

Introduction Policies

IN/1

Standards of Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 places an obligation on all district planning authorities to produce a district wide local plan. Indeed Section 54A of the 1990 Act stresses the importance of development plans in the decision making process. It states:

“Where, in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

1.2 The development plan for Harborough District comprises the Leicestershire Structure Plan and Leicestershire Minerals Local Plan prepared by Leicestershire County Council, and the Harborough District Local Plan prepared by Harborough District Council. The District Local Plan is required to generally conform with the proposals in the Structure Plan.

1.3 The functions of the Local Plan can be summarised as:

- i) to set out detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land;
- ii) to provide a detailed framework for development control;
- iii) to provide local communities with the opportunity to participate in the planning process;
- iv) to allocate land for specific purposes in general conformity with the Structure Plan.

1.4 The purpose of this Local Plan is to outline policies and proposals for the future development of Harborough District for the period 1991 to 2006. The implementation of the Plan will be monitored and reviews carried out during the period of the Plan. The Plan must make adequate provision for development, whilst taking account of the need to protect the natural and built environment. The scale of development for Harborough District is set out in the Structure Plan. The Local Plan provides the opportunity to consider how and where development should be accommodated.

1.5 The Local Plan is formally entitled the ‘Harborough District Local Plan’. It comprises the **Written Statement** and the **Proposals Maps** accompanying this document. The policies and proposals relating principally to land use matters are set out in block capitals in the text and cross referenced to specific sites on the **Proposals Maps** where appropriate. Other relevant policies of the District Council are written in lower case and underlined in the text. It is important that all the policies and proposals in the Plan and considered together.

Background

1.6 The Harborough District Local Plan provides statutory local plan coverage for the whole of Harborough District. Local plan coverage of Harborough District previously comprised a number of statutory local plans covering the major settlements, and non-statutory village plans and appraisals covering some of the larger villages. All of these have been superseded by the adoption of the Harborough District Local Plan.

1.7 The background to the preparation of the Plan is as follows:-

July 1993	Publication of Consultation Draft
February 1995	Publication of Deposit Draft
July-December 1996	Public Inquiry
December 1997	Receipt of Inspector's Report
January 1999	Publication of First Round of Modifications
May 2000	Publication of Second Round of Modifications
April 2001	Adoption

Plan Area

1.8 The Harborough District Local Plan relates to the whole of Harborough District which covers an area of 230 square miles. The District is largely a rural area with the towns of Market Harborough and Lutterworth providing the main shopping and business services. The 1991 census records the population of the District as 67,607 with 35% of the population residing in Market Harborough and Lutterworth. The District also includes the four larger villages of Broughton Astley, Fleckney, Great Glen and Kibworth with populations of over 3,000, as well as eighty smaller villages. By mid 1998 the population of the District had increased to 75,200.

National Policy Guidance

1.9 National and regional guidance produced by the Government must be taken into consideration in preparing development plans since this provides the framework within which development plans are prepared. National guidance is provided through Planning Policy Guidance Notes, Minerals Policy Guidance Notes and Departmental Circulars produced by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 Development Plans published in February 1992, provides details of the role and purpose of development plans.

Regional Planning Guidance

1.10 Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands was published by the Secretary of State for the Environment in March 1994, in response to the Regional Strategy submitted by the East Midlands Regional Planning Forum. The aim of the Guidance is to add a regional dimension to existing policies, to guide the pattern of development in the Region and to provide a framework for updating Structure Plans up to the year 2011. County Councils are required to have regard to this Guidance when formulating their Structure Plans.

Leicestershire Structure Plan

1.11 The Leicestershire Structure Plan is prepared by Leicestershire County Council. It was adopted in January 1994 and covers the period 1991-2006. The Structure Plan is based on four aims:

- “a) the strengthening and diversification of the local economy;
- b) the protection and enhancement of the local environment;
- c) providing for the planned housing requirements of the County;
- d) providing a viable choice of transportation.”

