strategies elsewhere in the County).

4.5. Developing the measures – highway improvements

- 4.5.1. The evidential work to date identifies ten specific highway improvement schemes on the MRN and SRN. Concept scheme drawings (Appendix B) and cost estimates (See Chapter 5) have been produced for each of these schemes.
- 4.5.2. As set out in Table 2 and shown in Figure 4 below all of the highway improvement schemes are associated with one or more of the area Transport

Strategies. Whilst most of the schemes are only associated with one of the Transport Strategies, scheme 5 straddles both the Loughborough and Shepshed and the Soar Valley areas, whilst scheme 6 straddles both the North of Leicester and the Soar Valley areas.

| Scheme | | Strategy Area(s) | Drawing Ref (see Appendix A) |
|--------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | M1 Junction 23 | Loughborough and Shepshed | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0015 (Rev. P01) |
| | | | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0016 (Rev. P01) (NB: These drawings are included in a single PDF file in the appendix) |
| 2. | Epinal Way/ Warwick Way | Loughborough and Shepshed | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0008 (Rev. P01) |
| 3. | A6004 Epinal Way/Alan Moss Rd | Loughborough and Shepshed | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0007 (Rev. P01) |
| 4. | A6004 Epinal Way/Beacon Rd | Loughborough and Shepshed | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0006 (Rev. P01) |
| 5. | A6/A6004 One Ash Rbt. | Loughborough and Shepshed + Soar Valley | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0005 (Rev. P01) |
| 6. | A46/A6 | North of Leicester + Soar Valley | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0003 (Rev. P01) |
| | | , | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0004 (Rev. P01) |
| 7. | A46/A50 | North of Leicester | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0002 (Rev. P01) |
| 8. | A46/Wanlip Rd | North of Leicester | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0011 (Rev. P01) |
| | | | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0012 (Rev. P01) |
| 9. | A46/A607 Hobby Horse Rbt. | North of Leicester | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0013 (Rev. P01) |
| 10. | A607/Fosse Way | North of Leicester | BLITMT07-JAC-HGN-DR-CH-0009 (Rev. P01) |

Table 2: SRN and MRN Targeted Improvements

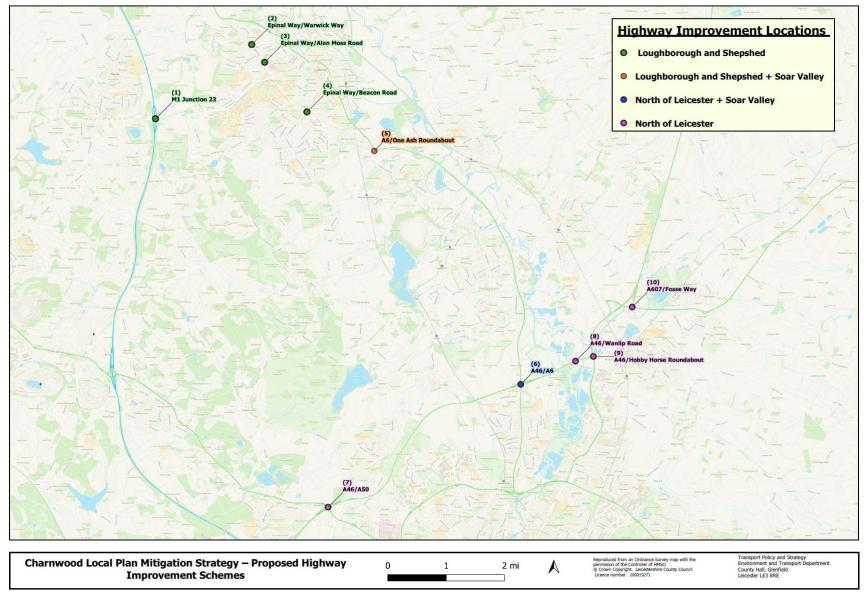


Figure 4: Highway Improvement Locations

- 4.5.3. The scheme identification and costing work to date is proportionate for the development of a Local Plan. However, in many cases further work is already in hand.
- 4.5.4. Schemes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 fall on the A6/A6004 MRN corridor, which for much of its length runs through the Soar Valley. This is the County Council's next MRN priority corridor for investment in the second MRN round 2025 to 2030⁸.
- 4.5.5. Building on the Plan's evidential work, the County Council has commissioned consultants to undertake investigatory work to examine issues, conceptual solutions and build a strategic narrative for investment in the A6/A6004 MRN corridor. Conceptual solutions will embrace, where appropriate, measures to enhance walking, cycling and wheeling provision and passenger transport provision within the corridor. This work will lay the foundation not just for future bids for second round MRN funding, but also provide further evidence in respect of wider funding opportunities (public and private).
- 4.5.6. Schemes 1, 7, 8 and 9 fall on the SRN. National Highways are currently progressing studies relating to each of those locations.

