



Creating new communities and places: A new local plan for Harborough District

Executive Summary

March 2025

1. A new local plan for Harborough

Harborough today: Harborough is a district that is rich in heritage, with some 63 conservation areas and scenic landscapes and charming market towns and villages. The district has a distinct rural charm while still allowing easy access to urban amenities in Leicester and London. Most of our residents have high life expectancy and good health. The district boasts a strong economy with a vibrant retail scene, particularly in Market Harborough, which is known for unique independent shops. Road and rail connections enhance the district's appeal as a place to live and to do business.



Fig. 1: Aerial view of Moorbarns Lane play area, Lutterworth
Osborne Photography

Harborough in 2041: Our ambitions for the future development of the district are set out in our new local plan. We encourage you to read the full plan, but the essence of our vision for 2041 is to support new homes, workspaces, and community facilities while preserving Harborough's rural character and rich heritage. Development in Market Harborough and near Leicester and Oadby in particular will provide diverse housing, job opportunities, and healthcare, education and recreation services. Our unique market towns and expanded employment hubs in Lutterworth, Market Harborough and near Oadby will boost the economy, with Magna Park continuing as a key logistics hub. Working with residents, businesses and partners the plan aims to create sustainable communities.

A development road map: A local plan is our main tool to achieve this vision. Guided by national planning policy, a local plan is a land use strategy that covers everything from the location of housing and workspaces to green spaces and new school buildings. English law requires us to determine planning applications in line with the plan, whether an extension to a house or a new neighbourhood. A local plan allows us to manage the form that future development takes in ways that reflect what we value about our district.

Government planning requirements: The Government requires councils to plan to meet housing needs, as calculated by a standard method. Additionally, 'the duty to cooperate' —a legal requirement set by the government—obliges us to work with neighbouring councils and other stakeholders to consider how we can address housing needs collectively and, in some cases, unmet need from other areas.

2. Why a local plan matters

Delivering on our ambitions: Harborough is a successful place but still faces real challenges. High home prices make affordability tough for many, and growth has put pressure on roads, schools and healthcare services. Rural areas experience added barriers, with limited public transport making essential services harder to access. While our economy is strong, pockets of income inequality and a skills gap persist. Climate change brings challenges, and we now need to work harder to boost biodiversity. Our plan outlines our objectives for development (fig 2) and the planning policies to achieve it.

Developing in the right place: With a plan, we can ensure growth supports our objectives. We can guide large scale developments to locations that make sense - close to infrastructure and in a way that delivers benefits to communities and the natural environment. A plan helps us be clear with developers about our expectations allowing them to properly plan for high quality development and giving them certainty. It also helps infrastructure providers, the NHS and utilities companies to plan for new demand more effectively.

Without a plan, we lose our voice: Without an up-to-date local plan, Harborough could see development happen in ways that do not meet our objectives. Without a local plan, developers have more power to decide where and how building takes place. This could leave us vulnerable to speculative developments that do not align with our community's vision or which do not have the level of infrastructure or services to support them.






	<p>Deliver the housing needed: Provide housing that addresses the specific needs of different communities and age groups, including the provision of affordable, accessible and specialist housing.</p>
	<p>Create jobs and diversify the local economy: Support vibrant town centres that adapt to changing needs and retain and provide employment land and creating opportunities for business expansion, job creation, and economic growth.</p>
	<p>Tackle climate change and enhance the natural environment: Reduce carbon emissions and implement climate adaptation strategies. Improve the quality of the natural environment by reducing pollution, protecting, enhancing, and extending biodiversity, and creating green infrastructure.</p>
	<p>Retain and celebrate our heritage and rural character: Thoughtfully accommodate development to preserve and enhance our rural landscape, built heritage and the vitality of rural communities.</p>
	<p>Enable supporting infrastructure: Work with partners to deliver infrastructure (including schools, health, and transport), supporting healthier communities through active and sustainable travel, expanding access to open spaces, and expanding and enhancing community facilities.</p>

Fig.2: Local Plan Objectives

3. Why we want to publish and progress our plan now

Changes to the planning system: National planning rules are being updated. A new system for local plans is expected to be introduced in 2025, which could delay our plan-making. If we do not progress our plan now, we will need to wait for this new system and we expose ourselves to the risks of being without a local plan for at least another three years. By acting now, we take control of ensuring that growth happens in ways and places that work for Harborough.