(para 2.2 Explanatory Memorandum Leicestershire Structure Plan 1991-2006, Leicestershire County Council).

1.12 The Structure Plan policies establish the scale and broad location of development for the District. Substantial requirements for new housing (6,500 dwellings) and new employment (195 hectares) are identified for Harborough District between 1991-2006. The Structure Plan policies guide major new development to locations within or adjoining urban areas and to locations which offer a realistic choice of transport along corridors between urban areas. The Structure Plan also includes a policy for the establishment of green wedges between Leicester/Scraftoft and Thurnby/Leicester/Oadby.

Other Plans and Policies

1.13 The District Council’s key objectives and strategies have informed the preparation of this Local Plan. Consideration has also been given to other corporate plans of the District Council such as the tourism and housing strategy statements. Plans produced by other bodies such as Leicestershire County Council’s Countryside 2000 and Transport Policies and Programmes, (now superseded by Local Transport Plans), as well as those of other agencies such as the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and utilities agencies have been taken into account. Regard has also been made to the Structure and Local Plans for the District, Borough and County Councils that adjoin Harborough District.

1.14 The District Council has produced supplementary planning guidance entitled ‘A Guide to the Design of Development’. The document constitutes supplementary planning guidance to the policies and proposals contained within the Local Plan and will be taken into account as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Planning and Sustainable Development

1.15 In September 1990 the Government published its Environment White Paper ‘This Common Inheritance’. Local authorities are encouraged to take account of environmental matters, in the widest sense, in preparing development plans. In particular there is an emphasis on sustainable development. This is defined in the World Commission on Development and the Environment (1986) as “that which satisfies the needs of the present generation without jeopardising the needs

of future generations.” The Government sees the preparation of development plans as contributing to the objective of ensuring that development and growth are sustainable.

- 1.16** The policies in this Local Plan should assist in promoting sustainable development. The District Council supports the Structure Plan concept of transport choice; locating development where a choice of transport can be made available, thereby reducing the reliance on the private car. The allocation of land in a controlled manner assists other agencies in the planning of their infrastructure provision and support services.
- 1.17** The Local Plan also aims to protect non-renewable resources, the best and most versatile agricultural land, the quality of ground water resources and the character and appearance of the Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside. Policies of restraint are proposed in areas where the quality of the built and natural landscape should be protected.

Strategy

- 1.18** This Local Plan has been prepared within the wider context of national, regional and Structure Plan guidance. Harborough District is recognised as an attractive place in which to live and work. The Structure Plan requires the provision of substantial areas of land for new housing and employment in the District.
- 1.19** The following principles have guided the choice of sites proposed for new development and the formulation of the policies to guide and control development.
- i) To maintain and enhance the quality of the environment in the District;
 - ii) To balance the scale and location of new development with the need to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment;
 - iii) To encourage the economic prosperity of the District;
 - iv) To make the best use of the scarce resources available to support development;
 - v) To encourage the provision of a range of housing to meet the needs of people in the District;
 - vi) To ensure that new development makes provision for the necessary infrastructure and supporting services;
 - vii) To locate and control new development to minimise the negative impacts of growth and maximise the benefits.
- 1.20** The strategy for the location of new development in this Local Plan contains the following elements:
- i) Concentration of development in and around the main towns and settlements in the District.

The aim of concentrating development in this way is to make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure and support services. Market Harborough and Lutterworth will

continue as the main centres of population and employment. Land has already been identified for the expansion of both of these settlements in previous Local Plans. Further major new development is proposed at Market Harborough, Broughton Astley, Kibworth and Great Glen.

- ii) Allocation of most new housing development, over and above existing commitments, in and around settlements where there is potential for it to be served by public transport and where it is located close to Leicester and Oadby and Wigston.

The Structure Plan requires provision of housing close to Leicester and Oadby and Wigston. In addition to the major new allocations at Kibworth and Great Glen, smaller scale new development is also proposed at Fleckney and Stoughton.