⁸ The first MRN round runs from 2020 to 2025. Having secured funding from the Department for Transport, the County Council is currently progressing to deliver a scheme on its first priority corridor, the A511/A50 in the north west of the County.

5. Costs, funding and delivery

5.1. Cost estimates

- 5.1.1. Cost estimate work to date has been proportionate for the development of a Local Plan. Table 3 overleaf summarises the current cost estimates for the three elements of the Strategies.
- 5.1.2. Based on experience of similar strategies and schemes it is possible that the complete mitigation package will cost at least £180m and, given current market conditions, could rise over the life of the Plan. However, this figure should be treated as being indicative of potential scale and is subject to the caveat about scheme cost uncertainties set out in the Table.
- 5.1.3. The substantial proportion of this cost estimate relates to the delivery of walking, cycling and wheeling networks enhancements through the Loughborough and North of Leicester LCWIPs. By their very nature, the scale and complexity of the proposed networks means at this stage it would be disproportionate and prohibitively costly to seek to prepare preliminary designs and cost estimates for every single corridor on the networks. So, the LCWIP cost estimates have been derived from preliminary conceptual design work and cost estimates for selected priority corridors and Active Travel England cost bench marking data, which represents the most robust and proportionate approach at this time. Further details on costings and preliminary conceptual schemes for priority corridors will be included in the LCWIP documents when they are published in the coming months. (See Chapter 6 for further information on next steps.)
- 5.1.4. It is important to stress, that in seeking to secure develop contributions (See Section 5.2) towards the LCWIPs delivery, this is likely to be based on seeking to deliver priority corridors, the selection of which has been driven by locations of growth and linkages to key destinations. Where the County Council has already prepared conceptual designs and cost estimates, these will mark the starting point for discussions with site promoters about a proportionate contribution (either financial or in kind). Alternatively, where no design work has been undertaken, the County Council will expect developers to prepare their own proposals in discussion with the Authority and in the context of 'Gear Change' and LTN1/20.
- 5.1.5. Information currently available indicates an estimated cost in the region of £45m to £50m in total for the MRN and SRN elements of the mitigation package. These form a critical part of the wider mitigation packages, the cost estimates for which are set out on page 31.
- 5.1.6. The MRN/SRN estimates have been subject to peer review and have sought to reflect the LHA's own recent experiences with costs of schemes delivered

on the ground. However, in such times of unprecedented global economic shocks and instabilities, there remain great uncertainties around future levels of scheme costs; for example, whilst the estimate makes an allowance for construction cost inflation, it is impossible to predict how accurate that allowance might prove to be several years into the future.

5.1.7. As the Strategy's development work is taken on further this will inform viability assessments that in turn will support prioritisation of measure delivery over the life of the Plan.

| Element | Estimated Costing | | Assumptions/comments |
|--|--|---|--|
| Cycling, Walking and Wheeling infrastructure | Loughborough LCWIP Soar Valley conceptual measures: Barrow Upon Soar Footway improvements to the railway station from key development site(s) Cycle route improvements to the railway station from key development site(s) Cycle parking facilities at the railway station Sileby Footway route improvements to the railway station | £70,000 £1,400,000 £13,000 £300,000 £13,000 | South of Leicester LCWIP costings used as a reasonable proxy for North of Leicester. Costings as of January 2023 Based on conceptual designs Soar Valley Costings taken from Local Plan Appendix 3 Infrastructure Delivery Schedule as submitted |
| Passenger Transport (PT) | Total £10 | 0,000,000 | Assumes future enhancement of PT provision in the Borough is based on a digital Demand Responsive Transport model as per our Fox Connect Rural Mobility Fund (RMF) project. In principle, the focus is likely to be on enhancing provision across the more rural areas of the Borough (with exceptions, see below), assuming that the City's Transforming Cities Fund projects deliver enhancements in the southern part of the Borough and that the Loughborough/Shepshed bus market (and services thereto) remains relatively stable going forward. Assumes that the essential nature/principles of the digital DRT would be the same as the RMF. That is, it would provide the relatively more rural areas (which could include the Soar Valley) with links to railway stations in the Borough, the Birstall P&R site and key employment areas (e.g. at Thurmaston/Syston), with a possible exception in this case being that it might also have a 'fixed route' element that provides improved Shepshed/Loughborough 'cross-town' connectivity. Assumes that it would operate with the same level of resource as the RMF project, i.e. 3 ICE vehicles. Updated costs to be provided as part of BSIP refresh in Autumn 2023, following conclusion of planned studies to explore specific proposals (set out in Chapter 4.) |
| Highway Improvements | A6004 Epinal Way/Warwick Way A6004 Epinal Way/Alan Moss Rd A6004 Epinal Way/Beacon Rd A6/A6004 One Ash Roundabout A46/A6 further imps' (additional to Broadnook) A46/A50 A46/Wanlip Rd A46/A607 Hobby Horse Roundabout A607/Fosse Way | | |
| | Total £183 | 33,000,000 | |

Table 3: Cost Estimates

5.2. Funding sources

- 5.2.1. It is anticipated that over the lifetime of the Local Plan, funding to deliver the Strategies will come from two key sources:
- 5.2.2. *Public funding:* The scale of transport measures required to enable the future growth of Leicestershire's growing and changing population goes beyond what is affordable from the County Council's own budgets.
- 5.2.3. Consequently, we will work with partners to develop bids and business cases to secure public funding of projects from Government where suitable opportunities exist, including through bidding opportunities or promotion of projects. Various Government funding pots have come and gone over the years associated with enabling the delivery of growth (e.g., Growth Deals and the Growth and Housing Fund). The same is likely to hold true for the future; over the Plan's lifetime (2021 to 2037) Governments are still likely to be making monies available to support economic growth and to help to deliver on net-zero policy aspirations/requirements. Current opportunities include:
 - Active Travel England to deliver the LCWIPs
 - Department for Transport (DfT) for funding to deliver our BSIP and towards the delivery of schemes on our next MRN priority corridor, the A6/A6004
 - We will also continue to work with National Highways to secure funding for the targeted improvements to the SRN through the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) process.
- 5.2.4. Private funding: We will work with the Charnwood Borough Council as the Plan making authority and Local Planning Authority to secure the delivery of measures by developers and/or financial contributions towards measures. The County Council's proposal is to pool such contributions from developers with this funding being used for priority projects only when the money has been received. Officers have been working on the understanding that Charnwood Borough Council support the Proposed Main Modifications to the policy framework provided by the Local Plan, and that they will ultimately provide the basis for seeking to secure developer contributions. In the meantime, however, pending the Local Plan's adoption, the County Council has sought to secure with the Borough Council an interim approach, based around the Interim Transport Contributions Strategy considered by the County Council's Cabinet in February 2023.
- 5.2.5. The best way to maximise opportunities to secure investment from all sources is through the continued development of the area Transport Strategies.

5.3. Delivery

- 5.3.1. The transport evidential approach demonstrates that there is an acceptable transport mitigation package that should be deliverable over the lifetime of the Plan, albeit challenges are very likely to persist, which are not unique to the Borough of Charnwood, in seeking to secure investment in the coordinated delivery of infrastructure relative to the delivery of growth.
- 5.3.2. In all likelihood, the sustainable measures will come forward first, as these can be scaled in line with development coming forward (e.g. a cycling, walking and wheeling priority corridor can be enhanced rather than necessarily seeking to deliver an entire network at once). The next MRN window is 2025 to 2030, so measures on the A6/A6004 could be delivered in that timeframe. Beyond 2030 is the most probable timeframe for the delivery of SRN improvements.
- 5.3.3. This approach is being informed by lessons learnt from other Plans, most recently Melton. Here, major highway infrastructure was identified alongside sustainable transport measures as part of an area-based transport strategy, with an intention to allow some development to come forward prior to full implementation of mitigation measures, on the condition that it does not prejudice the ability to deliver cumulative infrastructure at a later date.

