

MATTER 7: LOCATING DEVELOPMENT IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Whether the Plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy in relation to Locating Development in the Right Place?

Issue 2: Key Development Sites

Policies SA01, SA02, SA03, SA04, DS01 and DS02

Q1. Are the following proposed residential development/mixed use and employment allocations justified, based on up-to-date evidence, effective, and consistent with national policy?

Site S1: Scraftoft East, Land between Scraftoft and Bushby (950 homes) – Relevant policies: SA01, SA04, DS01

Site S1 allocates land between Scraftoft and Bushby for 950 dwellings and two primary schools, while also seeking to retain part of the green wedge identified on the policies map. This is not justified, consistent with evidence, or consistent with national policy.

The supporting text to policy SA04 states that the functions of the green wedge are to prevent the merging of settlements, guide development form, provide a green lung into urban areas, and facilitate recreational opportunities. Supporting text for Policy DS04: Preserving and Enhancing our Heritage and Rural Character states that only development which supports these functions should be permitted within green wedges. The allocation does not support these functions and, therefore, is not justified.

The Harborough District Green Wedge Assessment (2024) identifies the allocation site as green wedge sub-area GW1B and concludes that it makes a strong contribution to preventing the merging of settlements and guiding development form, and a moderate contribution towards providing a green lung into urban areas and providing recreational opportunities. While the assessment recommends retaining undeveloped land between Scraftoft and Bushby to preserve physical and visual separation, and maintaining openness on prominent valley slopes, these recommendations are not reflected in Policy SA04 or its supporting text. Therefore, the wording of the policy is not consistent with the underlying evidence.

Policy SA04 provides no clear mechanism for ensuring the green wedge continues to fulfil its functions. Instead, the proposed allocation for development would contribute to the coalescence of Scraftoft and Bushby and weaken the green wedge's functions in providing a green lung into urban areas and guiding development form, contrary to Policy DS04.

The Green Wedges, Areas of Separation and Landscape Topic Paper (March 2026) (TPC-NLP 11) states that there will be a 13% reduction in the green wedge, but that this is justified as separation of settlements will be maintained and the loss

of green wedge land is balanced against the need to locate new development in one of the district's most sustainable locations.

However, any loss of green wedge land for development on Site S1 is further called into question by the presence of an alternative housing site at Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area (SDA) which is an existing allocation in the adopted Local Plan for 1,200 dwellings, a two-form entry primary school, and a neighbourhood centre. The Scraptoft North SDA is proposed to be de-allocated through the emerging Local Plan. The Plan does not clearly demonstrate why a new allocation within the green wedge is preferable to retaining the existing Scraptoft North SDA which avoids harm to the green wedge.

The proposed allocation appears incompatible with the green wedge designation of the land and is insufficiently justified in the context of an available alternative allocation for development.

Site S2: Land at Beeby Road (175 homes) – Relevant policies: SA01, DS01

The city council does not object to the principle of this allocation. However, it notes that the site is relatively isolated and is not well related to either the settlement of Scraptoft or the urban edge of Leicester. These issues are compounded by the proposed de-allocation of the Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area (SDA) from the emerging Local Plan. In combination with Site S2, the Scraptoft North SDA would represent a logical and well-connected extension to the existing settlement, delivering a sustainable pattern of growth.

Retention of the Scraptoft North SDA as an allocation would facilitate the comprehensive planning and delivery of supporting infrastructure, including access and link roads, together with primary school provision, providing benefits across the proposed development sites in Scraptoft.

The de-allocation of the Scraptoft North SDA, which is a sustainable and sequentially preferable site, needs to be supported by robust evidence. The city council supports the promoter view that the Scraptoft North SDA is both viable and developable and is actively working with land promoters on an outline application for the western portion of the site, with the express intention that this will be Phase 1 of a comprehensive development of the entire SDA. The city council therefore recommends that Harborough District Council retains the Scraptoft North SDA as an allocation within the Local Plan and appropriately positions it within the housing trajectory to reflect any current delivery, infrastructure, or viability constraints.

Strategic site allocation SA02 and Policy SA01

Site OA1: Land South of Gartree Road (mixed use new neighbourhood inc.1,200 homes and 5Ha employment land in Plan period)

Q9. Should policy SA02 address the identified need for a strategic orbital connection around the south and east of Leicester in the non-statutory

Strategic Growth Plan? If so, how?

The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan identifies the need for a south-east orbital transport corridor that would connect the south and east of the City to support and facilitate future growth. The city council acknowledges this need will be required to support future growth. The route alignment, design, funding, delivery mechanism, and timescales of this corridor are unknown, and require very careful consideration alongside other projects and programmes.

The Land South of Gartree Road development is predicated on a sustainable strategy that requires a significant internalisation of trips, which is to be achieved by reducing car dependency and minimising the development's impact on the highway network. In this context, the promotion of a strategic orbital connection through the development is likely to be inconsistent with the development's overarching vision and objectives.

The city council, as transport authority, therefore, considers that the development should be planned to prioritise internal trips rather than strategic vehicle traffic. Any future strategic transport interventions required to deliver wider orbital connectivity should not compromise individual development objectives and instead be developed first and foremost as a priority transport project.

Q10. What is the robust evidence to justify a requirement for a minimum 15-minute zero carbon bus service? Would the requirement be clear and unambiguous, and would it be effective?

The city council, as a transport authority, considers that there is evidence to support the principle of requiring a high quality, frequent and zero emission bus service to serve the proposed development site.

The site is located adjacent to the Leicester Urban Area and would rely on transport connections to access services and facilities within Leicester, such as the A6 London Road corridor which functions as a key urban public transport corridor. The Government's National Bus Strategy, Bus Back Better, states that, 'turn up and go' services should be provided on major urban routes, such that passengers need not rely on a timetable, and specifically references intensive services and investment on key corridors. This provides support for a service frequency consistent with a 15-minute interval on an urban corridor of this nature.

The Bus Back Better Strategy also promotes the provision of bus services that are better integrated with other modes of transport, including rail, walking, and cycling networks. Services from the proposed development site would provide connections to Leicester railway station and the two city bus stations, and would therefore contribute towards an integrated transport network. Furthermore, the strategy supports the transition towards zero-emission buses.

This requirement is also consistent with Leicester's wider public transport ambitions set out in its Leicester Enhanced Bus Partnership and the development

of a zero-emission bus fleet. Any new service operating into Leicester would be expected to align with these objectives.

The requirement is further supported by Leicester's Air Quality Action Plan (2025-30). Although Leicester now meets the national objectives for nitrogen dioxide, the city continues to maintain an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Road traffic is the predominate source of poor air quality within its AQMA. The city council's Air Quality Action Plan identifies reducing emissions from transport, increasing public transport use, and continuing to transition to zero-emission buses as key measures to improve public health and reduce exposure to air pollution.

Therefore, the city council considers that a requirement for a minimum 15-minute zero-emission bus service is justified. It is considered that such a service would be an effective component of the overall mitigation strategy for the site. Given the scale of the proposed development and its location next to the Leicester Urban Area, a frequent zero-emission bus service would help reduce car dependency and support Leicester's air quality objectives.

Scraptoft

Site S1: Scraptoft East, Land between Scraptoft and Bushby (950 homes) **Policies SA01 and SA04**

Q1. Policy SA04 requires that development maintains an area of Green Wedge between Scraptoft and development to the South including Thurnby and Bushby. Plan paragraph 5.32 explains this is to prevent merging, guide development, provide a green lung and facilitate recreational opportunities. What is the robust evidence to confirm that development would not harmfully diminish the effectiveness of the Green Wedge when assessed against its aims, and that such an approach would further the aims of Plan Policy DS04, which requires the preservation of Green Wedges? Could such an approach involve some reduction in the existing Green Wedge?

The evidence underpinning the allocation is the Harborough District Green Wedge Assessment (2024), which identifies the site as green wedge sub-area GW1B. The Assessment concludes that the area makes a strong contribution to preventing the merging of settlements and guiding the form of development, and a moderate contribution to providing a green lung into urban areas and supporting recreational opportunities. It recommends retaining undeveloped land between Scraptoft and Bushby to preserve physical and visual separation, together with maintaining openness on the prominent valley slopes.

The council's topic paper Green Wedges, Areas of Separation and Landscape (March 2026) (TPC-NLP 11) explains that the proposed green wedge boundary responds to these recommendations, with land between Station Road, Footpath D19, and Covert Lane retained within the green wedge together with part of the valley slopes. The topic paper states that approximately 80 hectares of green wedge land would remain, representing a reduction of around 13%, and concludes

that the revised green wedge would continue to fulfil its strategic functions.

However, neither the wording of Policy SA04 nor its supporting text set out a clear mechanism for how the green wedge would continue to fulfil its functions following development. Development of the site would reduce the physical and visual separation between Scraptoft and Bushby and diminish the contribution the land makes to acting as a green lung in urban areas and guiding development form, which are functions identified in Policy DS04.

Therefore, the policy would likely harmfully diminish the effectiveness of the green wedge when assessed against its functions and is counter to the criteria of Policy DS04.

Justification for allocating this green wedge land for development is further weakened by the presence of the Scraptoft North Strategic Development Area (SDA), an existing allocation in the adopted local plan for approximately 1,200 dwellings, a two-form entry primary school and a neighbourhood centre. The Scraptoft North SDA is proposed to be de-allocated through the emerging local plan. The emerging plan does not demonstrate why a new allocation within the green wedge represents a more appropriate strategy than retaining the existing Scraptoft North SDA, nor why the de-allocation of that site is justified.

Given the availability of this alternative allocation, further evidence is required to demonstrate both the need for development within the green wedge and that the proposed boundary amendments would allow the green wedge to continue to fulfil its functions. In the absence of such evidence, the justification for Policy SA04 remains unclear.

Q4. How would Plan Policy SA01 S1/SA04 criterion 1b interact with Plan Policy DS05 criterion 1d and criterion 2, which requires a comprehensive approach to coordinating the provision, phasing and funding of necessary infrastructure, taking account of the cumulative and cross boundary impacts arising from the cluster of sites at Scraptoft, Thurnby and Bushby (S1, S2, TB1)?

The city council, as transport authority, supports the principle of requiring a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure delivery across the cluster of sites. Given the close proximity of sites and the relationship with the Leicester Urban Area, a comprehensive assessment of cumulative and cross-boundary impacts is essential to ensure that mitigation measures are appropriately planned, phased, and funded. The site-specific requirement is stated by Policy DS05 1d which requires development proposals to demonstrate how the required infrastructure will be co-ordinated and funded through developer contributions and other legal agreements.

DS05 criterion 2 provides the strategic mechanism for achieving this co-ordination, which would take into account the cumulative impacts and the need for cross-boundary collaboration.

This approach is consistent with the supporting transport evidence bases, as they have identified these cluster development sites. The evidence recognises that cumulative impacts arise from a number of sites, and into the City of Leicester, and that mitigation would need to be agreed collaboratively. Policies SA01/SA04 identify the need for a co-ordinated approach for the delivery of development whilst Policy DS05 provides the framework through which the mitigation requirements are delivered.