- iii) Restriction of development in the majority of villages to a scale compatible to the size and character of the village.

Limits to development around the larger villages are proposed in this Plan. The countryside will be protected from sporadic development that could be better located in or adjoining existing settlements.

- 1.21** The overall strategy of the Plan is translated into objectives which are set out at the beginning of each topic chapter (**chapters 2-9**). Whilst the chapters are largely self-contained there is a considerable inter-relationship between the objectives and policies in those chapters and in the settlement chapters that follow.

Standards of Development

- 1.22** The District Council expects applications for development submitted for consideration to be of a high standard. **Policy IN/1** sets out guidance for applicants and developers on achieving the required standard.

1.23 POLICY IN/1

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT WHICH ACHIEVES A GOOD STANDARD OF LAYOUT AND DESIGN, IS IN KEEPING WITH THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF ITS SURROUNDINGS AND WHERE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET, AS APPROPRIATE:-

- A) **BUILDING HEIGHTS, BUILDING SCALE AND STREET SCENES: NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NORMALLY RESPECT THE PARTICULAR FORM AND SCALE OF ADJACENT PROPERTIES AND THE STREET SCENE, AND SHOULD NOT DOMINATE THEM BY REASON OF HEIGHT, MASS OR SITE COVERAGE;**
- B) **DESIGN: PROPOSALS SHOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ESTABLISHED CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA IN TERMS OF SCALE, SPACE AROUND**

BUILDINGS, DENSITY, DESIGN, COLOUR AND TEXTURE OF MATERIALS;

- C) **BEST USE OF SITE: THE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES OF THE SITE SHOULD BE RESPECTED, INCLUDING VEGETATION, GRADIENT, ASPECT AND VIEWS IN AND OUT OF THE SITE;**
- D) **PRIVACY: NEW DWELLINGS AND EXISTING DWELLINGS ADJOINING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE PRIVACY FOR THE OCCUPANTS OF THE DWELLINGS;**
- E) **PRIVATE OPEN SPACE: ALL NEW DWELLINGS SHOULD NORMALLY BE PROVIDED WITH A USEABLE GARDEN OR OPEN AREA ADEQUATE FOR ITS OCCUPANTS;**
- F) **LANDSCAPE FEATURES: IMPORTANT FEATURES SUCH AS WALLS, TREES AND HEDGES SHOULD BE RETAINED WHEREVER POSSIBLE AND ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING SHOULD BE PROVIDED;**
- G) **TRAFFIC GENERATION: DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH WOULD LEAD TO AN UNSAFE HIGHWAY SITUATION OR ENVIRONMENTALLY UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF TRAFFIC;**
- H) **ACCESS: WHERE REQUIRED SATISFACTORY VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE SITE AND ADEQUATE PARKING WITHIN THE SITE SHOULD BE PROVIDED;**
- I) **CAR PARKING: ADEQUATE PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR VEHICLE PARKING OFF THE HIGHWAY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STANDARDS SET OUT IN APPENDIX A;**
- J) **PROTECTION OF AMENITIES: NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING USES;**
- K) **DRAINAGE: ADEQUATE PROVISION SHOULD BE MADE FOR THE DISPOSAL OF FOUL AND SURFACE WATER;**

- L) **ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** THE NEEDS OF DISABLED PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE LOCATION AND ARRANGEMENT OF BUILDINGS;
- M) **HABITATS:** THE RETENTION OF EXISTING AREAS OF ECOLOGICAL INTEREST WILL BE SOUGHT AND THE CREATION OF WILDLIFE HABITATS WILL BE ENCOURAGED;
- N) **DESIGNING OUT CRIME:** THE DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD SEEK TO MINIMISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CRIME.
- O) **ENERGY:** ENERGY CONSERVATION SHOULD BE PROMOTED THROUGH THE LOCATION, EXTERNAL LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT;
- P) **ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD MAKE ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR ACCESS BY PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS AND THOSE USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT