

Charnwood Council

Local Plan

SA Report Addendum:

Appraisal of Modifications

July, 2024

Quality information

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Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

AECOM is commissioned to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the Charnwood Local Plan (Thereafter referred to as 'the Plan'). SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of the plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA of the Plan is a legal requirement.

This is a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of this SA Report Addendum, which is an Addendum to the full SA Report published in May 2021 [Exam ref: SD5/SD6]. It is also important to note the findings of the SA Report Addendum prepared in December 2022 (Exam 57), which provides additional findings in relation to reasonable alternatives for housing growth.

The aim of the SA Report Addendum is essentially to present information on the proposed modifications, and alternatives where appropriate, with a view to informing the forthcoming consultation and subsequent plan finalisation.

Scope

The scope of the SA work, with respect to the Local Plan, is summarised within the SA Report published in May 2021. Essentially, the scope is reflected in a list of Sustainability Topics and corresponding objectives, which collectively provide a methodological 'framework' for appraisal. The SA Topics are listed below.

Sustainability Topics

- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Water quality
- Flood Risk
- Soil resources
- Air quality
- Climate change
- Historic environment
- Deprivation
- Healthy lifestyles
- Housing
- Local economy
- Accessibility
- Minerals

Screening of Proposed Modifications

As a result of the Examination of the Plan, a number of main modifications and additional modifications to the submitted Plan have been proposed. It is necessary to screen the modifications to determine if they significantly affect the findings of the main SA Report [SD5/SD6] and if further appraisal work is therefore required.

The additional modifications are largely to rectify minor issues, presentation, grammar and for clarity. Therefore, none are considered to have implications for the SA findings.

All of the proposed Main Modifications have been screened to determine if further SA work is required or if they can be screened out from further appraisal work. The proposed changes and detailed findings of the screening including the rationale for why a main modification was screened in or out are provided in Appendix A of this SA Report Addendum.

The majority of modifications involve edits to the Plan text for clarification, factual correction, to enhance readability or other minor reasons and have therefore been screened out as not being significant in terms of the SA (i.e. they would be inherently unlikely to give rise to significant effects or affect the overall conclusions).

The screening of the proposed Main Modifications (Appendix A) found that the majority of the modifications would be unlikely to have a significant effect on the findings of the previous SA work presented in the main SA Report [Exam ref: SD5/SD6].

Only the following Modifications were identified that required further consideration in the SA at this stage. These are as follows:

- Modifications that update the housing supply position and identify increased capacity on several site allocations
- Several modifications reference the need for good design and integration of developments at certain allocated sites (with regards to infrastructure and facilities).
- Modifications relating to affordable housing requirements
- A change in the location of primary school from HA48 to HA49
- Deletion of the Burial Space Policy
- Modifications relating to the approach to flood risk and drainage.
- Expanding the focus of rural diversification.
- Increased clarity in relation to Policy INF2, stating the need to address transport impacts of new development.

Consideration of alternatives

The Council explored whether there were any reasonable alternatives in relation to the proposed Main Modifications. The key changes relate to the housing strategy and propose to increase intensity at several sites to increase supply. Alternative distributions of growth were explored and tested in previous iterations of the SA, with findings presented in Exam 56, Exam 56A and Exam 57.

No further alternatives were identified as being reasonable or needing to be appraised through further SA work.

Appraisal of Modifications

The appraisal identifies that the Modifications would not lead to significant changes to the sustainability appraisal findings (compared to the Submission version of the Plan) when considering the overall effects of the Plan 'as a whole'. However, though the significance of effects remains unchanged for most SA Objectives, there are some differences between the Submitted Version of the Plan and the version with Modifications that are worth summarising.

The key differences are summarised below:

- The proposed modifications deliver a higher number of homes, which is positive for the housing and economy objectives.
- There is a slight increase in recreational pressure on some biodiversity habitats.
- There is further support for walking and cycling and improved links between strategic sites. This offsets the potential for some increased car trips on allocated sites due to intensification.

Mitigation and enhancement

No further mitigation or enhancement measures have been identified at this stage.

Monitoring

No significant effects have been identified at this stage. Therefore, the monitoring indicators identified in the main SA Report remain unchanged. A monitoring framework for the Plan has been set out as Appendix A for the Plan. This will be used as a starting point when finalising the SA indicators in the SA Adoption Statement.

Next Steps

Following consultation, the Inspectors will consider all representations received, before deciding how to report on the Plan's soundness. Assuming that the Inspectors are ultimately able to find the Plan 'sound', it will then be adopted by the Council. At the time of adoption an 'SA Statement' will be published that explains the process of plan-making/SA in full and presents 'measures decided concerning monitoring'.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1 Charnwood Borough Council is preparing a Local Plan (thereafter referred to as ‘the Plan’). The Plan is at an advanced stage, having gone through various rounds of consultation and is currently at public examination.
- 1.1.2 A number of modifications are being proposed to the Plan. It is important to explore whether these changes will affect sustainability appraisal. This SA Addendum should be read in conjunction with the SA Report (Exam SD5/SD6) and previous SA Addendum (Exam 57).

1.2. Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 1.2.1 AECOM is commissioned to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the Plan. SA is a legally required process that aims to ensure that the significant effects of an emerging draft plan (and alternatives) are systematically considered and communicated. It is a requirement that SA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (the ‘SEA Regulations’) 2004.

1.3. A note on Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 1.3.1 It is also a legal requirement to undertake a HRA in support of Local Plans. A HRA was submitted as a core document as part of the Examination process (see document SD/8). The HRA concluded that likely significant effects upon European designated habitats were unlikely given the long distance to the nearest sites and a lack of identified impact pathways. The Main Modifications have been reviewed in the context of the HRA and the conclusions remain the same (i.e. no likely significant effects).

1.4. Purpose and Structure of this SA Report Addendum

- 1.4.1 The aim of this SA Report Addendum is to present information on the proposed main modifications with a view to informing further consultation and subsequent plan finalisation.
- 1.4.2 This report is known as an SA Report ‘Addendum’ on the basis that it is an Addendum to the SA Report published in May 2021 [Exam ref: SD5/SD6]. This SA Report Addendum is structured as follows:
- **Section 2** - presents the scope of the SA;
 - **Section 3** - explains the method and presents the findings of the screening of proposed modifications;
 - **Section 4** - sets out consideration of alternatives;
 - **Section 5** – sets out an appraisal of the screened in modifications;
 - **Section 6** – considers mitigation and enhancement; and
 - **Section 7** – discusses the next steps.

2. What's the scope of the SA?

2.1. The SA Framework

2.1.1 The scope of the SA work, with respect to the Plan is introduced within the SA Report and was set out in detail within a scoping report (Exam Ref: EB/DS/10). The scope is reflected in a list of sustainability objectives and supporting criteria, which collectively provide a methodological 'framework' for appraisal.

2.1.2 The SA Objectives and criteria are listed below in Table 2.1. It has not been necessary to update or revise the SA framework for the purposes of appraisal work at this stage.

Table 2.1: The SA Framework

SA Objectives	Criteria
<p>Landscape</p> <p>Protect and enhance the integrity and quality of the Borough's urban and rural landscapes, maintaining local distinctiveness and sense of place.</p>	<p>Protect and enhance landscape character in accordance with management objectives.</p> <p>Maintain settlement identity and prevent coalescence.</p> <p>Protect and enhance areas of tranquillity.</p> <p>Promote schemes designed to promote the diversity of landscape and built character into new development.</p> <p>Minimise detrimental visual intrusion.</p> <p>Minimise light pollution.</p>
<p>Biodiversity and nature conservation</p> <p>Protect and enhance biodiversity, habitats and species</p>	<p>Protect and enhance designated sites including SSSIs, LNRs and LWSs.</p> <p>Protect and enhance priority habitats and species.</p> <p>Contribute to the protection and creation of new BAP habitats.</p> <p>Avoid habitat fragmentation and increase connectivity of habitats.</p> <p>Enhance community engagement with biodiversity.</p> <p>Encourage the protection and provision of green and open spaces.</p>
<p>Water Quality</p> <p>Protect and improve the quality and quantity of the water in the Borough's surface and groundwaters.</p>	<p>Contribute to the achievement of WFD objectives.</p> <p>Encourage sustainable and efficient management of water resources.</p> <p>Protect and where possible improve drinking water quality.</p> <p>Improve water quality in the Borough's watercourses.</p> <p>Enhancement and recreation of natural watercourses.</p> <p>Increase the use of SuDS.</p>
<p>Flood Risk</p> <p>Reduce the risk of flooding to existing communities and ensure no new developments are at risk.</p>	<p>Minimise the risk of flooding to people and properties.</p> <p>Promote and increase the use of SuDS that result in Greenfield or better run-off rates.</p> <p>Only development appropriate to the Flood Zone shall take place.</p> <p>All new development takes account of the 2016 Climate Change allowances.</p>

SA Objectives	Criteria
<p>Land</p> <p>Protect the Borough's soil resources.</p>	<p>Reduce soil erosion and protect and enhance soil quality and quantity.</p> <p>Minimise the loss of Grade 2 and Grade 3a ALC land. - Reduce contamination of soils from development, industry or agriculture.</p> <p>Promote the use of brownfield land for development where possible.</p> <p>Increase the remediation and regeneration of contaminated land.</p>
<p>Air quality</p> <p>Improve local air quality</p>	<p>Maintain and improve local air quality.</p> <p>Promote measures that will remove the occurrence of AQMAs.</p> <p>Reduce the impacts on air quality from transport.</p> <p>Mitigate against the uses that generate NO₂ or other particulates.</p>
<p>Climate change</p> <p>Reduce the impacts of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p>	<p>Deliver schemes that promote habitat and species resilience and adaptability to the effects of climate change.</p> <p>Promote measures that minimise greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Minimise the likely impacts of climate change through promotion of appropriate adaptation measures in new development.</p> <p>Promote the development of renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Promote water efficiency measures in new development.</p> <p>Reduce waste and increase reuse, recycling and energy produced of waste.</p> <p>Promote measures that reduce the need to travel and travel distances.</p> <p>Promote measures to reduce the need to travel by car.</p> <p>Promote use of public transport.</p>
<p>Historic environment</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings.</p>	<p>Conserve and enhance designated heritage features.</p> <p>Maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of Conservation Areas and settlements.</p> <p>Promote high-quality design.</p> <p>Promote heritage based sustainable tourism.</p> <p>Provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment.</p> <p>Provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment.</p> <p>Promote heritage-led regeneration.</p> <p>Increase the social benefit derived from the historic environment.</p>
<p>Population</p> <p>Reduce poverty and deprivation</p>	<p>Increase community engagement and decision making.</p> <p>Increase racial and gender equality and community cohesion.</p> <p>Reduce poverty and social exclusion.</p>

SA Objectives	Criteria
Population	Reduce crime and the fear of crime.
Promote healthy and active lifestyles in the Borough	Increase access to high quality healthcare facilities. Promote active and healthy lifestyles. Promote recreational and leisure opportunities and access to open space. Increase regular participation in physical activities and sport.
Population	Provide an adequate supply of housing. Reduce homelessness. Make best use of existing housing stock. Provide quality and flexible homes that meet the needs of the community
Local economy	Promote retention of existing jobs and create new employment opportunities. Increase diversity in the range of job opportunities. Ensure an adequate supply of a range of sites in terms of types and quality for employment uses. Improve access to opportunities for education, learning and skills training for all sectors of the community. Support the creation of flexible jobs to meet the changing needs of the population.
Material assets - Increase access to a wide range of services and facilities.	Improve availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including healthcare, education, retail and leisure. - Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities. - Maintain and enhance rural facilities. - Increase voluntary and community infrastructure.
Mineral resources - Ensure sustainable management of the Borough's mineral resources.	Increase the retention of mineral workings for biodiversity, landscape and the general public. - Reduce the use of minerals and increase the reuse of material on and off site. - Safeguard the existing development from the environmental effects of mineral workings.

3. Screening of Proposed Modifications

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1 A number of Main Modifications to the submitted Plan are proposed as a result of the examination hearing sessions and representations received. It is necessary to screen these modifications to determine if they could significantly affect previous SA findings and if further appraisal work is therefore required.

3.2. Method

- 3.2.1 All of the proposed Main Modifications were screened to determine if further SA work was required or if they could be screened out from appraisal. The findings of the screening exercise, including the rationale for why a modification was screened in or out, are provided in Appendix A.
- 3.2.2 The majority of modifications involve minor edits to the Plan text for clarification or factual correction and have therefore been screened out as not being significant in terms of requiring further exploration through the SA (i.e. they would be inherently unlikely to give rise to significant effects).
- 3.2.3 Where modifications are identified as potentially giving rise to significant effects, then additional appraisal work has been undertaken.

3.3. Screening Findings

- 3.3.1 The screening of the proposed Main Modifications (**Appendix A**) found that the majority of modifications would not be likely to have a significant effect on the findings of the previous SA work presented in the SA Report [Exam ref: SD5/SD6]. This is because the changes do not fundamentally alter the thrust of the policies when considering the Plan 'as a whole'.
- 3.3.2 Several modifications have been identified as requiring further consideration through the SA process. These are as follows:
- Modifications that update the housing supply position and identify increased capacity on several site allocations
 - Several modifications reference the need for good design and integration of developments at certain allocated sites (with regards to infrastructure and facilities). There is also a need to ensure that development on strategic sites has regard to and does not prejudice development on adjacent sites.
 - Modifications relating to affordable housing requirements
 - A change in the location of primary school from HA48 to HA49
 - Deletion of the Burial Space Policy
 - Modifications relating to the approach to flood risk and drainage.
 - Expanding the focus of rural diversification.

- Increased clarity in relation to Policy INF2, stating the need to address transport impacts of new development.

3.4. Appraising modifications

3.4.1 Each of the modifications that have been 'screened-in' have been considered in further detail, covering the following elements:

- Consideration of reasonable alternative approaches
- Appraisal against the SA framework
- Potential for mitigation / enhancement
- Monitoring.

4. Consideration of alternatives

4.1. Appraising modifications

- 4.1.1 For the modifications that have been screened-in, the potential for alternative approaches has been considered. This is discussed below.

Modifications that update the housing supply position and identify increased capacity on several site allocations

- 4.1.2 The strategy has been amended to take account of unmet needs arising from Leicester. Options relating to where unmet need could be delivered were explored through an SA Addendum that has already been subject to consultation (Exam 57).

Modifications that reference the need for good design and integration of developments at certain allocated sites (with regards to infrastructure and facilities)

- 4.1.3 The proposed changes are to ensure that allocated sites are comprehensively developed and supported by necessary infrastructure. There are no strategic alternatives to this approach (which is inherently positive in relation to a range of sustainability objectives).

A change in the location of primary school from HA49 to HA48

- 4.1.4 The location of the primary school has been determined through co-operation with the local education authority (Leicestershire County Council) and the promoters of allocated sites in Barrow upon Soar. This resulted in the preparation of a delivery strategy for the new primary school for the village (Exam 70) that included locating it on allocation HA48. There are no reasonable alternatives.

Modifications relating to affordable housing requirements

- 4.1.5 Changes in relation to requirements for affordable housing to be adaptable and accessible and for affordable housing contributions to apply to sheltered and extra care housing have been made in response to viability evidence. It is not reasonable to take an approach that is contrary to the evidence.

Deletion of the Burial Space policy

- 4.1.6 The policy is proposed to be deleted as the creation of a new cemetery in Loughborough is complete and a policy for the land is no longer necessary. There are no reasonable alternatives.

Modifications relating to the approach to flood risk and drainage.

- 4.1.7 The proposed changes seek to add clarity and strengthen the approach rather than make significant changes in approach. As such, there are no reasonable alternatives.

Modifications relating to rural diversification

- 4.1.8 The proposed changes are minor and seek to add clarity. There are no reasonable alternatives.

Modifications to INF2

- 4.1.9 The proposed changes seek to reflect the need to address significant cumulative and cross border transport impacts and the mitigation measures of Transport Strategies . There are no reasonable alternatives.

5. Appraisal of the modifications

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1 The Main Modifications that are 'screened-in' have been appraised in further detail against the full SA Framework. The findings are discussed below, first summarising the predicted effects of the submission version of the Plan and then commenting on the implications that the modifications have in relation to these effects. This helps to provide a context for which the modifications are being appraised within.
- 5.1.2 In some instances, the effects are not predicted to be significantly different as a result of the modifications, but it has been possible to discuss whether the modifications are generally more or less beneficial with regards to a particular SA topic.
- 5.1.3 Following the discussion of each topic is a table summarising how each 'iteration' of the Plan performs with regards to the SA topic 'relative to each other'. It could be the case that positive effects are predicted in both iterations, but that it is possible to conclude on the overall rank of preference.
- 5.1.4 The two iterations covered are: the proposed version of the Plan at Submission stage; and the Plan incorporating the main modifications.

5.2. SA Topic 1

Summary of effects of the Plan on Landscape (Submission version)

- 5.2.1 The strategy overall is positive as it directs growth away from the most sensitive locations such as Charnwood Forest. However, allocations are likely to lead to negative effects across a range of settlements, particularly where large scale development is proposed. In response, the Plan manages densities and developable areas on sites, as well as establishing site specific clauses (such as buffer zones and green infrastructure) to manage negative impacts on landscape character and function. As a result, residual **minor negative effects** are predicted. Other supporting Plan policies should generate **minor positive effects** as they seek to protect and enhance rural areas, consolidate areas of separation / green wedges, increase tree cover and protect landscape character.

Implications of modifications

- 5.2.2 The sites identified for intensification involve relatively small amounts of growth and are unlikely to have a major effect with regards to landscape. However, in several locations where intensification is greater (Shepshed / Anstey) it could make it more difficult to avoid negative effects on landscape where the intensification could lead to decreased areas of greenspace and / or denser developments in locations that are in close proximity to the Charnwood Forest (where landscape character is important). The effects would not be expected to be significantly negative though. In this respect, the potential for negative effects is slightly higher compared to the submitted Local Plan but would not change the overall picture from one of minor negative effects.

- 5.2.3 Other modifications require that landscape considerations are taken into account for renewable energy installations, referring to landscape character evidence and the need to reflect different character areas. This ought to help reduce the significance of any negative effects that could arise.
- 5.2.4 The modifications delete the Burial Space policy, but the site is already being constructed. Therefore, whilst effects will still arise, these are not attributed to the Plan.
- 5.2.5 Overall, it is predicted that the effects of the plan would remain similar, despite an increase in the capacity of development in some locations. There will be a requirement for development to address impacts on landscape at allocated sites, for renewable energy installations and there is acknowledgement of the need to enhance landscape in addition to protection. Therefore, **minor positive effects** and **minor negative effects** are predicted. In terms of rank, the Plan including modifications is broadly the same as the submission version (intensification on some allocated sites creates the potential for negative effects, but this is offset by stronger requirements for mitigation and enhancement, and not attributing negative effects at the burial site to this Plan.).

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	-	-

5.3. SA Topic 2

Effects of the Plan on Biodiversity (Submission version)

- 5.3.1 The Plan is predicted to have mixed effects. Though some growth locations display sensitivities in terms of biodiversity, there are specific requirements to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity. This should help to neutralise negative effects and lead to a net gain in biodiversity on site in the longer term, which would facilitate **significant positive effects**. However, it is probable that short term **minor negative effects** will arise as a result of construction activities and increased disturbance.
- 5.3.2 The likelihood of positive effects arising will also be dependent upon net gain being successfully delivered. There is a clear policy framework for directing development in this respect. In relation to other elements of the Plan, largely neutral effects are predicted. There are also some **minor positive effects** being generated through a focus on improvements in the Charnwood Forest and the need for biodiversity net gain.

Implications of modifications

- 5.3.3 The sites identified for intensification are dispersed across the borough in locations that are mostly not sensitive with regards to biodiversity. The scale of growth is also relatively low in most locations, and therefore effects are likely to be minimal in this respect. Several locations are adjacent to SSSIs in Shepshed (HA32, HA40). The level of growth is not major but could potentially lead to some increased pressures such as recreation, noise and light near to Black Brook and the Cuttings SSSI. This is dependent upon the layout and design of development though. HA43 at Anstey is also identified for more substantial intensification, and this site is fairly close to Sheet Hedges Wood SSSI and is adjacent to areas of woodland. The additional growth does not extend the site beyond the proposed allocated site, and with suitable mitigation effects on the SSSI are not considered to be significantly negative. It will be important to ensure that development retains a buffer between developed lands and the SSSI / wooded areas. Overall, the effects of intensification are likely to bring about greater potential for negative effects, but these are still likely to be **minor** or **moderate**.

5.3.4 There are no other modifications proposed relating to biodiversity that are likely to have a further effect with regards to mitigation and enhancement. Therefore, the modified version of the Plan is ranked less favourably compared to the Submitted Plan with respect to biodiversity.

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	1	2

5.3.5 It is noted that the SSSIs at Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood have been designated as a National Nature Reserve. All of the assessments within the SA up to this point have been undertaken in the context of these sites being SSSIs. These were treated as important receptors and this was reflected in significance scoring. The recognition of this area as a National Nature Reserve could bring added protection and an enhanced focus on the importance of this area. However, this does not alter the likelihood or significance of effects arising from the Plan (notably from development in Anstey).

5.4. SA Topic 3

Effects of the Plan on Water Quality (Submission version)

5.4.1 **Minor negative effects** could potentially arise in the short term as a result of development / construction. However, plan policies that seek to reduce pollution ought to ensure that effects are manageable. In the longer term, a change in land use from agriculture could reduce diffuse pollution. The implementation of SUDs should also help to minimise pollution from future development. These are **minor positive effects**.

Implications of modifications

5.4.2 Intensification / increased housing provision would occur in a dispersed manner across the borough, which would be unlikely to add significant pressures to water infrastructure in any particular location. None of the sites identified for intensification are within groundwater protection zones, and thus neutral effects are predicted in this respect. The effects remain unchanged compared to those within the submitted Local Plan.

5.4.3 Several modifications strengthen the focus on flood risk mitigation measures and the need to implement sustainable urban drainage systems (also considering cumulative effects). These are improvements to the Plan in relation to water quality but are unlikely to bring about significant changes to the overall conclusions (give that these principles were already reflected in the Plan policies). Therefore, whilst the Plan including modifications is ranked as more preferable to the Submitted version of the Plan, the effects are broadly the same (i.e. minor negative / minor positive effects).

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	2	1

5.5. SA Topic 4

Effects of the Plan on Flood Risk (Submission version)

5.5.1 Generally, the sites that have been allocated are either not within a flood risk zone or slightly adjoining a flood risk zone. Therefore, the strategy is likely to generate **neutral effects**. Though there are sites that are intersected by flood zone 2/3 (such as in the urban area of Loughborough), there is an expectation that Plan policies will minimise the potential for residual negative effects. Other Plan policies seek to avoid and manage flood risk, and this could lead to **minor positive effects** (particularly as there is a requirement to reduce net run-off from brownfield sites if possible). Increased tree planting and biodiversity net gain should also lead to overall improvements.

Implications of modifications

5.5.2 With regards to the sites selected for intensification, only two sites are identified as being at risk in terms of surface water flooding or being partly within Flood Zones 2/3. Site HA08 involves a small amount of additional housing, which would be achieved through density, rather than increasing the area of land to be involved. Therefore, areas at risk of flooding would still be avoided. The intensification involved at HA33 is more substantial but will not increase the development outside of flood zone 1 areas.

5.5.3 Other plan modifications (For example to policy CC1) provide greater direction and clarity with regards to addressing food risk sequentially and addressing the cumulative effects of development (including consideration of surface water flood risk, residual impacts and resistant / resilient design). Overall, the modifications are positive in relation to flood risk and are predicted to have **minor positive effects**, which is preferable to the submitted version of the Plan (which carried a degree of uncertainty).

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	2	1

5.6. SA Topic 5

Effects of the Plan on Land (Submission version)

5.6.1 There will be an unavoidable and permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Though there will remain substantial soil resources, this is still considered to be a **significant negative effect**.

Implications of modifications

5.6.2 Intensification of existing sites is the most effective way of avoiding further loss of greenfield and agricultural land whilst seeking to increase housing provision. As no additional sites would be allocated, the additional effects are predicted to be neutral. The effects of windfall development are considered likely to be addressed through Plan policies which mainly direct growth away from development outside existing settlements (hence avoiding a significant effect in terms of land use).

5.6.3 There are no other modifications of relevance to the land / soil SA topic that are likely to have implications for the SA findings. Therefore, overall, the effects remain as **significant negative**.

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	-	-

5.7. SA Topic 6

Effects of the Plan on Air Quality (Submission version)

- 5.7.1 The spatial strategy and site allocations will lead to growth in locations that could contribute to increased traffic through AQMAs at Loughborough and Syston. However, this is unlikely to lead to significant effects on air quality, as increased traffic would be offset by the gradual uptake of low emissions of vehicles, and the promotion of modal shift. A residual **minor negative effect** is predicted in the short term.
- 5.7.2 The Plan gives a strong focus on sustainable construction and sustainable travel and seeks to facilitate electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This could lead to **significant positive effects** in the longer term by enabling an uptake and increasing the attractiveness of such options. In terms of exposure to air quality and the impacts upon human health, the plan requires development within or adjoining an AQMA to secure appropriate mitigation measures and avoid impacts upon human health, which should help to ensure that new development is resilient.

Implications of modifications

- 5.7.3 None of the sites identified for intensification are in close proximity to air quality management areas, but there is a possibility that some increased growth could lead to trips along routes where AQMAs exist. For example, much of the intensification would take place at Anstey, potentially leading to increased car trips into Leicester and along areas declared as AQMAs within Leicester. The remaining growth is fairly dispersed across the Borough and would be unlikely to lead to significant effects with regards to air quality. These are minor negative effects, and unlikely to significantly change the effects of the submitted Local Plan (though the modified plan is ranked as less preferable in respect of air quality). Though requirements relating to EV charging have been removed, this is simply to avoid duplication of building regulations that have since been introduced (and will achieve the same outcomes).
- 5.7.4 Modifications proposed to policy EV9 clarify that there is a need for replacement facilities for open space, sport and recreation need to be easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. This is likely to help reduce car trips slightly, which is of benefit to air quality. However, this is unlikely to have significant implications.
- 5.7.5 There are no other modifications of relevance to the air quality SA topic that are likely to have significant implications for the SA findings. Therefore the predicted effects remain as **minor negative** alongside **significant positive effects**.

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	1	2

5.8. SA Topic 7

Effects of the Plan on Climate Change (Submission version)

5.8.1 There are a range of Plan policies that seek to achieve reductions in emissions, and these are likely to be successful where firm requirements are made (such as the need to deliver higher standards of water efficiency and increased tree coverage). Other carbon emissions savings could be achieved through the Plan’s focus on sustainable transport, requiring support for electric charging points and by identifying locations suitable for wind energy schemes. Conversely, the approach to employment focuses on sectors which increase transport related emissions. On balance, the Plan is likely to lead to a reduction in carbon emissions (i.e. the positive measures outweigh the increases in emissions that could occur due to the strategic approach to employment), which is a **minor positive effect**.

Implications of modifications

5.8.2 Intensification of existing allocations will lead to an overall increase in housing delivery. Whilst this would lead to an increase in overall greenhouse gas emissions, an approach that increases density / intensifies growth should help to ensure that per capita emissions are reduced (by promoting accessible / walkable developments and increasing the potential to secure low carbon energy generation at new developments (increased densities could improve viability for example). It is also likely that new growth would be designed to a higher standard of sustainability compared to the existing stock of housing. Therefore, the effects of this additional growth are not expected to change the overall conclusions in relation to the submitted Local Plan.

5.8.3 Though requirements relating to EV charging have been removed, this is simply to avoid duplication of building regulations that have since been introduced (and will achieve the same outcomes). There are no other modifications of relevance to the climate change mitigation SA topic that are likely to have significant implications for the SA findings. Therefore, the predicted effects remain as **minor positive**.

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	-	-

5.9. SA Topic 8

Effects of the Plan on Historic Environment (Submission version)

5.9.1 In general, the strategy directs growth away from very sensitive locations with regards to the historic environment. For example, no development is located at the sensitive settlements within Charnwood Forest such as Newton Linford, Woodhouse Eaves and Swithland, and none is allocated to the smaller villages in the rural northeast such as Cotes, Prestwold, Burton on the Wolds, and Hoton. This is positive from a borough-wide perspective. Most of the site allocations are in areas that do not contribute positively to the character of their respective settlements, and so impacts on heritage are either unlikely or could be positive (for example in Loughborough there are poor quality sites that reduce the quality of the area rather than supporting it). In this respect, the Plan has mainly neutral effects / some minor positives. There are several site allocations identified where negative effects could occur though. At Anstey, Sileby, Thurstaston, Thrussington and Rearsby, site allocations are adjacent to or within the respective Conservation Areas, and there is therefore potential for the character of these areas to be affected negatively.

5.9.2 The effects are not predicted to be significant as there are no designated or locally important assets on these sites, and there are plan policies dedicated to protecting heritage and securing high quality design (including site specific clauses which seek to ensure bespoke design that is informed by Conservation Area Appraisals). Overall, negative effects ought to be possible to avoid or would be minor, but there is an element of uncertainty. The supporting Plan policies should help to minimise effects associated with site allocations to an extent, and for a range of sites, specific clauses have been drafted. In terms of general development principles and other elements of the Plan, mostly minor positive effects are predicted, which should help to achieve improvements in terms of the wider public realm and town centres.

Implications of modifications

5.9.3 The majority of sites identified for intensification are not sensitive with regard to the historic environment, and intensification is considered unlikely to have a different effect compared to the allocated sites in the submitted plan. Site HA64 is an exception, as it is adjacent to a Grade II listed milestone. However, development of a residential property has already occurred directly opposite the milestone, and further development is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on this asset. Site HA43 is also earmarked for intensification. The effects would be dependent upon how this intensification is achieved. If growth maintains areas of separation and open green space between the settlement at Green Court and new built up areas, then negative effects are likely to be avoidable.

5.9.4 There are no other modifications of relevance to the heritage SA topic that are likely to have significant implications for the SA findings. Therefore the predicted effects remain as mixed (i.e. **minor positive**).

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	-	-

5.10. SA Topic 9

Effects of the Plan on Deprivation (Submission version)

5.10.1 Allocated sites are mostly located in areas that do not directly suffer from high levels of deprivation. Therefore, it is uncertain whether areas of need will benefit from development. For this reason, only **minor positive effects** are predicted (mostly related to affordable housing provision and new social infrastructure). To ensure that new development benefits deprived communities it will be important for new development to be permeable to surrounding communities. A focus on regeneration in Loughborough and Shepshed could have benefits in terms of addressing inequalities in this respect, especially with the provision of employment opportunities in accessible locations. There are supporting policies to help encourage take up of local training and jobs for such communities. The increased growth in Loughborough and the Leicester Urban Area could potentially create increased congestion that may affect deprived areas disproportionately, which is an uncertain **minor negative effect**.

Implications of modifications

5.10.2 The majority of sites proposed for intensification are not within areas suffering from multiple deprivation. In one respect, this is likely to result in neutral effects with regards to poverty and deprivation, as the benefits of development may not be felt by communities most at need.

5.10.3 Conversely, it means that additional pressures on infrastructure do not arise in deprived communities. Overall, neutral effects are predicted (in relation to additional growth) despite there being an overall increase in homes allocated under this approach.

5.10.4 There are no further modifications of relevance to the deprivation SA topic that are likely to have significant implications for the SA findings. Therefore, mixed effects remain (**minor positives** alongside **minor negatives**).

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	-	-

5.11. SA Topic 10

Effects of the Plan on Healthy Communities (Submission version)

5.11.1 In the main, the site allocations are located in areas that have reasonable access to healthcare (though this is not on foot for some sites). As a result, mostly neutral or minor positive effects are likely for existing and new residents. The majority of site allocations also have good access to local green space and other recreational facilities, which is a **minor positive effect** with regards to wellbeing. General plan policies should complement these effects as they seek to deliver environmental improvements, improve accessibility, promote active travel and protect and enhance community facilities.

Implications of modifications

5.11.2 The locations for intensification are scattered across the Borough, which should reduce pressures on health care in any particular location. Additional growth in Shepshed could contribute to pressure on healthcare in the short term, but longer term it ought to help support new facilities, as required through policy INF1. In terms of access to green infrastructure and access to services, increasing densities should not have a negative effect on those sites involved. For many sites, the increase in homes is small, and where larger increases are involved such as at Anstey, this does not lead to a negative effect on green infrastructure or provision of services. Therefore, in this respect, no further effects would be anticipated. In some locations, residential amenity will continue to be affected, but increased densities or intensification is unlikely to be significantly different in locations already earmarked for growth.

5.11.3 Other modifications are likely to have mixed effects with regards to health and communities. There is a greater attention brought to the need to address health inequalities in Policy INF1 which is positive if this directs infrastructure towards facilities that benefit communities of need. Conversely, there is a change in the approach to affordable housing provision, which is likely to reduce the number of new homes that are both 'affordable' and achieve accessibility standards (though more homes are likely to be provided, which in itself should help health and wellbeing).

5.11.4 On balance, the effects are likely to remain the same as identified in the Submitted Local Plan (i.e. **minor positive effects**).

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	-	-

5.12. SA Topic 11

Effects of the Plan on Housing (Submission version)

5.12.1 A **significant positive effect** is predicted as housing needs are likely to be met and a range of locations and types of sites (large, small, brownfield, greenfield) are included as allocations. The supply of land identified in the Plan provides flexibility and choice. Furthermore, the Plan will seek delivery of affordable housing and the types of homes for those with specific needs.

Implications of modifications

5.12.2 Additional housing is identified through a combination of windfall development allowance, appeal sites and intensification of several allocated sites. The sites identified for intensification are dispersed across the borough, with some locations having a closer relationship to Leicester than others (but most not being directly related to the Leicester urban area). An increased supply of housing will strengthen the significant positive effects identified for the submitted version of the Local Plan, but in terms of directing growth to where needs are arising, the effects are limited (though it should be noted that the submitted Plan already directs significant growth in locations that have good relationships with Leicester City).

5.12.3 Policy requirements relating to space standards / accessibility have been relaxed to recognise potential impacts in relation to viability on housing developments. It is also made clearer that affordable contributions from sheltered housing and extra care housing are not required. These measures are both more likely to remove barriers to viable housing schemes. Significant positive effects are predicted, with the modified version also ranking more preferable to the submitted version of the plan.

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	2	1

5.13. SA Topic 12

Effects of the Plan on Local Economy (Submission version)

5.13.1 The strategy will meet identified employment needs at locations that are attractive to market and broadly accessible to job seekers. The proposed housing also aligns relatively well with existing employment opportunities. A specific opportunity has also been supported at Loughborough Science and Enterprise Park, which will have positive effects in terms of attracting investment, promoting innovation and improving qualifications. Overall, **significant positive effects** are predicted in this respect. With regards to education, the sites are broadly accessible to primary and secondary schools by a range of transport modes.

5.13.2 However, in some locations, there could be pressure on schools in the short term if new schools are not secured up front. Shepshed (in particular) has issues given that a large proportion of growth is proposed in this settlement; however, measures are in place for these to be addressed alongside housing growth. Therefore, **neutral effects** are predicted. It is unclear the extent to which the strategy will support the vitality of the smaller settlements and their local centres. However, there are clear efforts to regenerate Loughborough and Shepshed, and a higher level of growth at Anstey and Barrow-upon-Soar that should support the vitality of these service centres. These are **minor positive effects**.

Implications of modifications

- 5.13.3 Increased planned growth at the proposed allocations, is likely to have further benefits with regards to employment, by providing accommodation for an increased population and bringing inward spending into different settlements. The overall effects are likely to remain **significantly positive** in terms of employment generation and economy, with minor positive effects potentially rising to moderate positives in terms of the vitality of centres. The increase in growth in a dispersed manner ought to be possible to accommodate in terms of education provision. Therefore, effects associated with the submission version of the Plan remain neutral in this respect.
- 5.13.4 There are some minor changes in relation to the rural economy that clarify support for the growth of all types of business growth and community needs (rather than only for rural farm diversification). This is more beneficial , but unlikely to lead to a significant change in the SA findings (i.e. **neutral effects** remain).
- 5.13.5 There are no modifications of relevance to town centres that are likely to have significant implications for the SA findings. Therefore the predicted effects remain as **minor positive** in this respect.

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	2	1

5.14. SA Topic 13

Effects of the Plan on Accessibility (Submission version)

5.14.1 On balance, mixed effects are predicted. On one hand, **minor positive effects** are predicted to reflect the overall focus on development and regeneration at settlements that are well served by transport links and a range of jobs, services and walkable access to green space for recreation. There is also a general focus on shifting towards sustainable modes of transport. On the other hand, there are several site allocations that are not within reasonable or ideal walking distance of some local facilities, and it is possible that such developments would involve high levels of car use (despite plan efforts to promote sustainable modes of transport). This could have knock on implications in terms of increased car trips along busy routes into Leicester City. The effects associated with such development are neutral (i.e. more of the same) to **potentially minor negative**. There is uncertainty because behavioural changes will heavily influence patterns of travel and modes of transport.

Implications of modifications

5.14.2 Two of the locations proposed for greatest intensification are at Anstey and Barrow-upon-Soar. Both locations are well located with regards to existing facilities that are accessible on foot / cycle. Both locations also involve policy requirements for a new school, and intensification could also help to better support local facilities. In this respect, positive effects will be achieved. Intensification in other locations is relatively modest, but the sites are also broadly accessible in terms of walking / cycling to access local facilities, public transport and jobs. Several sites proposed for intensification are less well located, but the magnitude of additional growth is unlikely to lead to a difference in terms of effects. Overall, the effects of the submitted local plan are likely to remain similar, and thus minor positive effects and uncertain neutral / minor negative effects are predicted.

5.14.3 Policy INF2 provides further detail/ clarity in relation to the transport impacts of development and the address cross boundary impacts, through the Transport Strategies. This ought to better address any increased pressures due to intensification, as well as providing a more comprehensive approach to addressing impacts on the road network.

5.14.4 Modifications are also proposed that seek high quality design and to ensure integration between sites that fall within broad locations for growth. This ought to be positive with regards to accessibility, as it will help to ensure permeability between developments, and ensure that sufficient infrastructure is provided.

5.14.5 Overall, the effects of the Plan are predicted to be broadly the same with the Modifications (i.e. **minor positive** and potential **minor negative** effects). There could be a slight increase in traffic as a result of further housing provision, but this is not likely to be significant. Countering this, the Plan has been strengthened in terms of the integration of strategic developments and securing necessary infrastructure, including consideration of cross-boundary impacts.

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	-	-

5.15. SA Topic 14

Effects of the Plan on Minerals (Submission version)

5.15.1 The overall effect of the Plan with regards to mineral resources is **minor negative**. It is likely that some mineral resources would be sterilised, but it is unclear whether these would be viable. Furthermore, it is unlikely that this would affect the required supply.

Implications of modifications

5.15.2 Intensification of allocated sites will help to avoid further land use changes, which could have otherwise involved land that falls within mineral safeguarded areas. In this respect, neutral effects are expected, and there is little change in relation to the effects of the Submission Local Plan.

5.15.3 There are no modifications of relevance to minerals that are likely to have significant implications for the SA findings. Therefore the predicted effects remain as **minor negative** in this respect.

	Submission Plan	Plan review with modifications
<i>Rank</i>	--	-

5.16. Summary of Effects

5.16.1 The previous sections discuss how the modifications are likely to affect each of the Sustainability Objectives. Whilst several implications have been identified (both positive and negative), these do not change the significance of the effects when compared to the Submission version of the Plan. This is reflected in Table 5.1 below, which shows the effects of the Submission version of the Plan, a brief commentary on the implications of the Modifications, and finally the ‘residual’ effects of the modified version of the Plan. The key differences in effects are as follows:

- The intensification in housing at several site allocations adds some additional recreational pressure at biodiversity sites. However, this should be possible to mitigate though through existing policy requirements and so the predicted effects remain the same.
- There could be some increased car trips as a result of intensification, but not enough to change the conclusions in relation to air quality.
- The additional housing provision is more positive for the housing and economy SA Objectives. However, significant positive effects were already predicted for both these topics so the broad conclusions remain the same.
- The plan performs less well in terms of the provision of homes that are both ‘affordable’ and meet the M4(3) standards. This has implications for the health SA topic, but not to a significant extent. Conversely, the modifications reaffirm the need to support walking and cycling and to address health inequalities. Again, whilst beneficial, this does not affect the overall conclusions.
- The approach to managing flood risk is clearer, which is more beneficial in terms of climate change, water quality and flood risk topics.

Table 5.1: Summary of SA findings

SA Topic	Effects of Submission Plan	Implications of the modifications	Effects taking account of modifications
Landscape	Minor negative Minor positive	Neutral	Minor negative Minor positive
Biodiversity	Minor negative Minor positive Significant positive	Negative	Minor negative Minor positive Significant positive
Wate quality	Minor negative Minor positive	Positive	Minor negative Minor positive
Flood Risk	Neutral Minor positive	Positive	Neutral Minor positive
Soil resources	Significant negative	Neutral	Significant negative
Air quality	Minor negative Significant positive	Neutral	Minor negative Significant positive
Climate change	Minor positive	Neutral	Minor positive
Historic environment	Neutral Minor negative Minor positive	Neutral	Neutral Minor negative Minor positive
Deprivation	Minor negative? Minor positive?	Neutral	Minor negative? Minor positive?
Healthy lifestyles	Minor positive	Mixed	Minor positive
Housing	Significant positive	Positive	Significant positive
Local economy	Neutral Minor positive Significant positive	Positive	Neutral Minor positive Significant positive
Accessibility	Minor negative? Minor positive	Mixed	Minor negative? Minor positive
Minerals	Minor negative	Neutral	Minor negative

5.17. Ranking

5.17.1 Though the significance of effects has remained the same for all but one of the SA Objectives, it has been possible to comment on whether the modifications contribute more positively toward the objective or not. This allows the two versions of the plan to be compared and relatively ranked. For several of the SA objectives, there has been limited change, and the different plan versions are ranked on par with each other (represented by the - symbol in table 5.2 below). The modifications serve to improve the performance against several SA Objectives relatively speaking including water quality, flood risk, housing and local economy. There are two instances where the Submitted version of the Plan is ranked relatively better than with the modifications, which is for 'Biodiversity' and 'Air quality'.

Table 5.2: Rank of performance

SA Objective	Submission Plan	Plan with modifications
Landscape	-	-
Biodiversity	1	2
Water quality	2	1
Flood Risk	2	1
Soil resources	-	-
Air quality	1	2
Climate change	-	-
Historic environment	-	-
Deprivation	-	-
Healthy lifestyles	-	-
Housing	2	1
Local economy	2	1
Accessibility	-	-
Minerals	-	-

6. Mitigation and enhancement

- 6.1.1 Where modifications are predicted to result in less positive effects (though not to a significant extent) this is due to an increase in housing provision at several site allocations. This serves to put some additional recreational pressure on biodiversity, but proposed policies in the Plan provide an adequate framework to manage these effects. Therefore, no further mitigation measures are considered necessary.
- 6.1.2 Likewise, an increase in intensity of some developments could lead to a slight increase in car trips and contribute to air quality issues. These are not significant effects though and there are no additional mitigation measures considered necessary.
- 6.1.3 For some topics, the modifications lead to improved outcomes for SA topics (albeit not to a significant extent). Therefore, the modifications in and of themselves are considered to constitute 'mitigation/enhancement'. No further measures are considered necessary at this stage.

7. Other matters

- 7.1.1 This section brings together information that has been prepared to address queries that were raised at the hearing session in relation to the first SA Addendum (EXAM 57).

Explanatory note on the spatial options explored within EXAM57

- 7.1.2 The Inspectors requested clarification with regards to the rationale for selecting the sites that make up spatial option 2 within EXAM 57.
- 7.1.3 The council have prepared an explanatory note (EXAM 57b) setting out the process and reasons for selecting sites under Option 2. For ease of reference, this note is replicated in Appendix A to this SA Addendum.

Notes on biodiversity in EXAM 57

- 7.1.4 The text below explains how the more detailed findings in relation to biodiversity effects were summarised for the 3 spatial options appraised in the SA Addendum (Exam 57). This information was requested by the inspectors as an action note from the hearing on 20 February 2024.
- 7.1.5 The assessment of the three spatial options for accommodating Charnwood's apportionment of Leicester's unmet need for housing against the biodiversity measure is set out in full in Appendix A to EXAM 57 (pp41-43). This sets out the impacts arising from each option and a comparison of the different options.
- 7.1.6 The main body of the report sets out where there are differences in the significance of effects between the options (paragraph 5.8, p20). Paragraph 5.9 then goes on to set out those measures where there is not a difference in significance between the options but it is possible to rank them. The biodiversity measure falls into this category. The summary of the assessment included as part of paragraph 5.9 is set out below.
- 7.1.7 ***Biodiversity: Option 2 performs less favourably compared to options 1 and 3 as it brings development close to a SSSI at one of the additional sites.***
- 7.1.8 This description of the assessment is repeated in the non-technical summary (pvi).

7.1.9 It was pointed out at the hearing sessions that proximity to SSSIs was mentioned in relation to all three of the options in the assessment in Appendix A (of EXAM 57). As identified in Appendix A, the key issue in relation to option 2 is the greater potential for negative effects given the cumulative growth to the south of Loughborough, and the close proximity to a large SSSI. The following wording would therefore provide a better summary of the overall assessment of this measure.

7.1.10 **Biodiversity:** *Option 2 performs less favourably compared to options 1 and 3 as one of the sites adds to the cumulative growth to the south of Loughborough which also brings development close to a large SSSI.*

8. Next steps

8.1. Monitoring

8.1.1 The SA Report [Exam ref: SD5/SD6] submitted alongside the Local Plan presented a range of 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring'.

8.1.2 The modifications are not likely to lead to significant changes to the SA findings, and therefore, it is considered unnecessary to identify further monitoring measures to address significant effects.

8.1.3 A final list of monitoring measures will be presented within the SA Statement produced once the Local Plan is adopted. This could include updates to reflect any changes to the Council's proposed monitoring framework for the Plan.

8.2. Plan Finalisation

8.2.1 Following consultation on the modifications and supporting evidence (including this SA Addendum), the Inspectors will consider all representations received, before deciding how to report on the Plan's soundness.

8.2.2 Assuming that the Inspectors are ultimately able to find the Plan 'sound', it will then be adopted by the Council. At the time of adoption an 'SA Statement' will be published that explains the process of plan-making/SA in full and presents 'measures decided concerning monitoring'.

APPENDIX A: SCREENING THE MAIN MODIFICATIONS

the 1990s, the number of studies on the effects of the environment on the development of children has increased. The majority of these studies have been carried out in industrialized countries, and have focused on the effects of environmental factors on the development of children with mental health problems. The aim of this study was to explore the effects of environmental factors on the development of children with mental health problems in a developing country.

The study was carried out in a developing country, where the majority of the population lives in poverty and has limited access to health care. The aim of the study was to explore the effects of environmental factors on the development of children with mental health problems in this context. The study was carried out in a developing country, where the majority of the population lives in poverty and has limited access to health care. The aim of the study was to explore the effects of environmental factors on the development of children with mental health problems in this context.

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