



# Harborough District Local Development Framework

## **Core Spatial Strategy**

## **Towards a Final Draft**

**October 2009**

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## Preface

### Purpose of this Document

- 1.1 As part of the Local Development Framework, the District Council is required to prepare a Core Spatial Strategy to set the context for all other planning documents which are issued.
- 1.2 The Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) is being prepared by the District Council in partnership with the community to set out a long term spatial plan to express how the District and its communities should be in 2026 and beyond - and how change will happen. It needs to take account of the policies in the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), and express in spatial terms the vision and objectives of the District and County Sustainable Community Strategies.
- 1.3 “Towards a Final Draft” is a report which draws together the evidence we have collected and indicates a potential strategy and layout of the forthcoming Core Spatial Strategy which will be published for formal consultation in January 2010. In essence it provides in outline what the thrust of the CSS could be and allows people to see a “work in progress” prior to further development of the Submission Draft.
- 1.4 It must be emphasised that this really is work in progress and that owing to further consideration and development – particularly arising from ongoing consultation with infrastructure providers and arising from dialogue with the consultants appointed to carry out sustainability appraisal – the contents will evolve further prior to finalising the Submission Draft Core Strategy.
- 1.5 The approach taken in this document to each potential strategy is to:
  - Summarise the options considered in the Alternative options document;
  - Identify the related evidence;
  - Summarise the conclusions of Sustainability Appraisal;
  - Summarise the Community Responses;
  - Provide an overall assessment; and
  - Set out a potential strategy.

## Section A - Vision and Objectives

### 1. Spatial portrait and issues to be addressed - summary

1.1 This section describes the District and the issues that the Core Spatial Strategy must address. It has been developed from a number of sources including the [Harborough Now](#) report, which has been produced to accompany the Harborough District Sustainable Community Strategy. This provides a summary outline of the portrait to be contained in the Submission Draft.

Location:

- Large rural district in central location sharing borders with 4 counties, 4 Leicestershire authorities and Leicester City.
- Part of District lies within the Leicester Principal Urban Area (PUA).
- Belongs to the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area and part of the 6Cs Growth Area which will see major new development focused on the Principal Urban Areas of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham.
- Harborough's role to support regeneration and growth objectives of the Leicester PUA.
- District dependent on Leicester PUA for employment, health, retail and cultural provision.
- Also adjacent to North Northamptonshire, a key component in the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area.
- Good road transport links: M1, M6, A14 and train station at Market Harborough on Leicester – London line.
- Population of 82,800 with over 20,000 living in Market Harborough, designated as a sub-regional centre in the Regional Plan. Other two largest settlements are Lutterworth and Broughton Astley both with a population of 9,000.

People:

- District population grew by over 8% between 2001 and 2008. Expected to increase by a further 7% by 2016.
- Relatively low proportion of population in 16 – 29 age bands. This is most pronounced in rural villages.
- Higher proportion in 45 – 64 age groups than national and regional averages. Ageing population in line with rest of country.
- Highest house prices in Leicestershire. Affordability a major issue especially in rural areas. Difficult for young people to stay or move into these areas.
- Overall one of least deprived areas in England and least deprived in Leicestershire. However, Central Market Harborough identified as a priority neighbourhood as suffers from multiple deprivations.

- Significant deprivation in domain of 'Barriers to housing and services' in some rural parts of the district where there are problems relating to accessing key services and the affordability of housing.
- Public transport provision is patchy away from main towns. As there is often no viable alternative, levels of car ownership are high.
- Harborough residents generally healthier than Leicestershire and national averages. However, there are inequalities in accessing health services between main settlements and rural areas. This is compounded by ageing population.

#### Economy:

- Significant growth in employment in District between 1991 -2003. Magna Park largely responsible for growth. Most economic activity centred round Market Harborough, Lutterworth/Magna Park. Structure continues to reflect District's rural character.
- 88% of businesses have less than 10 employees and collectively they employ 80% of workforce. Most large employers are located at Magna Park.
- Relatively highly skilled population. Low unemployment rate. Above average self employment rate.
- Significant out-commuting particularly to Leicester, Oadby & Wigston and Blaby underlining the reliance on Leicester PUA.
- Market Harborough town centre relatively healthy in economic terms, with national retailers continuing to be attracted.
- Lutterworth town centre underperforming in retail terms due in part to impact of through traffic on environment.
- Housing growth in Broughton Astley has not been matched by service and facility provision.

#### Environment:

- Predominantly rural. No national landscape designations.
- Grand Union Canal passes through District and includes Foxton Locks.
- Main rivers are Welland, Avon, Swift, Sence and Eyebrook with Welland most vulnerable to flooding.
- District is relatively poor in biodiversity and geodiversity terms. However, there are 14 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 2 Local Nature Reserves and 207 Local Wildlife Sites.
- Historic environment encompasses 1,250 Listed buildings, 62 Conservation Areas, 60 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 6 Registered Parks and Gardens.
- Road transport by far the biggest contributor to CO<sup>2</sup> emissions in the District, accounting for 45% total emissions.
- District produces more carbon dioxide emissions per capita than regional or national averages, reflecting relative affluence of District and high car dependence linked to rural nature of district.
- Due to impact of traffic, air quality is a concern in Lutterworth and is being monitored.

- Only 2 sites in Harborough producing significant renewable energy.

### Key Issues

From the spatial portrait of the District, Core Strategy workshops (held in March 2009) and the themes and priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy, a number of issues have emerged which the Core Spatial Strategy needs to address:

#### The People:

- P1 Ensuring delivery of new housing to accommodate population growth does not impact adversely on existing settlement and landscape character;
- P2 Securing delivery of appropriate affordable housing, particularly in the more rural areas;
- P3 Providing an appropriate range of housing to enable young people and older people to stay in rural settlements;
- P4 Meeting high unmet need for gypsy, traveller and travelling showperson pitches as identified in the Regional Plan;
- P5 Addressing the relatively low proportion of population 16 – 29 age group and the needs of a generally ageing population;
- P6 Reducing deprivation in Central Market Harborough through priority neighbourhood project;
- P7 Addressing the problem of rural accessibility in relation to key local services, including healthcare, and affordable housing;
- P8 Securing the retention of village services and facilities, such as post offices and public houses;
- P9 Improving public transport, especially in rural areas, thus reducing the reliance on use of car;
- P10 Reliance on neighbouring areas for higher order services and facilities;
- P11 Need to retain and build on sense of community in settlements; and
- P12 Need to ensure delivery of infrastructure from outset to support new housing development.

#### The Economy:

- EC1 Over representation in declining economic sectors with shallow knowledge economy and low representation of growth sectors;
- EC2 High and increasing levels of in and out commuting and worsening self- containment rate;
- EC3 Areas of rural disadvantage, service loss and isolation;
- EC4 Poor public transport provision in terms of frequency means reliance on private transport to access employment/training;
- EC5 Excluding Magna Park, low inward investment profile;

- EC6 Safeguarding independent retail sector in current economic climate;
- EC7 Current traffic problems affecting vitality and viability of Lutterworth town centre;
- EC8 Services and facilities in Broughton Astley not kept pace with housing development; and
- EC9 Continuing development pressure for housing facing employment sites.

#### The Environment:

- EN1 Safeguard distinctive landscapes, historic assets and biodiversity where development is proposed;
- EN2 Low number of sites protected under European, national, regional and local designations for their biodiversity/geological value;
- EN3 Improving provision of and access to open space and promoting access to the countryside;
- EN4 Vulnerability of biodiversity to development on brownfield sites and in urban fringe areas;
- EN5 Vulnerability to flooding which may increase due to effects of climate change;
- EN6 Higher CO<sup>2</sup> emissions per capita than regional and national averages;
- EN7 High level of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions from transport; and
- EN8 Low levels of renewable energy generation in the district.

## 2. Vision and Spatial Objectives

2.1 The Harborough District Sustainable Community Strategy is the overarching framework for Harborough District. It also links to a wider Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

2.2 The Harborough Local Strategic Partnership (to be renamed Harborough Together) has developed the following vision as the basis for its work and initial Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2014:

**In 2026 Harborough will be a district where local people take the lead in creating thriving and sustainable local communities through community led actions supported by elected Town and Parish Councils and local and district partnerships.**

**It will be a safe district where good quality and affordable homes and local job opportunities go hand in hand; where people are proud to live, work and visit because of the sensitivity and quality of the built environment and diverse rural character, which is well protected.**

**Residents and organisations make a full contribution to a sustainable future through local action and maintaining one of the highest recycling rates in the country.**

**Innovation drives vibrant market towns and rural centres, which contribute to a strong local economy.**

**Everyone is able to maintain a healthy lifestyle but also have access to excellent health and welfare services should they require them.**

**All sections of the community including the vulnerable and the most rural are able to access and influence the services they need.**

The Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy has been developed by the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership (called Leicestershire Together) and outlines what stakeholders see as priorities across Leicestershire.

2.3 Leicestershire Together, like Harborough LSP, is made up of key organisations that deliver public services across the county. It is chaired by the Leader of Leicestershire County Council. For more information visit [www.leicestershiretogether.org.uk](http://www.leicestershiretogether.org.uk).

2.4 The Local Area Agreement is a three year agreement between Leicestershire Together and government on how Leicestershire organisations, including Harborough Local Strategic Partnership, will tackle the most important priorities in the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy. The Local Area Agreement will be delivered through different partnerships in Leicestershire who have prepared delivery plans for each of the priorities.

2.5 Together, the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement form a performance framework for Leicestershire, which has seven priority themes:

1. Improved life chances for vulnerable people
2. Stronger, more cohesive communities
3. A safe and attractive place to live and work
4. A more effective response to climate change
5. A prosperous innovative and dynamic economy
6. A healthier Leicestershire
7. More effective and efficient service delivery

2.6 Spatial objectives for the District were published for comment during the early development of the Local Development Framework process and have been amended in light of comments made at the time and the refining of the key issues during the development of the Core Spatial Strategy. The objectives are listed below. A table showing how they relate

to the priority themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy has been prepared and will be appended to the final submission draft.

1	To meet strategic housing requirements, the accommodation needs of the District's population and the need for affordable housing.
2	To meet strategic employment requirements, foster economic growth and maintain high employment levels in the District.
3	To locate new development in sustainable locations that respect environmental capacity and which have appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities in place or where these can realistically be provided; and to encourage the appropriate re-use of brownfield sites in sustainable locations.
4	To protect, enhance and, where appropriate, secure the provision of additional accessible community services, facilities, open spaces and infrastructure throughout the District.
5	To protect and enhance the District's distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern, historic assets, natural environment and biodiversity.
6	To safeguard and enhance the character and built heritage of the District's settlements and ensure that residential amenity is protected.
7	To protect and promote the economic viability and vitality of the District's towns and rural centres.
8	To promote good design which respects, and where possible enhances, its surroundings and quality of life and which improves community safety, reduces anti-social behaviour and reduces the fear and incidence of crime.
9	To reduce the environmental impacts of road traffic, both private and commercial, and lessen the need for car use by encouraging alternative modes of transport including cycling and walking.
10	To minimise waste production and maximise re-use and recycling of waste.
11	To minimise energy demand and maximise the use of renewable energy resources.
12	To promote sustainable growth of tourism and access to the countryside within the district.
13	To locate new development in areas which will not put life or property at risk of flooding.

## Section B - Strategy for Places

In order to identify a clear spatial development strategy at the outset of the document linked to appropriate levels of infrastructure – this section presents Spatial Policies 4-12 as set out in the Alternative Options document in the following order:

- SP1 Strategy for Settlements
- SP2 Strategy for Housing Development to 2026
- SP3 Strategy to Deal with Longer Term Development
- SP4 Strategy for Leicester Principal Urban Area
- SP5 Strategy for Market Harborough,
- SP6 Strategy for Lutterworth, Broughton Astley & Rural Centres
- SP7 Strategy for the Countryside: Settlements and Landscape
- SP8 Strategy for the Countryside: Green Infrastructure
- SP9 Strategy for Delivery of Development and Supporting Infrastructure

## **SP1 STRATEGY FOR SETTLEMENTS IN HARBOROUGH DISTRICT**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 7**

- Option 1: To maintain Market Harborough as the main retail and sub-regional centre in the District.
- Option 2: To give Lutterworth and Broughton Astley the same status as each other within the settlement hierarchy – as Key Centres.
- Option 3: To retain the status of Broughton Astley as a village, or Rural Centre.
- Option 4: To retain the Preferred Options definition of Rural Centres, i.e. Kibworth Beauchamp, Fleckney and Great Glen.
- Option 5: To extend the definition of Rural Centre to other villages within the District.
- Option 6: Consider ‘groupings’ of smaller villages which are dependent upon each other for the use of services.

### **Related Evidence**

- Earlier work on Core Spatial Strategy in 2006
- Rural Partnership evidence
- Leicestershire Rural Strategy
- Accessibility study – LCC 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Option 1 will support a range of sustainability benefits.
- Option 2 preferred to Option 3 to support an increased range of services reflective of Broughton Astley’s size.
- Option 4 will help maintain facilities in these larger villages to serve their catchment areas.
- Option 6 will help improve / support viability of services & should be taken forward.

### **Community Response**

- Majority of respondents supported maintaining Market Harborough as the main retail and sub regional centre in the District and identifying both Lutterworth and Broughton Astley as Key Centres.
- Only limited response to the option of retaining or extending the current definition of Rural Centres, but this is partly due to the greater number of responses originating from the larger settlements.

## Overall Assessment

A potential strategy has been drafted which seeks to recognise the diversity of the District, the existence of local ambitions and concerns and to provide a clear overview of the future of the District ranging from the parts of it within the Leicester urban area to the countryside areas which occupy the vast majority of the District. In order to take account of sustainability and infrastructure the strategy seeks to provide for planned development suitable to the needs of each settlement across the whole District and limit pressure on any single part of the District.

### Potential Strategy SP1

**The District Council will focus on the priorities established in the Sustainable Community Strategy at District and County levels to ensure development of the District contributes to a more sustainable future in Leicester and Leicestershire and an improved quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the District. In so doing:**

**Development of the part of the District within or adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area will take into account the need to support regeneration and development objectives in Leicester City and Oadby and Wigston Borough , support more sustainable patterns of development, improve public transport and safeguard the identity of the communities of Scraptoft and Thurnby/Bushby.**

**Market Harborough as a Sub Regional Centre will develop as the main focus for additional development outside the Leicester Principal Urban Area to meet the needs of the District in the period to 2026 with the emphasis on promoting its role as an historic market town and safeguarding its compact and attractive character.**

**Lutterworth and Broughton Astley will develop as Key Centres in the District in order to help promote additional employment retail, leisure and community facilities serving each settlement and its catchment area.**

**The communities of Kibworth, Fleckney, Great Glen, Billesdon, Ullesthorpe and Husbands Bosworth will be identified as Rural Centres as a focus for rural affordable housing, additional employment and additional retail and community uses to serve the rural area.**

**In settlements below rural centre level, small scale development within the confines of settlements will help support provision of rural affordable housing and existing services.**

**Built development in the Countryside will be strictly controlled and the Green Infrastructure asset of the District developed as a resource for habitat restoration, low key recreation, tree and woodland creation and flood mitigation.**

## **SP2 STRATEGY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TO 2026**

### **1. Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 8**

- Option 1: 560 dwellings (15%) at Leicester PUA, 2,050 (55%) at Market Harborough, 1,120 (30%) in remainder of District focussed primarily on Lutterworth and Broughton Astley, elsewhere affordable housing only (where local need is demonstrated).
- Option 2: 560 dwellings (15%) at Leicester PUA 2,050 (55%) at Market Harborough, 1,120 (30%) in remainder of District focussed primarily on Lutterworth, Broughton Astley and other rural centres, elsewhere affordable housing only (where local need is demonstrated).
- Option 3: 2,420 dwellings (65%) at Leicester PUA, 1,300 (35%) at Market Harborough, elsewhere affordable housing only (where local need is demonstrated).
- Option 4: 560 dwellings (15%) at Leicester PUA, 3,170 (85%) at Market Harborough, elsewhere affordable housing only (where local need is demonstrated).
- Option 5: 1,305 dwellings (35%) at Leicester PUA, 1,305 (35%) at Market Harborough and 1,120 (30%) in remainder of District.
- Option 6: Any other suggestions for distribution.

### **Related Evidence**

- East Midlands Regional Plan 2009
- Transport Assessment 2009
- District Landscape Assessment 2007
- Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment 2009
- Leicester Principal Urban Area Landscape Character Assessment 2009
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- The relative sustainability of Options are considered in relation to; accessibility, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, landscape quality
- Options 1,2 & 4 (focused on Market Harborough) do most to improve accessibility
- New development in the PUA (all 6 options) should be accompanied by new & improved transport services
- Options 1,2,3 and 5 have the potential to lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions
- Options 1,2,& 4 may have further implications for air quality in the towns

- All 6 options can be differentiated in terms of potential effects on landscape quality. Option 1 has the largest effect on Lutterworth & B Astley (Options 3 & 4 least), Option 2 smaller impact on a wider range of locations, Option 3 largest effect on PUA, Option 4 more effects for Market Harborough

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) shows that there are significant benefits in accommodating the majority of development in Market Harborough. This is because such development would be accessible by a range of transport methods, and so limit the need to use the car. An option which spreads remaining development into a wider range of locations would help minimise impact on landscape, and so may be preferable. The SA also comments on the poor public transport network in the south east sector of the Leicester PUA.

### **Community Response on the Distribution of Development**

A large majority of responses looked for a limited amount of housing in the Leicester fringe, with the majority of housing development being focussed on Market Harborough and the remainder placed at Lutterworth or Broughton Astley or alternatively distributed to the Rural Centres. The public response was however dominated by a large number of responses from Thurnby, responding to concerns about potential additional development in the locality with consequential loss of identity.

The Citizens Panel survey which is a sample of residents across the District showed a large proportion in favour of locating development close to the Leicester Principal Urban Area.

## **2. Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 6**

Option 1: Concentrate new housing growth in one area to aid new infrastructure delivery and completion.

Option 2: Distribute development more widely, led by areas of existing infrastructure capacity.

### **Assessment of responses to the questions on Infrastructure**

The sustainability appraisal says that both options will help support the sustainability objectives – there are benefits and dis-benefits in following both options. In terms of community responses, there is overwhelming support for option 2 – to distribute development led by infrastructure capacity.

### **3. Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 3**

- Option 1: Restrict development to sustainable locations with appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities in place, or where they can be realistically provided.
- Option 2: Ensure that all new development is within an accepted distance of public transport connections, or where this can realistically provided and is viable.
- Option 3: Prioritise the reuse of Previously Developed Land (PDL) for new developments.
- Option 4: Ensure that access to all new development, and within new developments, is easily accessible by pedestrians and cycle users.

#### **Assessment of responses to the options on sustainable development**

The Sustainability Appraisal recommended embedding the policy here in other parts of the Core Strategy and the inclusion of this element within the Strategy for Development indicates that this is being done. The Community consultation responses demonstrated a clear preference to restrict development to sustainable locations with appropriate infrastructure, services and facilities in place, or where they can be realistically provided.

#### **Overall Assessment**

Taking responses and evidence concerning options on housing distribution, infrastructure provision and sustainable development into account, it appears that in sustainability terms, Market Harborough should be the principal focus for development. Nevertheless there is evidence of considerable landscape and transport constraints which militate against development of many parts of the edge of the town.

Transport and landscape evidence suggests that option 5 of the alternative housing distribution could be accommodated without significant impacts arising especially in the A6 corridor rather than the A47 corridor. The transport assessment of higher levels of development allocated to the PUA under Alternative Option 5 shows existing congestion issues being exacerbated. The SHLAA demonstrates considerable scope to deliver housing beyond the minimum RSS requirement in the area within and adjoining the PUA. A strategy for limited land release in the A47 corridor with a strategic development area in the Oadby/A6 corridor appears to offer most capacity to accommodate development related to the Principal Urban Area.

As such a potential strategy could be a hybrid of a number of options consulted upon and a potential strategy is set out below:

## **Potential Strategy SP2**

**The Council will work with partners to deliver existing sites with planning permission and allocate additional housing to meet current and future housing needs in accordance with the settlement strategy SP1 as follows:**

**30% of future housing in Harborough District will be provided on land within or adjoining the Leicester PUA. This is expected to comprise around 1100 dwellings from all new sites and be allocated in accordance with the principles of Strategy SP4.**

**40% of the future housing in Harborough District will be provided at Market Harborough Sub-regional Centre. This is expected to comprise around 1500 dwellings from all new sites and be allocated in accordance with the principles of Strategy SP5.**

**25% of the future housing in Harborough District will be provided at Lutterworth and Broughton Astley Key Centres and those Rural Centres listed in Strategy SP1. This is expected to comprise around 900 dwellings and will be expected to be distributed between the eight centres in response to evidence of local housing need and taking account of the Strategy SP6.**

**Elsewhere in the District the priority will be housing development which enables affordable housing provision, development which enables historic buildings to be restored and that required by the needs of land based businesses. It will be expected that this source will provide around 5% (200 dwellings) of the District housing.**

The above dwelling figures are based on estimates at June 2008 of the numbers of dwellings needed to meet levels of Regional Plan housing provision taking into account the estimated contribution of planning commitments.

## **SP3: STRATEGY TO DEAL WITH POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE LONGER TERM**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 9**

- Option 1: Continuation of the spatial option selected to deliver the current RSS housing requirement.
- Option 2: Development of a new sustainable settlement adjacent to Oadby with very little additional development elsewhere in the District.
- Option 3: Development of a new settlement elsewhere in the District with very little additional development elsewhere.
- Option 4: Focus on Lutterworth to help achieve major transport improvements and regeneration of the town centre.

### **Related Evidence**

- Transport Assessment 2009
- District Landscape Assessment 2007:
- Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment 2009
- Leicester Principal Urban Area Landscape Character Assessment 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Large number of uncertainties relating to sustainability performance in the long term make assessment difficult.
- Significance of potential impacts of new settlement means that further detailed assessment is needed.
- Development of Option 4 (Lutterworth priority) has potential to bring more sustainability benefits.

### **Community Response**

- Greatest level of support for focussing on Lutterworth in the long term, followed by continuation of the selected spatial option chosen in the period to 2026 and then development of a sustainable settlement adjacent to Oadby.

### **Overall Assessment**

Whilst there are considerable uncertainties in understanding the level of longer term development needs in the District, there is benefit in outlining a longer term development strategy which can help “future proof” the Core Strategy to some degree and enable it to remain relevant if the local authority is asked to accommodate additional rates of housing development. There are a number of options available which will enable future revisions to

development plan documents to proceed within the context of this Core Spatial Strategy. In each case, these developments options seek to deliver sustainable transport improvements. Community responses favour Lutterworth as a key future development location, but it is an area with few choices other than travel by car. The area has a very large employment base at Magna Park, and there is a case to support reduced commuting flows where possible and look to explore options to assist in reducing through traffic in the town centre. There is little conclusive evidence from sustainability appraisal on these options at this stage. A potential strategy might best look to identifying land adjoining Leicester as a preferred location for longer term growth, seek to direct future growth at Market Harborough to a south eastern direction to assist in resolving east west transport movement and also supporting Lutterworth development in order to explore transport improvements.

### **Potential Strategy SP3**

**In order to deal with additional housing development over a longer term period across the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area the Council will:**

**Work with partner authorities around the Leicester Principal Urban Area to examine all options for development growth, in particular options which promote significant public transport investment.**

**Ensure that any development adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area enables additional land to be considered in the longer term as a key location for longer term growth.**

**Identify the South East sector of Market Harborough as an area of search for complementary longer term development, subject to infrastructure capacity and the need for orbital road improvements to assist in town centre congestion being addressed.**

**Consider additional development at Lutterworth which supports transport improvements and enhancement of the town centre.**

## **SP4 STRATEGY FOR LEICESTER PRINCIPAL URBAN AREA (PUA)**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 11**

- Option 1: Concentrate development adjacent to Oadby and Wigston to link with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's strategic allocations.
- Option 2: Limit development to brownfield sites within the existing settlement limits.
- Option 3: Review the existing Green Wedge and Area of Separation designations and allow limited, sustainable development in these areas where they adjoin settlements.
- Option 4: Retain existing Green Wedge and Area of Separation designations but allow a mix of brownfield and greenfield allocations in non-designated areas.

### **Related Evidence**

- Transport Assessment – Harborough / Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy
- Supplementary report Transport Assessment of higher level growth at the Principal Urban Area
- District Landscape Assessment:
- Leicester Principal Urban Area Landscape Character Assessment
- Affordable Housing Viability Assessment

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Higher density development required by Option 2 may be less appropriate for the area, given existing accessibility issues & potential compromises in housing quality & greenspace provision.
- Sustainability performance of other options than Option 2 is dependant on proximity to services & public transport, location, layout, design.
- New development should be accompanied by transport improvements and walking / cycling networks that link housing, services, facilities, open space and public transport.
- Development should be led by local environmental constraints.

### **Community Response**

- There is overwhelming support for options which focus on concentrating development adjacent to Oadby, limiting development to brownfield sites within the existing settlement limits and retaining the existing Green Wedge and Area of Separation designations but allow a mix of brownfield and Greenfield allocations in non-designated areas.

## Overall Assessment

At the time of consultation on Alternative Options, evidence about the transport implications of higher levels of development adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the detailed landscape capacity assessment of land adjoining the same area were being completed. These have demonstrated the greater capacity in the A6 corridor to deal with the transport and landscape impacts of development compared with the A47. There are considerably greater opportunities to develop better quality and more frequent public transport services in the A6 corridor, taking account of development commitments at Great Glen and future development at Market Harborough subject to public transport provision being developed further within Leicester City. Whilst not in the current round of Transport Plans, the opportunity to provide a Park and Ride site adjoining the A6 as part of a ring of sites around the edge of the urban area could be promoted during the period to 2026 and the Strategy for Leicester PUA development should accommodate this.

### **Potential Strategy SP4**

**The strategy for that part of Harborough District within or adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area is to retain distinctive and identifiable communities, seek to assist in the development of high quality public transport and safeguard the character of the High Leicestershire landscape where it meets the City.**

**To meet the growth requirements of Leicester, priority will be afforded to the use of brownfield land and a strategic development area adjoining Oadby.**

**Between Great Glen and Oadby in the Glen Rise area, a strategic development area will be identified to form a more sustainable community at a scale sufficient to help support a frequent public transport service, a primary school and local retail facilities. It is possible this could result in a development of around 900 homes and be separated from Oadby and Great Glen by an identified Green Wedge but linked to the Principal Urban Area by a Country Park.**

**The strategic development area should enable improved access to London Road, take account of other potential development sites to meet longer term housing requirements at the Principal Urban Area and the possible need for a Park and Ride site serving Leicester.**

**The distinctiveness of the communities of Stoughton, Scraftoft and Thurnby/Bushby will be retained and settlements separated through identification of Green Wedges. Existing Green Wedges and Areas of Separation will be merged and boundaries reviewed and an Urban Fringe Enhancement Zone will apply to a broad area across the area from the A6 to north of the A47 to help deliver improved countryside access, strategic landscaping and countryside management.**

**Development at Leicester Principal Urban Area as described above is expected to be needed during the period 2011-2021, in order to assist (with other urban extensions) in supporting the delivery of sustainable transport measures which benefit the wider area at the earliest opportunity.**

## **SP5 STRATEGY FOR MARKET HARBOROUGH**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 10**

- Option 1: Concentrate housing development upon brownfield sites within the existing urban area and provide smaller greenfield allocations where necessary.
- Option 2: Concentrate development to the west of Market Harborough in a Sustainable Urban Extension.
- Option 3: Concentrate development to the south east of Market Harborough in a Sustainable Urban Extension.
- Option 4: Provide limited brownfield development within the existing urban area (to protect employment sites) and concentrate upon a number of smaller greenfield allocations.

### **Transport Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 4**

- Option 1: Concentrate upon physical infrastructure improvements to the west of Market Harborough.
- Option 2: Concentrate upon physical infrastructure improvements to the south east of Market Harborough.
- Option 3: Concentrate upon physical infrastructure improvements within Market Harborough town centre.
- Option 4: No physical infrastructure improvements but enforce Travel Plans, 'Smarter Choices', park and ride and integrated public transport.
- Option 5: Combination of Option 4 with one of Options 1-3.

### **Related Evidence**

- Transport Assessment 2009
- Harborough District Landscape Assessment 2007
- Market Harborough Landscape Character Assessment 2009
- Harborough District Retail Study 2007
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

In terms of housing options considered above:

- there appears to be no option which conclusively should be followed on grounds of sustainability;
- Option 1 has the potential to lead to less greenfield land development compared to other options, and the potential to limit land availability for employment use (a significant issue re. commuting levels);
- Options 2,3, & 4 likely to lead to a lower density more dispersed pattern of development;
- Options 2 & 3 likely to result in greatest loss of greenfield land. Both options will have adverse environmental effects & impacts on landscape quality & archaeological assets (but will avoid development in areas of highest landscape quality around / to north of town). Flood risk has the potential to constrain both options;
- Option 2 has the potential to impact on the setting of heritage features;
- Option 4 may have similar potential effects to 2 & 3 and may lead to challenges to new service provision.

In terms of transport options considered above:

- The Sustainability implications of Options 1, 2 & 3 depend on the extent to which infrastructure improvements focus on highway enhancements and improving traffic flows.
- Overall Option 5 is considered most appropriate.

### **Community Response**

- In terms of housing options considered the greatest level of support is for concentrating development at Market Harborough in a sustainable urban extension – the direction most respondents favour is south east – followed by west.
- In terms of transport improvements, the largest response was for proposals which concentrated on physical infrastructure improvements to the South East of Market Harborough.

### **Overall Assessment**

There are only limited opportunities for additional development at Market Harborough which do not compromise the current landscape setting of the town as evidenced by the Landscape Assessment. Equally, the issues of increased traffic congestion through the town centre may compromise the commercial attractiveness of the market town unless a future development strategy deals with this, since there is likely to be no public funding available for major transport schemes during the lifetime of this document. Whilst there is support for development to the south east of the town, there are constraints and little evidence of deliverable sites of sufficient scale. There is however evidence of an area of land to the west of the town, sufficient to deliver a considerable proportion of Market Harborough's share of the District development. The potential strategy seeks therefore moderate levels of additional growth and accommodate this largely in one single strategic

development area and also complementary development of brownfield and limited greenfield development elsewhere in and around the town where landscape constraints permit.

### **Potential Strategy SP5**

**The spatial strategy for Market Harborough will be to accommodate growth in a manner which respects the landscape setting, its compact and historic character and the need to reduce the growth of traffic congestion in the town centre.**

**The principal means of accommodating additional housing development in Market Harborough will be in the form of a strategic development area to the north west of the town in the form of a linked new village community. This will be at a size capable of ensuring provision of at least a shop and primary school. It is expected that this could provide around 1000 dwellings. The new community will be well linked to the town but distinct from it and will help establish new standards in carbon reduced living. The area should also provide additional land for employment development serving Market Harborough for the post 2021 period.**

**Remaining development of around 500 dwellings will be provided at Market Harborough with priority given to brownfield sites and limited greenfield development where landscape issues permit.**

**In all cases additional housing development must ensure that a package of transport measures is promoted which help to reduce the impact of traffic congestion, especially in the town centre. This will involve contributing to traffic management measures in the town centre, expansion of safe walking and cycle routes, improving the frequency and reach of the town bus network and increasing town car parking capacity.**

**Green Wedges will be identified to ensure distinctiveness and separation of Market Harborough from the settlements of Great Bowden and Lubenham and an Urban Fringe Enhancement Zone will be designated around the town to promote development of Green Infrastructure.**

**The town centre will be the focus for retailing but Great Bowden, Western Avenue, Meadowdale and the strategic development area Village will provide a focus for additional local facilities serving local needs.**

**If there is a requirement to examine locations for further development at Market Harborough, then the preferred direction of growth is South East, subject to infrastructure capacity and the need for provision of orbital traffic improvements to reduce town centre congestion being addressed.**

**Further development at Market Harborough as described above is expected to be needed during the period 2016-2026, taking into account the availability and deliverability of approved development in Market Harborough during the period 2009-2016.**

## **SP6 STRATEGY FOR LUTTERWORTH, BROUGHTON ASTLEY & RURAL CENTRES**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 5**

- Option 1: Encourage diverse employment development on the outskirts of Lutterworth, and over time relocate the employment currently located adjacent to the A426. Undertake improvements to key junctions on existing routes to the west of the town to encourage their greater use and improve traffic calming within the town centre.
- Option 2: Maintain the existing transport system and do not allocate any future housing or employment growth at Lutterworth.
- Option 3: Consider allocating diverse employment development to the south of the A4303 to limit transport impacts in the Air Quality Management Area.
- Option 4: Consider concentrating employment allocations at Broughton Astley rather than Lutterworth to reduce traffic implications.

Questions relating to Distribution development below Sub Regional Centre level:

- If Strategic Housing Distribution Option 1, 2 or 5 is chosen what should the approach be to locating housing in Lutterworth, Broughton Astley or the Rural Centres of Great Glen, Kibworth Beauchamp and Fleckney?
- What distributional split should be considered for these settlements?

### **Related Evidence**

- Transport Assessment 2009
- Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment 2007
- Harborough District Retail Study 2007
- Settlement and service provision – Leicestershire County Council 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Distribution should be dependant on local affordable housing need, accessibility to services and proximity to public transport.
- Lutterworth & Broughton Astley (due to size) have greater scope to incorporate a greater degree of housing growth than smaller settlements.

### **Community Response**

- In terms of options which support transport development, the supported option was to encourage diverse employment development on the outskirts of Lutterworth, and over time relocate the employment currently located adjacent to the A426. Undertake improvements to key junctions on

existing routes to the west of the town to encourage their greater use and improve traffic calming within the town centre.

## **Overall Assessment**

There is considerable local support to assist Broughton Astley in becoming a more balanced sustainable settlement with a range of supporting commercial and community facilities which are commensurate with its population size. Although there are presently considerable differences in the character and function of each place, definition as a Key Centre alongside Lutterworth is a statement of support for these differences to be reduced during the period of the Strategy, although it is accepted that such provision at Broughton Astley is likely to be affected by the proximity of other centres nearer the Leicester Principal Urban Area beyond Harborough district.

Further evidence about rural services in each settlement which appeared following the Alternative Options consultation has supported a previous consultation by the Council when considering Core Strategy issues in 2006 over extending the definition of rural centres in Harborough District. This work has concluded that the settlements of Billesdon, Husbands Bosworth and Ullesthorpe have a range of local services which would support them being identified as Rural Centres and therefore be a focus for limited additional development to help sustain rural services serving a wider area.

### **Potential Strategy SP6**

**The spatial strategy for Lutterworth and Broughton Astley will be to reflect their roles as Key Centres in the District but acknowledge their different characteristics and needs.**

**Future housing development in Lutterworth will be provided on previously used land and appropriate greenfield development. Additional employment development will be provided to meet local needs, and older employment land currently located adjacent to the A426 will be redeveloped more intensively to provide mixed uses to improve the range of housing and other facilities. Support for a solution to HGV movements in South West Leicestershire to reduce the volume of through traffic will help improve the attractiveness of the town centre to retailers and shoppers.**

**In considering additional housing development in the District beyond current requirements, then opportunities at Lutterworth will be examined which continue to assist in reducing movement of traffic (especially HGVs) through the town centre.**

**Future housing development at Broughton Astley will be provided within or adjoining the built up area of the settlement and additional employment, retail, leisure and community uses supported to meet local needs.**

**In the Rural Centres of Billesdon, Fleckney, Great Glen, Kibworth, Husbands Bosworth and Ullesthorpe, development will generally only be permitted within the built up area of the settlement and priority given to use of previously used land. These centres will be the focus of initiatives to enable more affordable housing to meet the needs of rural areas. Proposals which provide additional employment, retail, leisure and community use will be supported.**

**Future housing development will be expected to occur throughout the period 2009-2026.**

## **SP7 STRATEGY FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE – SETTLEMENTS AND LANDSCAPE**

### **Consultation Question Alternative Options CSP 17**

Given that local landscape designations are no longer supported by national or regional policy, how can the Core Spatial Strategy ensure that new development respects local landscape character?

#### **Related Evidence**

- Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment 2007
- Market Harborough Landscape Capacity Study 2009
- Leicester PUA Landscape Capacity Study 2009
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy 2001

#### **Sustainability Appraisal**

SA Objective 2 is: 'Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities'.

#### **Community Response**

- There were 6 responses to the Question 1 relating to landscape character.
- Natural England recommends that a landscape character approach is followed (as recommended by PPS 7) with the development of a specific policy on landscape to promote the protection and enhancement of all landscapes based on the Landscape Character Assessment.
- The County Council suggest that policy approach should refer to the County Council's landscape and Woodland Strategy and the Historic Landscape Characterisation project.

#### **Overall Assessment**

'Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' no longer supports local landscape designations such as the Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside. This advice is reflected in regional policy which recommends the establishment of criteria based policy in LDFs to ensure that development proposals respect intrinsic landscape character and distinctiveness in both rural and urban fringe areas. Whilst accepting that the landscape is continually evolving, it is considered that the policy set out below reflects current national and regional advice and enables the unique and varied characteristics of Harborough's landscape to be taken into account in development and land management decisions.

Options for distribution of housing development only referred to planned distribution to rural centre level with reliance on a wider rural exception policy to deliver only affordable homes. Further evaluation of this issue has led to the conclusion that we should plan positively rather than rely on proposals emerging which are exceptions to policy. We refer therefore to supporting provision of small levels of housing provision within settlements below rural centre level in order to support local shop and school provision and the provision of a proportion of affordable homes

### **Potential Strategy SP7**

**New development in the open countryside will be strictly controlled. Only development required for purposes of agriculture, forestry, low key recreation, tourism and renewable energy will be appropriate.**

**All future development will be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting, retaining and enhancing the distinctive qualities of the landscape character area in which it would be situated.**

**Five landscape character areas, and their associated characteristics, have been identified in the Harborough District. They are: High Leicestershire, Laughton Hills, Welland Valley, Upper Soar, and Lutterworth Lowlands.**

**All development in these areas shall contribute to:**

- **Protecting and, where possible, enhancing the character and quality of the landscape in which it would be situated;**
- **Preserving and promoting local distinctiveness;**
- **Protecting and, where possible, enhancing local character through appropriate design and management which is sensitive to the landscape setting;**
- **Avoiding the loss of features and habitats of landscape, historic, wildlife or geological importance, whether of national or local significance;**
- **Safeguarding important views and landmarks;**
- **Protecting the landscape setting of individual settlements; and**
- **Restoring, or provide mitigation proportionate in scale, for damaged features/landscapes in poor condition.**

**In rural settlements additional small site housing development (generally fewer than 10 dwellings) will occur in locations within the confines of existing settlements, where the development would help support local facilities such as a local shop or primary school within reasonable distance. Such development will deliver a proportion of affordable housing in accordance with Strategy ST2.**

## **SP8 STRATEGY FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 17**

The options presented for consultation on Strategic Green Space and Open Space were not necessarily all mutually exclusive and following consultation it is proposed to incorporate these within an overall Green Infrastructure Theme. The original options are therefore not being repeated.

### **Related Evidence**

- Towards a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the 6Cs Growth Point (Annex A3: Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the sub-regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray (Draft Sept 2009).
- Harborough District Council Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2008
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2002
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (revised 2007)
- Harborough District Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Rather than addressing Green Infrastructure under *Strategic Green Space* and *Open Space* these two separate topics, within a generic Core Spatial Policy which addresses both the natural and historic environment, the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) recommended that a single, and separate, Green Infrastructure Core Spatial Policy is taken forward by the Core Strategy.
- The SA also felt that there was an over-concentration on urban fringe areas in the Alternative Options document. An improvement and expansion of Green Infrastructure for all areas of the district, including within existing settlements, urban fringe areas and between settlements and areas of core Green Infrastructure should be actively promoted by the Core Strategy.

### **Community Response**

- There was general endorsement of a range of policy statements to support active development and improvement of green spaces and networks for improvements for biodiversity, access and recreational development in the District
- Natural England, as a statutory consultee, also recommended that Green Infrastructure should be addressed through a dedicated policy.

### **Overall Assessment**

Although Harborough is a predominantly rural area, opportunities to access the natural and historic environments are limited. Recognising the important

contribution a comprehensive Green Infrastructure network can make to community health, well-being and education forms basis of this policy. The various elements which make up the network as set out will have linkages between them and with more localised green spaces and networks.

Setting out Green Infrastructure priorities in the policy represents a way of focusing investment where it can be best used to achieve maximum benefits to rural and urban communities. The growth proposed in Leicestershire as part of the 6Cs Growth Point provides an opportunity to plan for a green infrastructure at the strategic level.

### **Potential Strategy SP8**

**A strategic network of green infrastructure across the countryside of Harborough district will be developed to contribute to a wider network of green infrastructure in Leicester and Leicestershire and extending into surrounding counties. In Harborough district this comprises:**

**Strategic Corridors/Areas of Green Infrastructure:**

**The Sence Strategic River Corridor and Grand Union Canal;  
Welland Strategic River Corridor; and  
Leighfield Forest.**

**Greenways which link major settlements.**

**Urban Fringe Enhancement Zones surrounding Leicester and Market Harborough.**

**Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (South East Leicester and River Welland at Market Harborough).**

**Green Wedges (Scraptoft, Thurnby, Oadby, Great Bowden, Lubenham and Magna Park/Bitteswell).**

### **Our Approach to Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors:**

To work with partners and developers to promote and support opportunities for delivering benefits in relation to protecting, enhancing and promoting:

- access and movement, creating linkages, promoting walking/cycling;
- biodiversity value;
- natural processes including flood management;
- cultural heritage through interpretation and accessibility to key heritage assets; and
- landscape character protection and enhancement.

### **Our Approach to Existing and Proposed Greenways:**

- A network of greenways will improve linkages between settlements, and other green assets. We will work with partners and developers in seeking new/enhanced access in the form of multi-use greenways as indicated on Key Diagram enabling improved access to countryside for more people.
- Greenways will offer quiet through routes which can be used for walking or cycling and have significant potential to replace car journeys. Opportunities to incorporate them into new development or provide links to them should be sought.

### **Our Approach to Urban Fringe Enhancement Zones:**

- The scale of development envisaged for the Leicester PUA and Market Harborough sub-regional centre means that opportunities for delivering significant access to local green space must be maximised.
- In these areas we will work to connect urban communities to greenspace in the surrounding countryside.
- The aim will be to create a network of interlinked, multi-functional and accessible open spaces that link to employment and residential areas.

**Our approach to Green Wedges: Further detail is given in the Strategy for Key Issues/Theme section ST6.**

## **SP9 STRATEGY FOR DELIVERY OF DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 18**

- Option 1: Continue to seek planning obligations from the areas we currently obtain obligations - contributions to community facilities, recreation and open space, education and transport on a negotiated basis.
- Option 2: Maximise opportunities to obtain planning obligations to meet local and sub regional needs via an enhanced section 106 tariff based system to enhance the District's current practice and based upon infrastructure requirements set out in the Core Spatial Strategy.
- Option 3: Introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy as part of a wider City/County arrangement to help meet sub regional requirements as well as District needs and ensure the application of the Levy is common throughout Leicester and Leicestershire

### **Related Evidence**

- Leicester and Leicestershire HMA Authorities Growth Infrastructure Assessment 2009
- Transport Assessment 2009
- Planning Obligations – HDC Developer Guidance Note 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Option 2 or 3 will help bring sustainability benefits to a wide area. Both should be taken forward by the Core Strategy.

### **Community Response**

- Most support for Option 1 – continuing at present – using the current section 106 system to negotiate obligations
- Extending the current system by a more defined tariff system was second, with introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy last.

### **Overall Assessment**

The purpose of this document is to promote consideration of the need for additional supporting infrastructure made necessary by the development strategy. As such the infrastructure list remains to be completed and will be appended to the final document.

Following consideration of the proposed structure of the Core Strategy, one of the areas which needs to be reflected better is the issue of securing good design and development. This was not highlighted within the Alternative Options consultation but there is a need for a reference to development standards and design. Potential Strategy SP9 therefore refers to good design

standards and the wider impact of development – together how development will be considered acceptable.

### **Potential Strategy SP9**

**All development will be expected to demonstrate high quality, inclusive, safe and sustainable design and will only be allowed where proposals are of a scale, density and design that would not cause damage to the qualities, character and amenity of the areas in which they are situated.**

**Development will ensure that the amenities of existing and future neighbouring occupiers are safeguarded.**

**Development will be designed to reduce the use of non renewable resources and take into account the impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the development.**

**In order to create sustainable development, development applications will be required to help funding the list of local services and facilities infrastructure as scheduled in Appendix \*.**

**Appendix \* provides an overview of the types of infrastructure which the levels of proposed development in this Plan would generate and will be the basis for subsequent supplementary guidance in the form of a Developer Contributions SPD.**

## Section C – Strategy for Key Issues/Themes

- ST1 Addressing Climate Change
- ST2 Providing Housing Choice and Affordability
- ST3 Providing for Gypsy and Traveller Needs
- ST4 Enabling Employment Provision and Business Development
- ST5 Improving Town Centres
- ST6 Safeguarding Green Wedges
- ST7 Promoting Public Open space, Recreation and Sport
- ST8 Safeguarding and Improving Biodiversity
- ST9 Promoting our Built Heritage

## **ST1: ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **Core Spatial Policy 1 - Improving Energy Efficiency in New Development**

#### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 1**

- Option 1: Employ a District wide standard for new residential developments - i.e. to exceed the national Code for Sustainable Homes targets.
- Option 2: Employ a District wide standard for new non-residential development - i.e. to comply with or exceed the BREEAM assessment.
- Option 3: Set a percentage target of the demand for energy to be met on site on developments over a certain number of square metres and/or over a certain number of dwellings.
- Option 4: Require a range of green technologies to accompany new development, for example the incorporation of 'green roofs' on suitable flat floor developments (i.e. warehousing).

#### **Related Evidence**

- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 22
- Planning for Climate Change Study 2008

#### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- All Options recommended.

#### **Community Response**

- There was a widespread support for all options from members of the public. However a number of developers and planning agents commented that attempts to surpass national targets would make future housing delivery more costly.

#### **Overall Assessment**

Combine into a single climate change /adaptation strategy statement as set out below.

### **Core Spatial Policy 2 - Facilitating Renewable Energy Generation**

#### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 2**

- Option 1: Designate broad areas for wind farm development based on the findings of the Planning for Climate Change study.
- Option 2: Set out a criteria based policy for wind farm development in accordance with the requirements of PPS22 Renewable Energy.

## Related Evidence

- PPS 22
- East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy 2009

## Sustainability Appraisal

- In addition to establishing criteria to manage pressures within the District to accommodate wind farms, the Core Strategy should seek to encourage other forms of renewable energy in the district with potentially different impacts

## Community Response

- Leicestershire County Council comment that a criteria based policy is more likely to be successful but should be generic for all forms of renewable energy.
- A large number of respondents have stated that other forms of renewable energy should be explored including Combined Heat and Power (CHP), solar, thermal and ground source heat pump technologies.

## Overall Assessment

The District will be required to support all national targets addressing climate change. To help achieve national targets, PPS 22 states that Local Planning Authorities may include policies that require a percentage of energy used in new development to be provided by on-site renewable energy production.

Regarding renewable energy generation, PPS 22 also states that criteria based policies to reflect local circumstance should be set by planning authorities. The results of the Planning for Climate Change Study have identified Harborough as the Authority with the most potential for wind energy generation within Leicestershire.

### Potential Strategy ST1

**All development must help mitigate and adapt to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

**In new developments a percentage target of the demand for energy is to be met on site in developments over a certain number of square metres and/or over a certain number of dwellings (to be developed further for submission draft).**

**Development will avoid areas liable to be at risk of flooding, support sustainable drainage measures and not compromise the function of watercourses and value of river corridors in providing natural floodplain.**

**Development involving renewable energy creation will be supported subject to compliance with the development strategies for Leicester PUA (SP4), Market Harborough (SP5), Lutterworth/Broughton Astley and Rural Centres (SP6) and the Countryside - Landscape and Settlements (SP7).**

**Further criteria based guidance will be developed for inclusion in the submission draft.**

## **ST2: PROVIDING HOUSING CHOICE AND AFFORDABILITY**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 13**

#### **Percentage of Affordable Housing**

- Option 1: Set a District-wide percentage affordable housing to be sought.  
What percentage should be sought?
- Option 2: Set different percentages for rural and urban areas which reflect the severity of the affordable housing problem.
- Option 3: Set percentage of affordable housing to be sought on a site by site basis to reflect local circumstances at the time.
- Option 4: Allow only affordable housing in rural settlements negating the need to set a percentage in these areas.

#### **Site Thresholds**

- Option 1: Continue to seek affordable housing element on developments of 5 or more dwellings.
- Option 2: Set a revised threshold before seeking affordable housing element.  
Should this be higher or lower than the current threshold?
- Option 3: Adopt different thresholds across the District which reflects the severity of the affordability problem locally.
- Option 4: Allow only affordable housing in rural settlements negating the need for a threshold in these areas.

#### **Tenure Split**

- Option 1: Set percentage rental/intermediate split on a site by site basis.
- Option 2: Set a District wide percentage rental/intermediate split.

#### **Related Evidence**

- Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008
- Leicestershire Affordable Housing Viability Study (awaited)
- HDC Affordable Housing SPD 2006
- HDC Housing Strategy 2009
- CLG Delivering Affordable Housing
- CLG Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable – Housing Green Paper
- HDC Local Plan Policies HS/1, HS/4 and HS/5
- HDC Planning Obligations Developer guidance note

- HMA Growth Infrastructure Assessment 2009
- Audit Commission – Building better lives - Getting the best from strategic housing

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Percentages and Thresholds Options 3 will help provide flexibility to ensure local affordable housing needs are met.
- Percentage and Thresholds Options 1, 2 and 4 offer less flexibility, appropriateness and scope than Option 3.
- Provision should be promoted in urban and rural areas and as part of mixed and smaller developments.
- The Core Strategy should more explicitly support high quality, energy efficient and environmentally sustainable provision.

### **Community Response**

- There is support for Percentages Options 1, 2 and 3 spread fairly equally but negligible support for Option 4. For the Site Thresholds options, Option 1 and 3 gained equal support with both Option 2 and 4 having very little or no support. For Tenure Split there was no favourite option, with both options getting an equal split of support.
- General comments on CSP 13 frequently mention the need to keep the policy on affordable housing flexible and site specific to allow for sustainable communities. Further comments fully support the percentage requirements stated in the Viability Study over those put forward in the Strategic housing market Assessment. Other comments mention a need for more research into local need on a parish level to encourage developers to look at rural exception sites, while a need to look at S106 contributions and energy efficiency targets is also needed due to the cost implications on new houses.

### **Overall Assessment**

At the time of public consultation on options, the assessment of viability issues surrounding the provision of affordable housing was not complete. This is a critical piece of evidence since in light of the relative high housing costs in Harborough District and the need for homes that meet the requirements of all members of the community.

The proposed strategy is now able to take account of the Leicestershire Affordable Housing Viability Study 2009 in order to as a guide in setting requirements that are both achievable, and that differ across the district according to development value and housing need. However in order to meet demand and need for housing at any point in time, there will also be a need to recognise that housing supply by type, size location and tenure requires a 'bespoke' approach and therefore the Core Strategy can only set a framework within which future decisions are taken.

For this strategy, the District has been split into five sub-market areas based on areas with strong similarities:

- **Harborough Rural South West** – including the settlements of Husbands Bosworth, Dunton Bassett, Claybrooke Magna, Peatling Parva and Swinford;
- **Harborough Rural North & Central** – including the settlements of Great Glen, the A47 corridor (Billesdon, Houghton and the PUA), The Kibworths, The Langtons, Hallaton and Great Bowden;
- **Market Harborough** – including Lubenham;
- **Lutterworth** – including Bitteswell and Walcote; and
- **Blaby Border Settlements** – including the settlements of Broughton Astley, Peatling Magna, Arnesby, Fleckney and Sutton in the Elms.

### **Potential Strategy ST2**

**New housing development will enable choice of house type and tenure to help meet a range of housing need, both now and to support emerging needs.**

**In order to meet local housing need, within the Harborough Rural South West and Harborough Rural North and Central sub housing market areas, 40% of all additional dwellings will be affordable.**

**In order to meet local housing need, in the Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Blaby Border Settlements sub markets, 30% of all housing development of 5 dwellings and above will be affordable.**

**The tenure and mix of house sizes for affordable housing (rent and part rent/buy arrangements) should reflect local housing need at the time of development.**

**In rural areas where affordable housing is proposed to respond to defined local need, proposals will be considered as an exception to the strategy of development restraint in the countryside as contained in Strategy SP7.**

**Where the viability of affordable housing provision is being questioned on any given site, the options of changing the mix of housing, supporting grant funding, re-considering other planning obligation requirements and accepting a commuted sum to enable provision of affordable housing on an alternative site, will be explored.**

**All affordable housing provision will be required to achieve Lifetime Homes Standards and Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3, as set out in HCA guidance document Design and Quality Standards.**

## **ST3: PROVIDING FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS NEEDS**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP14:**

- Option 1: Allocate pitches to mirror the chosen strategic distribution of housing; ensuring pitches are a well integrated part of new housing development.
- Option 2: Allocate pitches to mirror the chosen strategic distribution of housing, in self-contained sites separate from new housing development.
- Option 3: Concentrate provision in rural areas, representing a more even distribution across the District.
- Option 4: Concentrate upon extensions to existing sites rather than providing new sites.
- Option 5: Combination of the above approaches.

### **Related Evidence**

- RSS - Pitch requirements for the District for 2007 - 2012.
- The Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment April 2007
- Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites Circular 01/2006 (February 2006): Para.31 states that 'the core strategy should set out criteria'

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- In sustainability terms, a key aspect of site provision is the accessibility of sites and pitches to services and facilities in the district.
- In particular the proximity and access of sites to health services, educational opportunities and local shopping facilities should be a key consideration.
- Option 5 recommended.

### **Community Response**

- Out of the 166 responses to Theme 8, 80% were in support of Option 4 (extending existing provision).
- The next highest support rate was the 11.5% for Option 5.

### **Overall Assessment**

The policy approach taken provides the greatest level of flexibility in determining the locations of future gypsy and traveller sites. Both the Traveller

Law Reform Project and Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group have recommended that a combination of approaches should be implemented to ensure that additional sites reflect the locational needs of Gypsy -Travellers.

In addition to the criteria based strategy to guide provision of future sites, specific discussion is planned shortly with representatives of the Gypsy-Traveller Community to assess how best additional sites may be delivered to meet local needs with improved facilities, In order to meet current evidence of housing need, additional pitch provision for temporary transit and permanent provision at Market Harborough must be considered further.

### **Potential Strategy ST3**

**The Council will seek the delivery of a sufficient number of sustainable and suitable located Gypsy -Traveller pitches to meet the identified local needs for permanent and transit sites as specified within the Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and subsequent reviews.**

**Proposals for new and extensions of existing sites should meet the following criteria:**

**The site lies within or adjoining the existing settlement boundaries of the Principal Urban Area, Sub Regional Centre, Key Centres or Rural Centre;**

**The key services of a primary school, GP, food shop etc are nearby;**

**The site has safe pedestrian and vehicle access to a public highway;**

**The site is not at risk of flooding; is not contaminated land; and is not near a refuse, industrial or other hazardous land use/installation;**

**The site is capable of gaining suitable access to mains water, electricity supply, drainage and sanitation;**

**The site is no greater than nor develops beyond 15 pitches in total;**

**The site does not have a significant visual impact on the surrounding area and/or on local residents.**

**In addition to the above, sites for travelling showpeople should take account of their specific business requirements.**

## **ST4: ENABLING ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 15**

- Option 1: Support sub-regional growth of Leicester by allocating minimal employment in the district other than small-scale rural development.
- Option 2: Significant allocation at Lutterworth, minimal at Market Harborough with small-scale rural development.
- Option 3: Significant allocation at Market Harborough, minimal at Lutterworth with small-scale rural development.
- Option 4: Split allocation between Lutterworth and Broughton Astley with small-scale rural development.
- Option 5: Consider an additional policy within the Core Spatial Strategy to support local level business needs and more flexible approaches to employment development, such as live-work units.

### **Related Evidence**

- Leicester & Leicestershire HMA Employment Land Study 2008
- Harborough Employment Land Study 2006
- East Midlands Strategic Distribution Study 2006
- East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 2009
- Consultation Draft PPS4 – Planning for Prosperous Communities 2009
- HDC AMR / Employment Land Availability Monitoring 2007/8, 2008/9

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- A mix of Options 5 and 3 recommended - will do most to support the socio-economic SA objectives. Option 5 has the potential to reduce the need to travel & reduce out-commuting.
- Concentrating a large proportion of economic & employment growth at Market Harborough, which has the most comprehensive public transport links and largest range of services / facilities, will support accessibility to these opportunities and support the vitality / vibrancy of the town.
- New employment provision should be located in areas accessible by sustainable means of transport, and existing & expanded sites should be supported by improvements in public transport provision, walking and cycling networks.

### **Community Response**

- Option 1 to support sub-regional growth by minimal employment other than small scale rural development was the best supported option (39% of all 194 respondents on Theme 9).
- Options 2, 3 and 4 gained 18% 7% and 22% of all support respectively.

- 22% of respondents supported Option 5 - a specific policy to support local level business needs and more flexible approaches to employment development.
- 18 respondents made general comments covering the following issues; co-location of housing & employment uses, need to consolidate local economy & be flexible (needs of existing businesses, attracting new, reduced commuting, skills mismatch, rural economy), broad portfolio of uses / locations, re-assessing employment sites and allocations (loss, protection / re-use), deliverability, transport implications.
- Existing employment sites at; Magna Park, Bruntingthorpe Industrial Estate /Proving Ground, Airfield Farm Business Park were the subject of specific comment.

## **Overall Assessment**

The two evidence studies use different economic forecasts and methods to calculate future requirements – the result being that the requirement for new employment land (to meet job needs) varies between them from 5 – 18ha. The PACEC study uses the most up to date economic forecasts and covers the same timeframe as the LDF (to 2026), it also uses an approach that is consistent across the HMA and which arguably more fully recognises City / County interdependencies & structure shift in terms of employment & jobs.

Taking responses and evidence into account, it appears that only minimal new allocations are required or desired within the district, to meet local as opposed to strategic needs within the HMA. Concentrating growth at Market Harborough would appear to provide greatest sustainability benefits. However there is also a desire to; retain existing employment provision in key, rural and other centres and in general to balance housing & employment growth to support the sustainability of settlements, as well as strong support to employ more flexible approaches and have a broad portfolio of business premises / sites to enable businesses to grow. The aspiration to reduce out-commuting conflicts with the need to support sub-regional economic growth and minimise development.

The alternate options refer specifically to ‘allocations’ rather than to total stock and the distribution of employment that they suggest doesn’t reflect the settlement hierarchy that is proposed in Policy SP1, with Broughton Astley as a key centre alongside Lutterworth. Consequently no single option fully supports or fulfils the recommendations of the evidence studies nor matches the community response.

As such the suggested strategy is a hybrid of Options 1 and 3 complemented by Option 5, as set out below:

#### **Potential Strategy ST4**

**The Council will promote local employment and business development to achieve opportunities for local employment, a better balance between jobs and homes, limit growth in out commuting and assist in promoting the sub-regional economic growth of Leicester and Leicestershire. This will be achieved by:**

**Focussing employment development which strengthens Market Harborough's role as the sub-regional centre to reinforce the settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy for Market Harborough. Allocating additional land for employment within Market Harborough as part of a strategic development area for the town, to support the spatial strategy to offset any future losses of existing employment space and meet needs beyond 2021.**

**Reviewing and allocating land for specific employment uses in the District to provide a broad portfolio of sustainably located sites, of the right quality at the right time to meet any identified shortfall through assessment and confirmation in the Allocations Development Plan document.**

**Working with partners in delivering existing sites with planning permission, identifying and safeguarding key employment areas in Market Harborough, Key Centres and Rural Centres from changes of use which may limit future business development and support the renewal of non key employment areas.**

**Strictly controlling development in open countryside and supporting development within rural settlements where it supports the retention & viability of rural services or aids rural diversification.**

**Requiring the provision of a proportion of small / starter units in employment sites and supporting the provision of live/work units.**

**Supporting new enterprise by working with partners to deliver an Innovation Centre in Market Harborough.**

**Protecting Magna Park's unique role as a strategic distribution centre of National significance, and exemplar of environmental performance whilst enabling the growth of business and supporting a shift towards sustainable rail linked distribution provision.**

**Recognising the role & contribution of Bruntingthope Proving Ground & Industrial Estate in providing for research and local business, taking into account its unique rural location.**

## **ST5: IMPROVING TOWN CENTRES AND SHOPPING**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP10**

#### **Distribution of additional floorspace to 2026**

- Option 1: Prioritise Lutterworth over Market Harborough in terms of additional retail floorspace provision to 2026.
- Option 2: Distribute additional retail floorspace between Market Harborough (7,600 sq. m) and Lutterworth (4,800 sq. m) town centres.
- Option 3: Allow additional floorspace provision to be demand led (i.e. either Market Harborough or Lutterworth).

#### **Accommodating additional floorspace**

- Option 1: Encourage ground floor retail element in developments within the town centres.
- Option 2: Keep both Market Harborough and Lutterworth town centres compact and concentrate on improving secondary shopping areas and their potential.
- Option 3: Small scale extensions to existing town centres to accommodate additional floor space to 2026.

#### **Related Evidence**

- Harborough District Retail Study 2007
- Harborough District Parking Strategy 2008
- Hands on Harborough Final Report 2007
- Lutterworth Town Centre Vision and Master Plan 2006

#### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Market Harborough, as the main settlement of the district with the most comprehensive public transport links, is a more appropriate location for the bulk additional retail floorspace provision in the district than Lutterworth.
- Under the *Accommodating Additional Floorspace* topic, Options 1 and 3 will do more to support the vitality and vibrancy of Market Harborough and Lutterworth town centres.

#### **Community response**

- In relation to distribution of additional floorspace to 2026, there was least support for the Option 1 (27 respondents) whilst there was almost equal support for Options 2 (67) and 3 (73) amongst respondents.

- Accommodating additional floorspace – 87 respondents favoured the approach expressed in Option 2. Support for Option 1 and Option 3 was more or less equal (42 and 37 respondents respectively).
- GOEM point out that retail development will only be attracted to viable locations and that some evidence of developer interest may be required to justify any strategy for retailing.
- English Heritage support Option 1 prioritising Lutterworth (if there are plans for the town to expand).

## **Overall Assessment**

Emerging policy for town centres takes into account the need to keep Market Harborough and Lutterworth town centres compact but to allow limited growth by extending the shopping and business areas into adjacent secondary shopping areas. This is consistent with the Retail Study which found that only a modest amount of new retail floorspace will be required to 2026.

The policy recognises the need to allow the further retail growth in Market Harborough to support its designation as a sub-regional centre. By proposing the extension of the shopping and business area to incorporate the secondary area of St Marys Road, the policy allows future retail requirements to be accommodated in the corridor leading from the train station into the established town centre.

The aspirations of Lutterworth's residents for town centre and retail improvements are also reflected in the approach. In redefining the town centre boundary, development opportunities will be incorporated where appropriate and justified. The option to prioritise Lutterworth over Market Harborough in terms of additional retail provision was not supported either by the findings of the SA or by the community response.

Encouraging further retail and service development commensurate with its size and key centre designation is set out as the priority for Broughton Astley.

The policy also reflects the importance in sustainability terms of retaining and developing local retail and service provision in rural centres and neighbourhood centres.

### **Potential Strategy ST5**

**Support Leicester City Centre as the principal sub regional shopping centre by limiting retail development within or adjoining the Leicester Principal Urban Area to development which supports local shopping and service provision at Scraptoft and Thurnby/Bushby and at a potential strategic development area.**

**Develop shopping and service provision at Market Harborough to maintain and develop its sub regional centre role and extend the**

**definition of the town centre shopping and business area boundary to include the secondary shopping area of St Marys Road in order to accommodate future retail requirements. Encourage the maintenance and development of facilities to meet local needs at Great Bowden, Western Avenue, Meadowdale and in a potential strategic development area.**

**Support appropriate retail and town centre growth in Lutterworth, recognising community aspirations and to review the town centre boundary taking into account development opportunities.**

**Encourage and support additional retail and community provision in Broughton Astley by considering the need and opportunity to designating land in the shopping and business area to support its role as a Key Centre.**

**Shopping and Business Area boundaries will be defined in the Sub Regional Centre, Key Centres and Rural Centres where additional retail and service uses will be encouraged.**

## **ST6: SAFEGUARDING GREEN WEDGES**

Theme 11 of the Alternative Options consultation asked for views in relation to the future of the district's Green Wedges and Areas of Separation. It should be noted that the options consulted upon were not mutually exclusive.

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 17**

Option 1: Continue to protect key areas of strategic green space in urban fringe areas as Green Wedges/Areas of Separation.

Option 2: Maximise opportunities to incorporate new and link existing strategic areas of green/open space around Market Harborough's fringe area (i.e. develop an accessible, multi-functional green network around the town's edge).

Option 3: Improve access to strategic green space around all urban fringe areas in the District, for example Lutterworth Country Park, and maximise the community benefits of the current Areas of Separation.

Option 4: Where feasible, improve access to former railway lines and other strategic green infrastructure in the District.

### **Related Evidence**

- Towards a GI Strategy for the 6Cs Growth Point (Annex A3: Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the sub-regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray (draft) 2009
- Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment 2007
- Stoughton, Oadby and Thurnby Green Wedge Management Strategy 2005
- Feasibility Study for the Creation of a Community Forest in the Central Leicestershire Area 2006

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- The SA recommended considering Green Wedges and Areas of Separation as part of a wider Green Infrastructure policy.

### **Community Response**

- Strong support for Option 1 with 157 respondents expressing support for the continued protection of Green Wedges and Areas of Separation.
- 34 respondents supported improved access to strategic greenspace around urban areas and maximising community benefits of current Areas of Separation.

- Maximising opportunities to incorporate new and existing strategic areas of green/open space around Market Harborough's fringe area was supported links by 31 respondents.
- 43 supported the option to improve access to former railway lines and other strategic green infrastructure in the District.

### **Overall Assessment**

In committing to supporting the principle of Green Wedges, the policy reflects the strong community support expressed for the retention of Green Wedge/ Areas of Separation designations, their strategic role in relation to the Leicester PUA and the opportunities in wider Green Infrastructure terms.

The policy sets out where Green Wedges (incorporating former Areas of Separation) will be defined both in relation to existing development and as part of strategic development proposals as set out in this document. Detailed boundaries will be defined as part of the Allocations DPD.

The Regional Spatial Strategy makes it clear that Green Wedges should fulfil a number of functions both in terms of guiding development form and as a resource for public access/recreation. In line with the SA comments, the Council and its partners will seek to encourage multiple functions for Green Wedges to serve both their local and wider urban communities so that their contribution to the District's Green Infrastructure network is maximised.

#### **Potential Strategy ST6**

**In parallel with other local planning authorities in Leicestershire, Green Wedges will be identified around Leicester and other settlements to safeguard against merging of settlements, guide development form, enable green infrastructure to penetrate urban areas and provide public access facilities, particularly for recreation.**

**The following Green Wedges are shown diagrammatically on the Key Diagram and will be identified in the following areas (incorporating former Areas of Separation where appropriate) through the Allocations DPD:**

**Leicester/Scraptoft,  
Thurnby/Scraptoft,  
Thurnby/Leicester/Oadby,  
Oadby/Stretton Hall,  
Stretton Hall/Great Glen,  
Market Harborough/Great Bowden,  
Market Harborough/Lubenham,  
Lutterworth/Bitteswell/Magna Park.**

## **ST 7: OPEN SPACE SPORT AND RECREATION**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP17**

- Option 1: Protect and improve all existing open space.
- Option 2: Allow development of underused, poorly located or poor quality open space provided alternative open space is provided or upgraded in return.
- Option 3: Develop multiple functions for open spaces to encourage usage.
- Option 4: Ensure that the thresholds and requirements for open space specified within the District's PPG 17 Assessment are achieved

### **Related Evidence**

- Open Space/Sport and Recreational Facilities and Assessment of Local Needs 2004
- Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation 2009
- Draft Open Space Strategy July 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Recommended that open space seen as part of wider GI policy.

### **Community Response**

- 157 respondents supported Option 1 (Protect and improve all existing open space).
- Options 2 and 3 both attracted 24 supporting respondents, while another 29 supported Option 4.

### **Overall Assessment**

The options set out in the Alternative Options paper were not mutually exclusive. The recommended policy approach set out below takes on various elements of all the options.

The recommended policy approach reflects the strong community support for Option 1. However, in order to comply with national guidance, there may be merit in re-locating existing open space provision which is poorly located in accessibility terms (as set out in Option 2). A commitment to protecting all open space provision would not allow for this flexibility in approach.

Developing multiple functions for the district's open space provision (as set out in Option 3) means that they can make a contribution to sustainable development through aspects such as biodiversity protection and enhancement, climate adaptation, walking and cycling, education and

linkages with wider green infrastructure. Developers should consider multiple roles for new open space provision at the design stage.

Option 4, relating to thresholds and requirements for open space as set out in the PPG 17 study, will ensure that new development contains adequate, quality, accessible open space in line with up to date, approved standards.

### **Potential Strategy ST 7**

**Provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities to meet existing and emerging needs across the District will be achieved by:**

- **Protecting and enhance existing open spaces and sport and recreational facilities of value (or potential value) to the local community, encouraging multiple uses to improve usage, quality and their contribution to sustainable development;**
- **Allowing re-location of poorly located but necessary open space or sport and recreation facilities;**
- **Setting out criteria addressing circumstances in which the planning authority may allow the redevelopment of existing open space;**
- **Requiring developers to make provision for adequate open space in association with new development in accordance with the relevant standards contained in the District Councils document 'Provision of Open Space, Sport and Recreation'.**
- **Seeking new provision to help address identified deficiencies in existing open space provision both in quantity and quality.**

Summary of open space types compared to expected standard of provision and identified deficiencies:

#### **Parks and Gardens:**

Deficiency across whole district, most pronounced in Kibworth, Fleckney and Great Glen area.

#### **Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace:**

Shortfall in Market Harborough and Lubenham area.

#### **Amenity Greenspace:**

Deficit in all areas other than Market Harborough and Lubenham.

#### **Provision for Children and Young People**

Total deficiency of provision across the District equating to 10 ha of provision. Greatest deficiency in Market Harborough and Lubenham area.

#### **Allotments:**

Overall deficiency of allotments in the District.

## **ST8: CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGY**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 17**

Option 1: Support Leighfield Forest as a priority area for conservation and enhancement.

Option 2: Ensure opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity are incorporated in new open space provision and in the subsequent management of these areas (both brownfield and Greenfield developments).

Option 3: Recognise the biodiversity value of green corridors (hedgerows, streams, verges) in considering areas for development.

### **Related Evidence**

- Harborough District Council Phase 1 Habitat Survey 2008
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2002
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan Revised 2007
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- Recommends that the Core Strategy should seek to enhance the biodiversity value of the district by increasing connectivity between statutory and non-statutory areas of biodiversity value.
- Creation of new areas of biodiversity value and designations (for example, a new Local Nature Reserve in the Market Harborough area).
- Recognise that although Harborough is not rich in biodiversity assets, protected species are found across the district and are not confined to sites of nature conservation interest.
- Core Strategy should seek to ensure that new development takes place with due regard to the aims of PPS9 and the biodiversity duty placed on local authorities by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act. (NERC).
- The Core Strategy should also aim to promote the objectives of the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Should reflect Natural England's Urban Greenspace standards (in relation to accessible natural greenspace and Local NatureReserves).

### **Community Response**

- 144 respondents supported Option 3.
- There were 42 respondents in support of Option 2.
- 23 supported Leighfield Forest as a priority area for biodiversity conservation and enhancement.
- Leicestershire Wildlife Trust recommended that it is important to identify important wildlife corridors, such as River Welland and acknowledge the biodiversity duty under the NERC Act.

## **Overall Assessment**

The policy approach set out below takes on board elements of all the options which were put out for consultation as jointly they have the potential to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the District's biodiversity. It recognises the need to work with partners who will deliver the necessary expertise to progress these projects and identifies key opportunity areas for the improvement of biodiversity as part of the wider Green Infrastructure network.

### **Potential Strategy ST8**

**Seek to conserve, enhance, and promote the biodiversity and geological interest of the area.**

**Working with partners, support Leighfield Forest as a priority area for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through its designation as a Biodiversity Conservation Area and as a key Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Corridor.**

**Support the delivery of strategic opportunities for enhancing connectivity of the natural greenspace network for biodiversity in the following areas: South East Leicester (incorporating Newton Harcourt and Great Glen); and River Welland to the west of Market Harborough (incorporating Lubenham and Theddingworth).**

**Through the systems of development control, grant aid, management agreement and positive initiatives, the Council and its partners will:**

**Contribute to the achievement of Leicestershire Biodiversity Action Plan targets;**

**Promote the management of biodiversity, encouraging the maintenance of wildlife corridors and stepping stones at the local level that contribute to the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network across sub-region and neighbouring local authorities;**

**Avoid demonstrable harm to habitats or species which are protected or which are of importance to biodiversity;**

**Safeguard the biodiversity value of previously developed land where significant;**

**Require proposed new development to incorporate beneficial features for biodiversity as part of good design and sustainable development;**

**Seek to secure the designation of additional Local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population (as recommended by Nature England). The designation of a Local Nature Reserve as part of new development in Market Harborough will be a priority.**

## **ST 9: PROMOTING OUR BUILT HERITAGE**

### **Options considered in Alternative Options CSP 17**

Option 1: Develop tourism potential of key heritage assets further for example, the Grand Union Canal, Foxton Locks, Market Harborough and Lutterworth town centres.

Option 2: Limit and/or control the further expansion of tourism development of key heritage assets, to ensure that whilst sites are publically accessible and contribute to tourism in general terms, historic character is protected.

Option 3: Identify other key heritage assets in the District which could be enhanced, without risk to their qualities.

### **Related Evidence**

- English Heritage – Heritage at Risk Register
- Draft Planning Policy Statement 15 - Planning for the Historic Environment
- Historic Environment Records – Leicestershire County Council
- Foxton Locks Master Plan and Implementation Strategy 2005

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- As acknowledged by the options, Harborough is rich in cultural heritage assets, and the district has a large number of designated listed buildings and conservation areas.
- The options also acknowledge that only a limited proportion of the district's overall historic environment resource is subject to statutory designations, and undesignated features represent a significant part of the district's cultural heritage. This is welcomed and should be recognised as the Core Strategy is further developed.
- New development should incorporate design which complements and enhances individual heritage assets and their settings, reducing its impact on designated and non-designated sites and townscapes.
- The Core Strategy should therefore actively and explicitly seek to promote and incorporate these aspects through a relevant policy.
- Option 1 is therefore seen as a more appropriate option for the Core Strategy to take forward for Harborough than Option 2. This would also be supported by additionally taking forward Option 3, which will help rejuvenate more vulnerable features and areas of historic environment value.

### **Community Response**

- The options set out were not mutually exclusive. In terms of support 87 respondents supported Option 1, 53 supported Option 2 and 45 supported Option 3.

- GOEM stated that most of these options (under environmental assets) point to the need for a green infrastructure strategy, which could include strategic allocations for urban fringe country parks, biodiversity enhancement (Leighfield Forest), heritage tourism (Grand Union Canal) and the green access/biodiversity corridors linking them. The necessary review of green wedges and separation areas should take place in this context.
- English Heritage considers all of the options have a role to play in delivering green infrastructure and local open space and, protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment.
- British Waterways welcomes prominence given to the canal in this theme.

### **Overall Assessment**

A commitment to the conserving and enhancing the historic environment underpins the policy approach. Whilst the policy reinforces the statutory protection afforded to Listed buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens, it also recognises that only a limited proportion of the District's historic assets are subject to statutory designations and that undesignated features represent a significant part of the District's cultural heritage and contribute to residents' sense of place.

The policy also takes on board elements of Options 1 and 2 to arrive at an approach that balances the economic benefits of tourism to the District with the need to protect and enhance heritage assets in the long term, specifically in relation to the Grand Union Canal and Foxton Locks.

#### **Potential Strategy ST9**

**In recognition of the built heritage of the District, the Council will work with partners to protect, conserve, enhance and help people enjoy this asset through:**

**Promoting buildings worthy of special protection for listed status;**

**Enabling appropriate development which ensures historic buildings (including historic parks and gardens) are maintained in good repair;**

**Appraising and designating conservation areas as to protect historic parts of towns, suburbs and villages;**

**Safeguarding scheduled ancient monuments and non-scheduled, nationally important archaeological remains; and other areas of archaeological potential or importance and areas of historic landscape or parkland;**

**Encouraging improved access to buildings and places of heritage for local people and visitors; and**

**Creating a list of buildings of local importance.**

**New development should be inspired by, respect and enhance local character and distinctiveness of the area in which it would be situated, particularly in areas with high heritage value such as Market Harborough and Lutterworth Town Centres.**

**Development which enables development of the tourism and heritage asset of the Grand Union Canal and the nationally significant Foxton Locks (including restoration of the Inclined Plane and Victorian Boat Lift) will be supported.**

## **Section D - Harborough Core Spatial Strategy**

### **KEY DIAGRAM**