

**Harborough Local Plan
Sustainability Appraisal
Pre-Submission Stage**

**SA Report
Non-Technical Summary**

September 2017



Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Outline of the Plan	4
2	Scoping	7
2.1	Background	7
2.2	Key issues	7
2.3	The SA Objectives	9
3	Alternatives	12
4	Appraisal findings	34
4.1	Cumulative assessment findings	34
4.2	Mitigation and Enhancement	38
4.3	Monitoring	39

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Introduction

01

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 AECOM is commissioned to undertake Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the Harborough District Council Local Plan. SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA of the Local Plan is a legal requirement.
- 1.1.2 This document is a Non-Technical Summary of the main SA Report which appraises the implications of the Harborough Local Plan (Pre-submission version), as well as documenting the SA process and outputs from previous stages of the plan-making process.
- 1.1.3 SA is a process for helping to ensure that Local Plans achieve an appropriate balance between environmental, economic and social objectives. SA should help to identify the sustainability implications of different plan approaches and recommend ways to reduce any negative effects and to increase the positive outcomes.
- 1.1.4 The Local Plan, once adopted, will provide a spatial strategy and a framework of policies to help the council to plan for new housing and employment needs across the district. The plan will also guide how and when development will be delivered, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment and securing benefits for communities.

1.1 Outline of the Plan

- 1.1.5 A vision has been established for the Local Plan, which is supported by fourteen objectives that are central to the Plans delivery. These objectives are reproduced below (taken from table A1 in the Proposed Submission Local Plan document).

1. Housing: Meet the housing requirements of the District in full by providing a range of market and affordable housing types, tenures and sizes in appropriate and sustainable locations to meet local needs. Also, recognise the specific accommodation requirements of the young and the elderly populations, including starter homes to help first time buyers, shared ownership and rented housing to help those who cannot afford to buy, and specialist housing such as sheltered and extra care accommodation.

2. Employment: Promote sustainable economic growth by facilitating the sustainable growth of businesses, fostering new local enterprise and helping to create more jobs that meet local employment needs. Contribute to reducing the need for out-commuting and thereby help to increase the sustainability and self-containment of communities, while encouraging the development of a vibrant, diverse and sustainable business community.

3. Location of development: Locate new development in sustainable locations that respect the environmental capacity of the local area. Encourage the appropriate and efficient re-use of previously developed land and buildings where such re-use achieves the objectives of sustainable development.

4. Infrastructure: Support local communities and maintain a high quality of life by ensuring that new development delivers the necessary infrastructure including that relating to health, education, security, culture, transport, open space, recreation, water supply and treatment, power, waste and telecommunications (incorporating high speed broadband connectivity).

5. Protection of local services: Protect, enhance and, where appropriate, secure the provision of additional accessible community services and local facilities, supporting innovation in their delivery across the District.

6. Natural environment: Protect and enhance the quality, diversity, character, local distinctiveness, biodiversity and geodiversity of the natural environment, ensuring that open countryside is protected against insensitive and sporadic development, the characteristics of the local landscape are respected and the unnecessary loss or sterilisation of natural resources is prevented.

7. Historic environment: Protect and enhance the character and historic significance of settlements and their wider landscape and townscape settings, thereby recognising the important contribution that heritage assets make to securing a high quality public realm, whilst also maintaining the distinctiveness of towns, villages and the wider countryside.

8. Town/village centres: Support and enhance the vitality and viability of market town and larger village centres as places for shopping, leisure, cultural, commercial and community activities, thereby recognising and embracing their valued role as the hearts of their communities; this will be achieved by encouraging retail, leisure and commercial development in appropriate locations and at appropriate scales.

9. Design: Ensure that new development is of high quality and sustainable design which reflects local character and distinctiveness, provides attractive, healthy and safe environments, respects residential amenity and promotes sustainable behaviours including waste reduction and non-motorised travel patterns.

10. Transport: Provide greater opportunities to reduce car use, thereby reducing the impacts of road traffic on local communities, the environment and air quality, by locating development where there is good access to jobs, services and facilities, and by supporting improvements in public transport, walking and cycling networks and facilities.

11. Flood risk: Locate new development in areas which will not put life or property at risk of flooding and build associated resilience by requiring the use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems in new developments and allowing for the provision of infrastructure associated with minimising flood risk.

12. Environmental impact: Minimise the environmental impact of development and its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by reducing pollution and waste as much as possible, maximising water and energy efficiency, and promoting the use of low carbon and any other alternative technologies and sustainable construction methods.

13. Tourism and Culture: Promote the sustainable growth of tourism, cultural activities and access to the countryside for the benefit of both residents and visitors. Enable the interpretation of the cultural assets of the District in order to enrich people's experiences.

14. Neighbourhood Planning: Encourage and support communities to make decisions at the local level through the preparation of neighbourhood plans and facilitate this process by setting out a clear strategic framework.

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Scoping

02

2 SCOPING

2.1 Background

2.1.1 The scoping stage of sustainability appraisal involves the collation of evidence relating to the baseline position and policy context - culminating in a series of key issues that should be a focus for the SA and which helped to establish a sustainability framework. These key issues are summarised below; categorised into one of five sustainability themes.

2.2 Key issues

Theme	Key sustainability issues and opportunities
Natural Environment	<p>Biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is only a small amount of land within the District formally designated for its nature conservation value. However, locally important wildlife habitats and species have been recorded across the District. • Protecting, maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitats are key objectives at national and local level, with a specific goal to enhance wildlife value and connectivity in the countryside. The Local Plan presents an opportunity to enhance wildlife habitats if development is appropriately located and designed. <p>Water quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a strategic level, the effects of increased development could have significant effects on water quality if required upgrades to the network are not secured in-phase with development and increased demands. <p>Land Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenfield development may affect the best and most versatile land.
Built and Natural Heritage	<p>Landscape and Settlement Character</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District's eastern countryside is recognised as being of high quality and particularly attractive. • Local landscape features such as hedgerows, open space, trees and field boundaries make certain parts of some settlement edges more sensitive to development. <p>Heritage Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are over 1,400 designated heritage assets located across the District and further features of local value (i.e. non-designated heritage assets). Development has the potential to affect the condition, setting, and access to these assets either positively or negatively.

Theme	Key sustainability issues and opportunities
Healthy & Wellbeing	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lack of health service provision in rural areas exists, which could be exacerbated by population growth and an ageing population and challenges of rural transport. <p>Accessibility & Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst Harborough has good road, rail and air links, accessibility is a critical issue in the rural areas of the District. <p>Air quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the District has generally good air quality, an AQMA has been designated in Lutterworth. Monitoring indicates that there are on-going air quality concerns in this area. <p>Green Infrastructure and recreation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a deficiency in the provision of certain types of green infrastructure. (<i>Parks & gardens, provision for children and young people and allotments</i>).
Resilience	<p>Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heat waves, flooding and drought. <p>Flood risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watercourse and surface water flooding causing damage to property and infrastructure represents the priority risk for Harborough.
Economy and Housing	<p>Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increasing and ageing population could put pressure on health services, housing provision and employment opportunities. <p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harborough has a highly skilled workforce, with an increasingly important service sector. There are also strong links with surrounding authorities with over 50% of the population commuting out of the District for work. Agricultural and rural economic activities are important to Harborough's economy. Retail provision is forecast to increase to support an expanding population and economy (including tourism). Much of the available floorspace is in Market Harborough. The development of high-speed broadband could have positive impacts for Harborough's socio-economic development. However, currently parts of the district are extremely poorly served. <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased housing pressures resulting from increasing population. There is a deficiency in affordable housing provision. The majority of land available for housing is Greenfield.

Theme		Key sustainability issues and opportunities
Resource use	<p>Minerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harborough contains sand and gravel resources that are to be protected from sterilisation. <p>Energy and carbon emissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of carbon emissions is a key objective at the national and local level. Reducing the impact of traffic emissions is a particular challenge for rural areas. 	

2.3 The SA Objectives

2.3.1 A series of Sustainability objectives were established through the scoping process, which have been used as the framework for appraising the effects of the Plan (and any alternatives).

Sustainability Theme	SA Objectives	Guiding Criteria
Natural Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity. Protect, enhance and manage environmental resources. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1) Would biodiversity interests be affected? 2.1) What could be the effects on the quality of water environments? 2.2) What could be the effects on land quality?
Built and natural heritage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Protect, enhance and manage the historic character and distinctiveness of the District's settlements and their surrounding landscapes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1) How could proposals affect the historic value and character of settlements and/or surrounding landscapes? 3.2) Could proposals hinder or assist efforts to maintain and enhance features (designated and non-designated) of historic, cultural or archaeological interest?
Health and Wellbeing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguard and improve community health, safety and wellbeing. Improve accessibility to employment, retail, business, health and community services, supporting health and wellbeing in the district. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1) How could proposals affect standards of open space, recreation and leisure provision? 4.2) Could proposals have an effect on efforts to maintain and strengthen local identity and community cohesion? 4.3) Could proposals have different impacts on certain social groups (<i>age, gender, social class for example</i>)? 4.4) How could proposals impact upon air quality (particularly in Lutterworth)? 5.1) What impact could there be on local service provision, particularly in rural areas? 5.2) What modes of transport would most likely be encouraged and how would these affect greenhouse gas emissions?

Sustainability Theme	SA Objectives	Guiding Criteria
Resilience (to climate change)	6) Reduce the risks from local and global climate change upon economic activity, delivery of essential services and the natural environment.	<p>6.1) What would be the effect in terms of flood risk?</p> <p>6.2) How would the resilience of local businesses be affected?</p> <p>6.3) How would the proposal affect the delivery of essential services?</p> <p>6.4) What will be the effects on green infrastructure and its ability to contribute to climate change resilience?</p>
Housing and Economy	7) Provide affordable, sustainable, good-quality housing for all.	<p>7.1) How could proposals affect levels of house building?</p> <p>7.2) How could proposals affect the ability to deliver affordable housing?</p>
	8) Support investment to grow the local economy.	<p>8.1) Would proposals help to create job opportunities for local residents?</p> <p>8.2) Would the proposals support the rural economy?</p> <p>8.3) Would the proposals help to support the vitality of town centres and their retail offer?</p> <p>8.4) Would the proposals help to secure improvements in telecommunications infrastructure? (For example high speed broadband connectivity)</p>
Resource use	9) Use and manage resources efficiently, whilst and minimising Harborough's emissions of greenhouse gases.	<p>9.1) To what extent would proposals lead to an increase or decrease in the use of energy and / or water?</p> <p>9.2) Do proposals help to achieve / support a reduction in carbon emissions?</p> <p>9.3) Do proposals encourage the efficient use of minerals?</p>

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Alternatives

03

3 ALTERNATIVES

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Stage 2 of the SA/SEA process involves identification and assessment of 'reasonable alternatives'. This means comparing different approaches that could be taken to achieve the objectives of the Plan; which in this case relates to whether there are different options for strategic approaches, site options and policies within the Plan.

3.2 Housing and employment strategy (Four selected options)

- 3.2.1 In working towards a preferred strategy for housing and employment distribution in the Local Plan, the Council identified nine strategic options ranging from dispersed approaches, through to those reliant on the delivery of Sustainable Development Areas (SDAs). Each of these nine options was assessed through the sustainability appraisal (SA) with the findings presented in an interim SA Report (September 2015). Following consultation on an Options Consultation Paper (which contained these nine options) in September 2015, the Council selected four approaches that it considered to be the most appropriate to take forward to the next stages of testing and plan development.

- 3.2.2 These four options are outlined below, and they each broadly correlate with one of the original nine strategic options. However, some adjustments to the distribution of homes were made to account for updated evidence about housing availability and constraints.

Selected Option 2 – This is a broad continuation of the Core Strategy approach (Correlating with Option 2 in the Options document)

Selected Option 4 – This involves an SDA to the north of Scraftoft with development elsewhere distributed according to the Core Strategy (This is a variant of Option 4 in the Options document)

Selected Option 5 - This involves an SDA at to the north east of Kibworth, with development elsewhere distributed according to the Core Strategy (Correlating with one of the alternative Kibworth SDAs set out in Option 5 of the Options document)

Selected Option 6 - This involves an SDA to the east of Lutterworth, with development elsewhere distributed according to the Core Strategy (Correlating with Option 6 in the Options document)

- 3.2.3 At this stage of plan-making, the effects of these four options had already been broadly identified in the first interim SA Report¹. However, this was at a scale of growth that would deliver 9500 dwellings to 2031 (i.e. the full objectively assessed housing need for the district of 475 dwellings per annum). In light of the emerging HEDNA and an indication that there could be un-met housing needs from neighbouring authorities, the Council uplifted the scale of housing growth to 550 dwellings per annum (11,000 over the plan period), giving greater flexibility. The selected options were therefore adjusted to reflect this higher level of need. The methodology is essentially the same in terms of how dwellings have been distributed across the settlements. However, where capacity does not exist, it has been necessary to decant some housing to nearby settlements that can accommodate needs.

¹ At the previous stage alternative SDAs were put forward for Kibworth and a different SDA was put forward to the east of Scraftoft/Thurnby.

3.2.4 Each of these four options was appraised against the SA Framework, building up a picture of the effects at each settlement in the District. This individual assessment at the settlement-level fed into an overall score for each option at the district level.

3.2.5 The table below presents a summary of the sustainability performance of each of the four selected strategic options against the six Sustainability Topics. These scores reflect the cumulative effects for each option, taking into account the effects at each settlement and 'as a whole' across the district.