6. Next steps

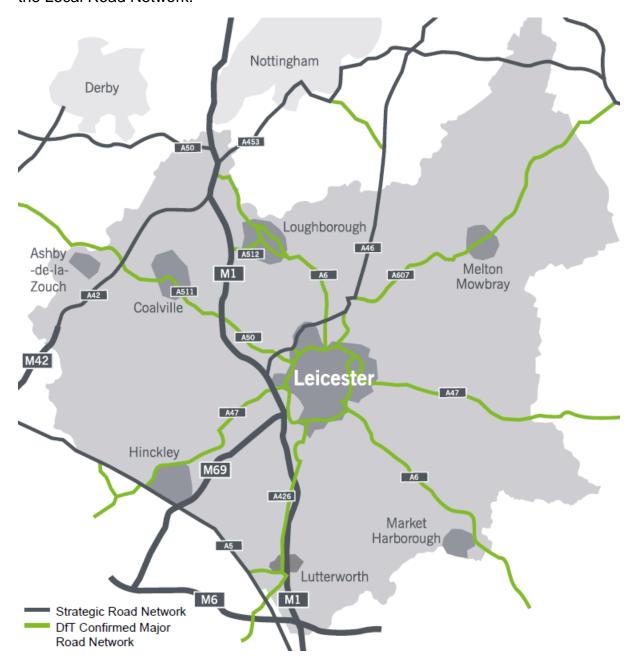
- 6.1. This document outlines the work that has been done to date to develop the three area Transport Strategies. The amount of work required to produce robust, evidence-based Strategies that accord with Government policy and guidance is very considerable and goes well beyond what would be considered propionate to underpin the development of a Local Plan.
- 6.2. Following on from the Examination In Public hearing sessions, the Inspectors examining the Local Plan have requested some further work to be carried out, including in respect of transport. In particular, they consider that the broad contents of, and the framework for, the Transport Strategies for Loughborough and Shepshed, North of Leicester and Soar Valley should be identified and submitted to the Examination. They also consider that there should be a period of consultation on the outcome of that work, including transport.
- 6.3. Accordingly, this document has been submitted to Inspectors and in conjunction with Charnwood Borough Council arrangements will be agreed in respect of consultations. The outcomes of those consultations will provide a further source of evidence to inform the Strategies' ongoing development.
- 6.4. Beyond that, the further steps are:
 - To finalise the Loughborough and Shepshed Area LCWIP and secure approval of it by the County Council's Cabinet this autumn.
 - To publish an updated Leicestershire BSIP this autumn.
 - To complete the study work in respect of the A6/A6004 MRN corridor and publish a strategic narrative document around the end of this calendar year.
 - To complete development of the North of Leicester Area LCWIP, including further public engagement, and secure approval of it by the County Council's Cabinet in spring 2024.
 - To review the conceptual cycling, walking and wheeling schemes identified as part of the Local Plan's evidential work for the Soar Valley, to ensure alignment with wider LCWIP development and the outcomes of the MRN work. (It is possible that an LCWIP for the Soar Valley villages will be developed.)
 - To continue to work with National Highways on its SRN studies.
- 6.5. Having undertaken some initial consultations and completed work on these key elements of the Strategies that would be the logical point at which to publish the actual draft strategy documents for further public consultation ahead of securing their approval by the County Council's Cabinet in summer 2024.

- 6.6. As noted earlier, however, this will not be the end of the journey. The contents of the Strategies will need to be reviewed and assessed in the light of, for example, evidence from initial delivery and changes in Government policy.
- 6.7. The implementation of actual measures will be dependent on design work, public consultations and the scale of funding available. To that end, the County Council has sought to reach agreement with Charnwood Borough Council on the approach to securing developer contributions towards the Strategies' delivery, pending the Local Plan's adoption.

Appendix A

Strategic and Major Road Networks

Note: All other roads that are open to use by the public and which are looked after (maintained) by Leicestershire Council as the Local Highway Authority form part of the Local Road Network.



Appendix B

Highway Improvement Scheme Concept Drawings

- Scheme 1 M1 Junction 23 Scheme
- Scheme 2 Epinal Way & Warwick Way Roundabout Scheme
- Scheme 3 A6004 Alan Moss Road Roundabout Scheme
- Scheme 4 A6004 Beacon Road Roundabout Scheme
- Scheme 5 A6 & A6004 One Ash Roundabout Scheme
- Scheme 6 A46 & A6 Wanlip Interchange Scheme
- Scheme 7 A46 & A50 The Brantings Interchange Scheme
- Scheme 8 A46 Wanlip Lane Slip Road Scheme
- Scheme 9 A46 & A607 Hobby Horse Roundabout Scheme
- Scheme 10 A607-A46-Fosse Way Roundabout Scheme