	Selected Option 2 (Core Strategy)	Selected Option 3 (Scraptoft North SDA)	Selected Option 5 (Kibworth North East SDA)	Selected Option 6 (Lutterworth East SDA)
Natural Environment	xx	xx	xx	xx
Built and Natural Heritage	xxx	xx	xx	xx
Health and Wellbeing	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Resilience to climate change	x	?	?	?
Housing and Economy	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Resource Use	x	-	-	✓

- Major positive ✓✓✓
- Moderate positive ✓✓
- Minor positive ✓
- Insignificant impacts -
- Minor negative x
- Moderate negative xx
- Major negative xxx
- Uncertain effects ? / ?

3.2.6 All four options are predicted to have significant positive effects upon health and wellbeing, housing and the economy for Harborough District. This is to be expected given that each option would help to meet housing needs across the district for each option, plan for the increased provision of employment land to support new and higher quality jobs, and by supporting infrastructure improvements. Options 2, 5 and 6 each generate major positive effects, but Option 3 only generates moderate positive effects on these two SA topics due to the lower provision of employment land overall which does not generate as many positive effects overall compared to the other three options.

3.2.7 The environmental effects are fairly consistent across the options, with a cumulative loss of best and most versatile agricultural land predicted to occur, as well as pressure on local wildlife habitats and species. Although the loss of agricultural land is negative in terms of the quantity lost, this is not significant on a district level, given that it represents a small proportion of the total. It should be possible to avoid Grade 2 agricultural land. Though this depends upon the specific sites selected. For Option 6 though, there would likely be a loss of Grade 2 land associated with the SDA.

- 3.2.8 It is harder to quantify effects upon biodiversity, but the potential for effects is an issue that will need to be tackled through site allocations and plan policies. It is likely that mitigation and enhancement could help to minimise effects, but it will be important to minimise cumulative effects and take advantage of opportunities to enhance biodiversity through green infrastructure provision. The SDA at Lutterworth presents a particular issue with regards to the presence of a SSSI. It is presumed that development here would need to avoid this sensitive location and demonstrate how effects would be managed.
- 3.2.9 With regards to 'built and natural heritage', all four options are predicted to have negative effects on the character of settlements across the district, mainly due to a change in the scale of settlements and (particularly for the SDAs) the surrounding landscapes. For Kibworth North East SDA (Option 5) and Scraftoft North SDA (Option 3) the effects upon heritage assets would be more likely to be significant given that both encroach into Conservation Areas and contain or are adjacent to listed buildings. The effects at Lutterworth SDA (Option 6) are less pronounced given that the proposed site is somewhat 'separated' from heritage assets in the town by the M1.
- 3.2.10 Option 2 performs the most negatively for both the natural environment and the built and natural environment, due mainly to the increased levels of growth at the SRVs, which could affect their character, and / or local biodiversity resources.
- 3.2.11 Option 2 is also the only option where a negative effect is predicted with regards to climate change resilience. This is largely due to higher rates of growth in some settlements and the possibility that meeting higher growth could mean consideration of areas that are at greater risk of flooding. The SDA options, would also each present better opportunities to secure strategic flood management measures into a comprehensive masterplan for the sites. Although Lutterworth SDA does contain some areas at risk of flooding, the site is of a strategic scale to allow these areas to be avoided.
- 3.2.12 Options 3, 5 and 6 all involve one SDA, at Scraftoft, Kibworth and Lutterworth respectively. The effects are therefore very similar at a District level. However, Option 3 scores less positively against health and wellbeing and housing and economy. This is in the main due to the lack of employment development at the Scraftoft SDA (meaning a lower overall employment target compared to the alternatives).
- 3.2.13 Options 5 and 6 perform almost the same overall (with slight differences across the different settlements), with Option 6 slightly 'edging' Option 5 due to a minor positive effect on resource that is predicted compared to a neutral effect for Option 5.
- 3.2.14 In terms of matching job opportunities to housing growth, Option 6 is perhaps the most desirable as it would provide substantial housing nearby to Magna Park, which is a potential location for major employment growth. Though Kibworth and Scraftoft have their own strengths and links with areas such as Leicester, it is considered that Option 6 is the most balanced approach.
- 3.2.15 With regards to meeting housing needs, each option sets out a broadly appropriate spread of housing to meet 'Harborough's' needs. However, Options 2 and 3, which propose substantial growth close to the Leicester urban area are well placed to meet any unmet needs from Leicester City should these needs arise. However, it is recognized that other settlements that are not as close to Leicester may also have strong links, and this would need to be explored further.
- 3.2.16 It is important to remember that the effects that have been predicted do not take account of proposed mitigation measures for the potential SDAs. It is recognised that these negative effects could possibly be effectively mitigated due to the potential for strategic

green infrastructure enhancements. The extent to which negative effects could be mitigated and positives enhanced may alter the effects predicted overall for Options 3, 5 and 6.

Outline reasons for the preferred approach

- 3.2.17 In October 2016 findings of the further assessment of selected spatial Options 2, 4, 5 and 6, including the results of SA, led to Option 6 (involving a Strategic Development Area on land East of Lutterworth) being identified as the recommended preferred option. It was also determined that the Scraftoft North SDA (variant of Option 4) should be identified as an addition to the preferred option, as a reserve site to be released if needed to contribute to meeting housing need from elsewhere.
- 3.2.18 The decision took into account assessment based on a wide variety of evidence and further information on: deliverability and risks associated with the east of Lutterworth SDA, transport modelling, updated housing delivery projections, and the location of SDAs in relation to Harborough's needs and other matters. In November 2016 the Council's Executive noted Option 6 as the preferred option, together with a variant of Option 4 (as the basis for the draft Local Plan and IDP, subject to the risks associated with the East of Lutterworth SDA being satisfactorily addressed.
- 3.2.19 The completion of the HEDNA in early 2017, and ongoing liaison on and clarification of details for the SDAs resulted in the identification of an amended preferred option comprising a hybrid of Option 6 involving a SDA east of Lutterworth and the variation of Option 4 Scraftoft North SDA, but with the latter no longer being a reserve site solely to meet unmet needs from elsewhere under the Duty to Cooperate and with an additional 20% flexibility allowance in total provision to meet both unmet needs and other unforeseen circumstances. In preparing the report recommending this amended approach, officers considered a range of alternative approaches as possible ways forward. Of these two could be considered to be reasonable alternatives that could have been selected but which did not offer the same benefits as the East of Lutterworth/ Scraftoft North hybrid.

3.3 Housing and employment strategy (Final options)

- 3.3.1 The preferred option (Alternative A) re-configured the previous preferred option (Selected Option 6) plus a reserve site at Scraftoft North- Option 4 variation) to deliver the higher level of growth of 12,800 by including the Scraftoft North SDA as contributing to general housing need as well as the need of adjoining authorities and was appraised.
- 3.3.2 Alternative B, replacing the East of Lutterworth SDA with Kibworth North and East SDA and retaining Scraftoft North as a reserve and Alternative C allocating all 3 SDA's with Scraftoft as a reserve, were the only two (out of 5 possible approaches) deemed reasonable to test from an SA perspective against the preferred option at this stage of the plan making process.
- 3.3.3 The table below presents a summary of the sustainability performance of each of the three final strategic alternatives against the six Sustainability Topics. These scores reflect the cumulative effects for each option, taking into account the effects at each settlement and 'as a whole' across the district.

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Natural Environment	×	×	×
Built and Natural Heritage	×	×	×
Health and Wellbeing	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Resilience to climate change	-	-	-
Housing and Economy	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Resource Use	✓	✓	✓

- Major positive ✓✓✓
- Moderate positive ✓✓
- Minor positive ✓
- Insignificant impacts -
- Minor negative ×
- Moderate negative ××
- Major negative ×××
- Uncertain effects ? / ?

3.3.4 The overall performance of each alternative against each of the sustainability topics is presented in table 15.1 above. As it can be seen, the effects are predicted to be broadly the same for each option at a district level. This is not surprising given that the distribution of development is very similar for the majority of settlements, with the main differences being the location and amount of development at the potential strategic development areas (SDAs). Having said this, there are some slight differences in the way that the effects would be experienced across the district for each of the options. These are discussed briefly below.

3.3.5 For the natural environment, the negative effects are predicted to be minor, as the scale of growth at most settlements is small, and effects on biodiversity and water quality would not be anticipated to be great. The effects are most prominent at the SDAs, with the Lutterworth site presenting as the most sensitive given the presence of the SSSI. However, avoidance, mitigation and enhancement would be expected as a key component of any scheme.

3.3.6 For the built and natural environment, the effects are mostly minor across the district, but the cumulative effects are considered to be a moderate negative effect, as the character of settlements is likely to change. The extent of effects at the SDAs is also much more prominent, particularly at Kibworth under Option B.

3.3.7 For health and wellbeing, positive effects are predicted for most settlements under each alternative, which leads to a cumulative major positive effect. Option B however, spreads the benefits to fewer settlements, and for Claybrooke Magna could have negative effects due to pressure on local facilities. The SDAs are likely to have benefits to both new and surrounding communities and contribute substantially to the major positive effects that are identified. With regards to air quality, there are uncertain negative effects where growth is

focused in Market Harborough, Fleckney, and at the SDAs and surrounding settlements. Conversely, a link road as part of the Lutterworth or Kibworth SDAs ought to help improve air quality in those settlements.

- 3.3.8 For resilience to climate change a neutral effect is predicted for each alternative overall. It is unlikely that development would be at risk of flooding for the majority of settlements. For each of the SDAs it ought to be possible to secure enhancements to flood risk and resilience through the use of SUDs, but this is recorded as an uncertain effect at this stage. There is little to separate each alternative.
- 3.3.9 For housing and economy, a major positive effect would be generated by each alternative at a district level through the delivery of homes and jobs. The distribution of benefits differs slightly between the options, with Option B having fewer benefits for the SRVs compared to Options A and C.
- 3.3.10 For resource use, the alternatives score very similarly, with each recording a minor positive overall. This relates to the large proportion of new homes being focused in accessible locations such as Market Harborough and the SDAs (each of which ought to encourage more sustainable patterns of growth).

Outline reasons for the preferred option

- 3.3.11 A hybrid option is chosen as the preferred option having considered and assessed in detail, based on a wide variety of proportionate evidence, a range of reasonable alternatives at various levels of growth throughout the plan making process. At this current stage of SA the effects of the preferred option (Alternative A) and Alternatives B and C are predicted to be broadly the same at the district level.
- 3.3.12 The choice of Alternative A takes account of the predicted SA effects, and is justified on the basis that it allocates development for the plan period and beyond in locations which meet strategic objectives for Lutterworth, the Leicester Principal Urban Area, Harborough District and, potentially, Leicestershire as a whole. At the same time this approach offers contingency against any potential delay in delivering the East of Lutterworth SDA and against the likely shortfall in employment land provision within Selected Option 4 when taken on its own. The advantages of the option are that it:
- reflects the comprehensive Options Assessment ranking;
 - maximises the extent to which Local Plan Objectives are met;
 - locates housing to meet unmet needs close to Leicester City, while also meeting Harborough's own needs arising from migration out of Leicester;
 - is well related to employment growth areas (SW Leics and M1 / A5 corridor) and Magna Park;
 - has potential benefits for Lutterworth town centre;
 - mitigates the risks associated with the short/medium term delivery of the East of Lutterworth SDA by offering an additional large site in the form of Scraftoft North SDA with relatively few delivery challenges;
 - mitigates the concern that Selected Option 4 variation (Scraftoft North) does not meet employment land needs;
 - removes the need to make further allocations (about 110 dwellings) to meet Scraftoft/Thurnby/Bushby's requirements;

- negates the need for an early review of the plan (subject to HDC's contribution to meeting any unmet needs arising from other parts of the Leicester and Leicestershire HMA not being excessive); and
- provides potential to meet longer term needs beyond the plan period, including possible extensions to both sites in a future review of the Local Plan.

3.4 Site options (housing)

3.4.1 Through a call for sites process, the Council identified a range of sites for potential inclusion in the Local Plan as land allocations. A sieving process was undertaken by the Council to remove sites that were undeliverable or majorly constrained. This left a total of 83 site options that were considered to be reasonable alternatives and were appraised in the SA.

3.4.2 Using a site appraisal framework each site was scored to determine if it was likely to have positive implications, negative implications or be broadly neutral in its effects. The tables that follow show a summary of how each site performs against all the different site appraisal criteria. The site appraisal framework can be found at Appendix E of the main SA Report, and a detailed proforma for each site is provided as Technical Appendix A.

3.4.3 The rationale for selecting preferred sites and dismissing alternatives takes into account the SA findings and a wider range of plan evidence. The selected sites are either central to the delivery of the spatial strategy (e.g. The Scraftoft and Lutterworth SDAs), or they are better related to the settlement compared to alternatives, meaning they generally perform better in terms of accessibility and other sustainability factors.

3.4.4 Some of the main issues contributing to the rejection of sites were as follows:

- Potential coalescence of settlements
- Some settlements are at an advanced stage of neighborhood planning which already include sufficient site allocations to meet targets.
- In some settlements the allocation of sites would mean that housing targets for those areas would exceed those that are set out through the spatial strategy.

Housing site options – summary of appraisal

	Mitigation <u>likely to be</u> required/ unavoidable impacts
	Mitigation <u>may be</u> required/ unavoidable impacts
	Unlikely to have a major impact on trends
	Promotes sustainable growth
?	No data / unknown

Site ID	Site Name	Location	H1- Access to Jobs	H2- Access to health services	H3- Access to education (primary)	H4- Access to education (secondary)	H5- Access to natural open green space	H6- Leisure facilities	H7- Community facilities	H8- Access to food shop/ post office	H9- Access to train station	H10- Bus Services	NE1- SSSIs	NE2- Potential impact on wildlife	NE3- Severance of wildlife corridors	NE4- Potential impact on protected trees	NE5- Green Wedges and AoS	NE6- Proximity to Air Quality Management Area	NE7- Potential to remediate contaminated land	NE8- Groundwater protection zone	NE9- Agricultural Land	R1- Flooding	BH1- Proximity to heritage assets	BH2- Impact on setting of built environment	BH3- Landscape capacity to change	RU1- Result in use of PDL	RU2- Access to HWRC	EH1- Loss of employment land	EH2- Housing growth	EH3- Links to principal roads	I4- Energy grid constraints	I5- Infrastructure constraints	I6- Access to Highways		
A/BA/HSG/01	Land off Dunton Road	Broughton Astley	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BA/HSG/07	Land west of Mill Farm	Broughton Astley	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BA/HSG/10	Agricultural land off Frolesworth Road	Broughton Astley	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BA/HSG/12	Land north of Dunton Road	Broughton Astley	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BA/HSG/13	Land north of Dunton Road (b)	Broughton Astley	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BA/HSG/14	Land at Station Farm	Broughton Astley	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BA/HSG/19	Land south of Dunton Road	Broughton Astley	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BA/MXD/05	Land at Glebe Farm	Broughton Astley	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BT/HSG/02	Land north of Valley Farm	Bitteswell	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/BT/HSG/03	Land east of Ashby Lane	Bitteswell	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/CD/HSG/34	Land at Springhill Farm, London Rd		Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/CD/HSG/39	Land at Witham Villa Riding Centre		Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/CD/HSG/69	Stoughton Estate near Evington	Stoughton	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/CM/HSG/01	Land off Frolesworth Lane	Claybrooke Magna	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

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?	No data / unknown

			H1- Access to Jobs	H2- Access to health services	H3- Access to education (primary)	H4- Access to education (secondary)	H5- Access to natural open green space	H6- Leisure facilities	H7- Community facilities	H8- Access to food shop/ post office	H9- Access to train station	H10- Bus Services	NE1- SSSIs	NE2- Potential impact on wildlife	NE3- Severance of wildlife corridors	NE4- Potential impact on protected trees	NE5- Green Wedges and AoS	NE6- Proximity to Air Quality Management Area	NE7- Potential to remediate contaminated land	NE8- Groundwater protection zone	NE9- Agricultural Land	R1- Flooding	BH1-Proximity to heritage assets	BH2- Impact on setting of built environment	BH3- Landscape capacity to change	RU1- Result in use of PDL	RU2- Access to HWRC	EH1- Loss of employment land	EH2- Housing growth	EH3- Links to principal roads	I4- Energy grid constraints	I5- Infrastructure constraints	I6- Access to Highways		
A/SC/HSG/10	Land east of Pulford drive and south of Covert Lane	Scraptoft	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	
A/SC/HSG/14	Land at Charles' Field, Scraptoft Hill Farm	Scraptoft	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	
A/SC/HSG/16	Scraptoft North (Proposed SDA)	Scraptoft	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	
A/TH/HSG/07	Coles Nursery, Uppingham Road	Thurnby	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/TH/HSG/13	Land south of Uppingham Road	Thurnby	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/TH/HSG/25	Land east of Charity Farm	Bushby	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/UL/HSG/06	South of South Avenue	Ullesthorpe	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/KB/MXD/22	Strategic Development Area West of Kibworth	Kibworth	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/KB/MXD/27	Land to north/east of Kibworth Harcourt	Kibworth	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/LT/MXD/03	Land east of Lutterworth	Lutterworth	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
A/SC/HSG/13	Land East of Scraptoft	Scraptoft	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

3.5 Site options (employment and retail)

- 3.5.1 Through a call for sites process, the Council identified a range of sites for potential inclusion in the Local Plan as land allocations for employment and retail. A sieving process was undertaken by the Council to remove sites that were undeliverable or majorly constrained. This left a total of 25 potential employment sites and 7 potential retail / town centre sites that were considered to be reasonable alternatives and were appraised in the SA.
- 3.5.2 Using a site appraisal framework each site was scored to determine if it was likely to have positive implications, negative implications or be broadly neutral in its effects. The tables that follow show a summary of how each site performs against all the different site appraisal criteria. The site appraisal framework can be found at Appendix E of the main SA Report, and a detailed proforma for each site is provided as Technical Appendix B.
- 3.5.3 For employment and town centre uses, some of the criteria used in the housing site options appraisal are not relevant. Therefore, no score is provided.

Rationale for site selection

- 3.5.4 The total capacity of alternative sites is greater than the total land requirement to 2031. The East of Lutterworth SDA is central to the delivery of the spatial strategy; the component employment sites are integral to the creation of a sustainable, high quality and largely self-sufficient new settlement. The allocation of Parcel B is necessary to support the viability of the wider SDA.
- 3.5.5 Other sites are allocated in accordance with the settlement hierarchy to deliver the spatial strategy (elements 4-7 of policy SS1). Development is focussed at the District's main economic centres and at Rural Centres all of which are well located, served by infrastructure and are accessible by sustainable modes of transport.
- 3.5.6 Sites selected are in addition to commitments and allocations in made neighbourhood plans (Broughton Astley, Billesdon) and include; the undeveloped parts of partially developed previous allocations in Market Harborough, and the employment component of a SDA to the North West of MH in accordance with its master-plan. Further sites are allocated in Lutterworth, to provide short-term choice to the market, and in Fleckney and Kibworth to extend existing successful employment areas and balance recent and planned housing growth.
- 3.5.7 The 5 non SDA related sites selected were assessed to perform most favourably, compared to the alternatives, in terms of: their location, scale and relationship to their respective settlements, fundamental constraints on development, their suitability for B class uses matching land requirements to 2031, and their general conformity with relevant policies of the plan (GD2). In some cases sites have extant outline planning consent.
- 3.5.8 The total capacity of alternative sites is greater than the identified retail need. The 2 sites selected in Market Harborough are within the Primary Shopping Area, are ideally located to maintain the vitality and viability of the town centre and present opportunities to improve the Conservation Area. Allocating retail at a local centre within the East of Lutterworth SDA is central to the delivery of the spatial strategy, and will help reduce car trips and improve sustainability.
- 3.5.9 The capacity of alternative sites for Leisure, Entertainment and Tourism use is commensurate with need. The site selected is assessed as most favourable for non-retail uses, due to its location outside the Primary Shopping Area.

Rationale for site rejection

- 3.5.10 Sites for general employment have been discarded for a variety of reasons including; their reliance on an SDA not selected as part of the spatial strategy, developed or superseded by another site, fundamental constraints on development, their location, scale and relationship with the settlement, or because they perform less favourably than other alternatives assessed. In some Rural Centres there is no need to choose sites due to commitments or allocations in neighbourhood plans.
- 3.5.11 Sites submitted for strategic warehouse and distribution use weren't considered for allocation as general employment sites, unless proposed for both uses at the time of submission. Sites considered for strategic warehouse and distribution use are covered separately in Chapter 19.
- 3.5.12 Vacant units are expected to absorb retail need within Lutterworth town centre. Broughton Astley Neighbourhood Plan includes a site allocation sufficient to meet need.

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			H1- Access to Jobs	H2- Access to health services	H3- Access to education (primary)	H4- Access to education (secondary)	H5- Access to natural open green space	H6- Leisure facilities	H7- Community facilities	H8- Access to food shop/ post office	H9- Access to train station	H10- Bus Services	NE1- SSSIs	NE2- Potential impact on wildlife	NE3- Severance of wildlife corridors	NE4- Potential impact on protected trees	NE5- Green Wedges and AoS	NE6- Proximity to Air Quality Management Area	NE7- Potential to remediate contaminated land	NE8- Groundwater protection zone	NE9- Agricultural Land	R1- Flooding	BH1-Proximity to heritage assets	BH2- Impact on setting of built environment	BH3- Landscape capacity to change	RU1- Result in use of PDL	RU2- Access to HWRC	EH1- Loss of employment land	EH2- Housing growth	EH3- Links to principal roads	I4- Energy grid constraints	I5- Infrastructure constraints	I6- Access to Highways		
E/009OC/15	Land south of Coventry Road	Lutterworth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/009OC/16	Shawell Quarry, Gibbet Lane	Shawell	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/010OC/15	Land North & West of Magna Park	Lutterworth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/010RC/15	Land off Fleckney Road	Fleckney	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/012OC/15	Land west of Magna Park	Lutterworth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/013OC/15	Woodbrig House Farm	Lutterworth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/0140C/15	Land centred on A426 (Prologis Park, Leicester)	Willoughby Waterly	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/006LT/15(A)	Proposed SDA (Land to East of Lutterworth) - Land south off A4303 (A)	Lutterworth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/006LT/15(B)	Proposed SDA (Land to East of Lutterworth) - Land south off A4303 (B)	Lutterworth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/012RC/15(A)	Proposed SDA (Land to the West of Kibworth) - Land off Leicester Road (A)	Kibworth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
E/012RC/15(B)	Proposed SDA (Land to the West of Kibworth) - Land off Leicester Road (B)	Kibworth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
A/BA/MXD/05	Land at Glebe Farm	Broughton Astley	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									
A/FK/MXD/05	Land adjacent to Churchill Way Industrial Estate, Fleckney	Fleckney	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/																									

3.6 Site options (Cemetery)

- 3.6.1 The Harborough Cemetery and Burial Strategy 2016 identified future requirements for the district, establishing where there are shortfalls in capacity and where there is sufficient capacity.
- 3.6.2 Shortfalls have been identified towards the south of the district around Market Harborough that cannot be addressed through intensification or expansion of existing sites. Therefore, the Council considers it necessary to identify a new site in the Local Plan for the provision of burial plots in this area.
- 3.6.3 To identify a suitable site for the south of the district around Market Harborough, the Council commissioned a specialist study in April 2017. The study involved the assessment of four sites that were identified as potentially suitable for cemetery provision. An initial review of a longer list of sites was undertaken by the Council, but only four sites were found to be appropriate for further exploration.
- 3.6.4 There are specific constraints and locational requirements for cemeteries / burial sites, which ought to inform the site selection process. Therefore, the specialist study focused on factors such as ground conditions, access, hydrological factors and environmental constraints. The study was also widened to include consideration of sustainability factors such as access to sustainable transport, landscape and visual effects and heritage effects.
- 3.6.5 Essentially, the site selection process covered a range of factors that are included within the SA site appraisal framework. However, whilst the site assessment process in the SA is geared towards housing and employment site options, the criteria in the specialist cemetery study are more appropriate for exploring the suitability of cemetery sites. Consequently, it was deemed unnecessary to undertake a separate assessment of site sustainability in the SA. This would duplicate much of what had already been covered in the specialist study, and would also not factor in critically important factors such as ground conditions.

3.7 Alternatives for strategic distribution and warehousing growth

- 3.7.1 The delivery of employment land for the growth of the strategic distribution and warehousing sector is a key issue for the authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire. There is a need to plan for increased provision of strategic distribution employment land (i.e. units greater than 9,000sq.m. that are typically used for strategic warehouses, logistics and distribution).
- 3.7.2 The Council identified and appraised a variety of options to help determine an appropriate approach to strategic distribution and warehousing growth. At issues and options stage, the Council tested a range of growth and distribution options related to three live planning applications. The findings were presented in an interim SA Report (Feb, 2016).
- 3.7.3 In response to this consultation, some key points were made with regards to the nature of the alternatives; with several respondents contending that the options (i.e. alternative scales of growth) should not be linked to specific sites or projects (i.e. the live planning applications). In response to these comments, and the emergence of additional site options, the Council considered it beneficial to undertake a broader assessment of alternative growth options that did not refer to any particular site option or planning application.
- 3.7.4 Four alternatives were identified as follows:
- Low Growth: Between 0m²-100,000m² (equivalent to 25ha)
 - Low – Medium growth: Between 100,000m² – 300,000m² (equivalent to 25-75ha)

- Medium growth: Between 300,000m² – 400,000m² (equivalent to 75ha – 100 ha)
- High growth: Up to 700,000m² (Equivalent to 175ha)

3.7.5 Each alternative was appraised against the SA Framework, with the findings summarised below.

	1. Low	2. Low-medium	3. Medium	4. High
Natural Environment (SA Objectives 1 and 2)	-	?	x	x
Built and Natural Heritage (SA Objective 3)	-	x	xxx	xxx
Health and Wellbeing (SA Objectives 4 and 5)	?	✓	✓x	✓✓x
Resilience (to climate change) (SA objective 6)	-	-	?	?
Housing and Economy (SA objectives 7 and 8)	?	✓	✓✓ / x	✓✓✓ / ?
Resource Use (SA objective 9)	-	?	x	xx

3.7.6 The appraisal demonstrates that Option 1 (low growth) is unlikely to have any significant effects for Harborough across the range of sustainability factors. There could be some minor positive effects on local communities through job creation, which could have knock-on benefits for local economies. In this scenario, this option would have neutral effects overall.

3.7.7 Option 2 (low-medium growth) is predicted to have a more pronounced positive effect upon the economy and health/wellbeing compared to Option 1 owing to the increased number of jobs created. However, the higher scale of growth is predicted to have negative effects upon built and natural heritage. This is due to the necessity to develop larger sites or multiple site options that could affect the character of the surrounding countryside and / or locally important heritage assets.

3.7.8 Option 3 (medium growth) is predicted to have moderate positive effects upon the economy through the increased numbers of jobs created, and this ought to have benefit upon wellbeing for communities within Harborough that are accessible to Magna Park. However, Option 3 is likely to have more profound negative effects on the character of the landscape and / or the setting of heritage assets, given that the scale of development would be higher. This could lead to development in close proximity to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, or in the open countryside. The ability to avoid sensitive areas or to secure lower density development may also be lower at this scale of growth.

3.7.9 At the high level of growth for Option 4, the effects on the economy and health and wellbeing are predicted to be the most positive. However, the increase in jobs could mean that demand for local housing increases. This scale of growth could have more implications for the distribution of homes in Harborough; particularly if housing is to be provided with good public transport access to the development location. Under high growth, the most compatible spatial options would be those which involve an SDA at Lutterworth.

Outline reasons for the preferred approach

3.7.10 The chosen approach is for a 'capped' criterion based policy allowing for up to 700,000sq.m of additional development for non rail-served strategic distribution at Magna Park.

- 3.7.11 Completions and commitments in the district and across the HMA are sufficient to meet minimum need without selecting a site for allocation. However, the forecasts of the need are minimum levels of provision and there is a strong case that Harborough should continue to make a substantial contribution to long term non rail-served strategic warehouse, logistics and distribution development in Leicester and Leicestershire.
- 3.7.12 Having considered and assessed a variety of proportionate evidence and a range of reasonable alternatives, including the SA, a criteria based policy is favoured to guide future growth above the minimum to avoid prejudicing the treatment of pending applications, and the emerging Strategic Growth Plan for the HMA.



Appraisal of the draft plan

04

4 APPRAISAL FINDINGS

4.1 Cumulative assessment findings

- 4.1.1 The following section sets out a summary of the effects of the Local Plan considered 'as a whole' against a range of sustainability factors (i.e. The SA Framework). Potential monitoring measures are also identified to track significant effects and trends more generally. The effects are summarised under the six over-arching sustainability topics.

1. Natural Environment	
Summary of effects	Potential monitoring measures
<p>The development of housing and employment through the Plan allocations and growth targets for each settlement are predicted to be negative for the natural environment in some locations. This is related to the cumulative loss of agricultural land of best and most versatile value, disturbance to wildlife, and potential increases in traffic.</p> <p>In particular, there is potential for more prominent negative effects associated with the SDAs due to their proximity to wildlife sites and the loss of agricultural land. However, the plan seeks to mitigate these potential negative effects in a number of ways. Individual site specific policies seek to protect biodiversity, and implement green infrastructure enhancements, whilst a range of other plan policies seek to ensure that development protects and enhances the environment where possible. Overall, the effects on biodiversity, water and air quality are predicted to be neutral, as the application of Plan policies ought to ensure that potential negative effects are mitigated and/or offset.</p> <p>With regards to soil, a minor negative effect will remain as there would be loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Whilst the total amount of agricultural land lost is fairly substantial, it is not significant in the context of the resources across the district. It is also unclear the extent to which the Grade 3 land being lost is Grade 3a or 3b.</p>	<p>Net loss of any extent of a nationally or locally designated biodiversity or geodiversity asset arising from development that is permitted.</p> <p>Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land (ha) as a % of total resources</p>

2. Built and natural heritage	
Summary of effects	Potential monitoring measures
<p>The Plan is likely to have some negative effects upon built and natural heritage due to new development affecting the character of settlements. In the main, the effects on settlements across the district are likely to be minor. More prominent effects are predicted at the proposed SDAs, due to their effects on landscape. However, mitigation and enhancement measures detailed in site policies and broader Plan policies would help to ensure that these effects were not significant.</p> <p>The Plan generally seeks to protect and enhance the built and natural environment through its development management policies, and these should help to offset the potential significant negative effects that could arise from development.</p> <p>Overall, a minor negative effect is predicted; acknowledging that changes to the landscape and settlement character will be inevitable, but that the residual effects will be minor in nature,</p>	<p>Number of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas on 'At Risk' registers.</p> <p>Net additional convenience and comparison retail floor space provided at Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Broughton Astley.</p> <p>Design standard achieved (of 10 randomly selected major developments) against Building for Life criteria.</p>

3. Health and wellbeing	
Summary of effects	Potential monitoring measures
<p>The Plan is predicted to have a significant / major positive effect through the provision of new housing and jobs, and accompanying improvements to the environment, and social / physical infrastructure. The delivery of two SDAs as an integral part of the strategy ought to bring about significant positive effects for new communities here, and also within surrounding communities.</p> <p>The majority of plan policies also seek to ensure that development brings about positive outcomes for local communities; and in combination should contribute to improvements to the health and wellbeing of the population. For example, through the provision of green infrastructure improvements, improved access to jobs, homes and facilities, supporting active travel, and preserving the character of settlements where possible.</p> <p>The inclusion of a link road as part of the Lutterworth East scheme should also help to reduce congestion through Lutterworth town centre, which would have positive effects on air quality in this settlement. However, uncertain negative effects are recorded for other nearby settlements that could be affected by increased traffic.</p>	<p>Proportion of major housing developments with efficient, easy and affordable access to key services (employment, education, health care and food shopping) by public transport.</p>

4. Resilience to climate change	
Summary of effects	Potential monitoring measures
<p>The plan is unlikely to lead to substantial changes to flood risk, or resilience to climate change. In the main, the allocated sites, and targets for housing growth at settlements would not be likely to put new development at risk of flooding. Though this is positive, the effects on the baseline position would be neutral (<i>i.e. there would be insignificant changes to the number of properties and people at risk of flooding on new development sites</i>).</p> <p>However, a variety of the Plan policies seek to mitigate potential flood risk both on site and downstream. For example, through measures which support green infrastructure, SUDs and site specific policies to minimise risk. These are positive measures, and should help to ensure that new development does not lead to incremental and cumulative adverse effects on flooding.</p> <p>Overall, the policy is likely to be beneficial with regards to climate change resilience, and so a minor positive effect is predicted. However, changes to the baseline position are not expected to be significant unless enhancement occurs as part of development.</p>	<p>Proportion of major development proposals supported by Design and Access Statements that fully cover climate change requirements.</p>

5. Housing and economy	
Summary of effects	Potential monitoring measures
<p>Overall, the Plan is predicted to have a significant / major positive effect on the provision of housing and the local economy. Policies H1 and E1 are the key policies for delivering the spatial strategy and are supported through the Places and Sites policies. These policies should ensure the delivery of sufficient housing to meet objectively assessed needs, including affordable and specialist provision as required through other Plan policies.</p> <p>Although there are some minor negative effects recorded for policies that could be restrictive to growth (GD4, GD7, CC1, CC3) these would not affect the achievement of the plans housing and employment land targets. Furthermore, a large number of the Plan policies ought to be positive in terms of creating attractive environments to live and work.</p> <p>Focusing a large amount of housing to Market Harborough and at two Strategic Development Areas ought to match new housing and employment opportunities well, whilst still ensuring that settlements throughout the district experience positive effects in terms of local housing provision.</p>	<p>Amount of housing delivered.</p> <p>Progress against housing trajectory.</p> <p>A five year deliverable supply of housing land.</p> <p>Net additional floor space provided.</p>

6. Resource use	
Summary of effects	Potential monitoring measures
<p>Development typically leads to an increase in energy use, water use and disposal, and travel; which subsequently increase the amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted. However, it is important to understand the context of the Local Plan, and that development would still be likely to occur in the absence of a Plan. Therefore the effects of the Plan are based upon how the distribution of development could have effects upon resource use, and whether this is more beneficial than the baseline position.</p> <p>For this Plan, the distribution of development focuses mainly on accessible locations such as Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Scraftoft. The inclusion of two SDAs will also ensure that new communities are created that promote sustainable forms of transport and a reduced need to travel. Therefore, with regards to emissions from transport, the Plan is likely to have positive implications.</p> <p>In terms of energy and water use, no particular opportunities have been identified to achieve higher levels of sustainability. However policies CC1 and CC2 are identified as having a positive effect by making it clear that development should seek to be high quality, and by identifying areas that are potentially suitable for wind development (which should help assist this energy sector). In combination with a number of other policy areas which encourage the recycling/reuse of land, and accessible modes of transport, the Plan is predicted to have a significant / moderate positive effect on resource use overall.</p>	<p>Provision of housing and commercial development and associated infrastructure in Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Fleckney.</p> <p>Installed capacity of wind energy schemes.</p>

4.2 Mitigation and Enhancement

- 4.2.1 Where significant effects are identified, measures to mitigate these have been suggested if possible. Further measures to enhance the positive effects of the Local Plan have also been suggested where possible. These are set out in the table below.

Key issue	Recommendations	Actions Taken
<p>Potential effects on the character of the built and natural environment, particularly in villages and rural centres that are low density and small scale.</p>	<p>Development ought to be low density and carefully designed to ensure that it is in keeping with the scale and character of the settlements. Where development is adjacent to a Conservation Area, it would be beneficial to apply the design principles of the Conservation Area into the new development even though it may not fall within this area as this would help to ensure a controlled transition between the Conservation Area and the new development.</p> <p>Development also ought to respect the approaches into selected rural villages and rural centres, as these act as the 'gateways' to settlements.</p> <p>For all options, the level of development proposed at Hallaton, Bitteswell, South Kilworth, Swinford and Foxton is predicted to have moderate negative effects on their character and minor / moderate negative effects on the natural environment. Reducing the level of housing here could help to mitigate these effects, and would not lead to significant negative effects on other aspects of sustainability (i.e. housing, economy and health). Conversely, there are settlements where negative or neutral effects have been identified due to low levels of growth (Ullesthorpe and Great Glen, or Kibworth under Options 3 and 6). An increase in growth here could be accommodated whilst having fewer negative effects on the built and natural environment.</p>	<p>Minor changes made to lower housing targets for Bitteswell, Swinford, South Kilworth, Foxton. Target for Great Glen higher in preferred option.</p>
<p>Some settlements contain dwellings that are not connected to the mains gas or electricity networks</p>	<p>New development should be connected to the gas and electricity networks. Where possible, improved connectivity for those dwellings that are reliant upon oil and electric heating should be sought.</p>	<p>No specific change made. SS1 focusses development in sustainable settlements, where mains services are generally available.</p>
<p>Development under all options will lead to the loss of agricultural land throughout the district (some of which could be best and most versatile)</p>	<p>The loss of agricultural land (some of which would be likely to be Grade 3a/3b, and to a lesser extent Grade 2 depending upon the preferred approach) will lead to a cumulative negative effect. For smaller scale developments it may be difficult to offset this loss. However, under an SDA approach it may be possible to 'offset' the loss of agricultural land somewhat through the provision of community allotments on site (<i>should the land be identified as Grade 2 or Grade 3a</i>). The data available only identifies if agricultural land is Grade 3, and does not break it down into 3a (which is best and most versatile) and 3b (which is not). A precautionary approach has been taken, though more detailed surveys are required to confirm classifications.</p>	<p>Allotments is covered generally by Policy GI2c. Policy L1 also requires specific allotment provision at the Lutterworth SDA.</p>

Key issue	Recommendations	Actions Taken
Where significant growth occurs, there is potential for increases in surface water run-off.	Development ought to deliver a net reduction or neutral effect on surface water run-off rates, rather than seeking to ' <i>minimise the net increase</i> ' (which suggests that an increase is anticipated and accepted). A review of Policy CS10 would be beneficial.	Policy C4 SuDS included. Policy requires SUDS meet the green field run off rate and constrain peak flows.
The low levels of development at Great Glen, Ullesthorpe, (under SDA options) and Kibworth (Options B and D) could lead to less positive effects on health, wellbeing, housing and economy (<i>than relying on completions and commitments alone</i>).	<p>By increasing housing provision at some settlements, it may be possible to generate positive effects without affecting the overall spatial strategy.</p> <p>As discussed above; an increase in growth at Great Glen and Kibworth would not be expected to have significant negative effects upon the built and natural environment. However, it would generate positive effects in these settlements, whilst mitigating negative effects at more sensitive locations (For example South Kilworth).</p> <p>Under options 3 and 6, it ought to be possible to increase housing delivery in Kibworth (given its role as a Rural Centre) without significantly affecting the built or natural environment. This would help to generate more positive effects on well-being, housing and economy should the preferred approach be option 3 or 6 (which involve no/low growth at Kibworth and Great Glen).</p>	Minor change has been made. Provision at Ullesthorpe and Great Glen (due to commitments and minor change), is higher under the preferred option.

4.2.2 As can be seen in the table above, the Council took actions in response to the recommendations early in the plan-making process. Therefore, only one further recommendation was made at pre-submission stage.

Identified effects	Recommendations
The Plan is unlikely to have significant negative effects in terms of flooding and climate change resilience. Where potential effects could occur, the Plan requires mitigation to ensure that there is no increase in flood risk on or off site. However, enhancement might be possible.	It may be possible to achieve enhancements to the management of water and flood risk at new developments. For example, seek a net-reduction in peak surface water run off rates at the SDAs where it may be more possible to integrate robust SUDs.

4.3 Monitoring

4.3.1 Monitoring measures will help to identify whether the effects identified in the SA are actually occurring, and also help to identify any unforeseen effects. Trend data is also helpful in monitoring progress towards sustainability objectives. Section 4.1 sets out potential monitoring indicators for each of the Sustainability Themes.