Protecting our district from unplanned housing growth: Our new local plan is expected to support the delivery of 657 homes per year between 2020 and 2036, and 534 homes per year between 2036 and 2041. This is compared to 557 homes a year in our 2019 local plan. The government is changing their standard method of calculating housing need. Under the procedures they have set out, if we fail to publish our Local Plan by mid-March 2025 this change will increase the number of homes we have to plan for to 723 homes a year (an increase of approx. 2,000 homes to 2041). Many of our neighbouring councils will also see increases.

Maintaining local control: The government has set an expectation for full national coverage of up-to-date local plans. Where authorities do not progress their own local plan, the government has been clear that it may step in and take over the process. Acting now, and progressing our plan means we keep control of Harborough District's future, shaped by local people and local priorities.

Shaping Harborough together: We are proud to have one of the highest numbers of Neighbourhood Plans in the country, demonstrating the strong commitment of our communities to actively participate in shaping the development of their areas. The local plan will set the parameters for future neighbourhood plans as these must align with strategic policies for development. This reinforces the need to make sure we have an up-to-date plan in place – and one which is prepared locally with our valued parish councils and community groups.

4. Where growth will be and how it benefits us

Meeting the needs of our business and residents: Our local plan focuses development in areas with higher levels of access to existing public transport, community facilities and healthcare – or where the necessary improvements and expansions can be most efficiently delivered. The plan makes provision for:

- 14,839 new homes which includes a buffer in case sites allocated in the plan do not come as expected, with 40% affordable homes as part of all but the smallest developments
- 60 hectares of workspaces for businesses to help them expand or relocate to Harborough
- A new district centre near Oadby, with new shops and services

Strategic development locations: The areas we have identified for larger scale - strategic housing or mixed-use development - include:

- Land south of Gartree Road (near Oadby)
- Scraptoft, Bushby and Thurnby
- North Market Harborough

Modest growth in larger villages: Alongside this, the plan allows for modest growth in selected larger and medium-sized villages where sufficient services and amenities for local communities can be provided. The scale of this development is limited to reflect the level of service provision as well as to maintain their distinct character compared to areas around Market Harborough and the Leicester, Oadby and Wigston urban areas.

Gypsy and traveller accommodation: The plan also addresses national policy requirements for specialist accommodation, including for Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Show-People so we will safeguard existing authorised sites and designated new sites to meet the needs of these communities.

Supporting our local economy: The plan is not just about housing. It embeds a strategy to make Harborough a vibrant hub for jobs and businesses. Magna Park is identified as a Strategic Distribution Employment Area (as with our previous plan). Its strategic road connections make it the only site in the district that can meet demands for large scale distribution. We are focused on diversifying Harborough's economy beyond logistics too. By providing additional land for businesses near Oadby and north Market Harborough and strengthening our retail and leisure centres, we want to create the conditions for a more balanced economy with a wider range of job opportunities for people across the district.

Development sites: Our plan identifies designated areas for new development, called site allocations (see pages 6 & 7). The tables on these pages give a snapshot of the type and scale of development planned for each of these sites. The site allocation policies in the plan include detailed guidelines for design that respect local heritage and landscape features, like ridge and furrow, and requirements for measures to address important issues such as flood risk and surface water run-off in areas that need it. These site allocations also identify when we need specialist homes such as retirement housing, extra care, or residential care housing and pitches for gypsy and traveller communities.

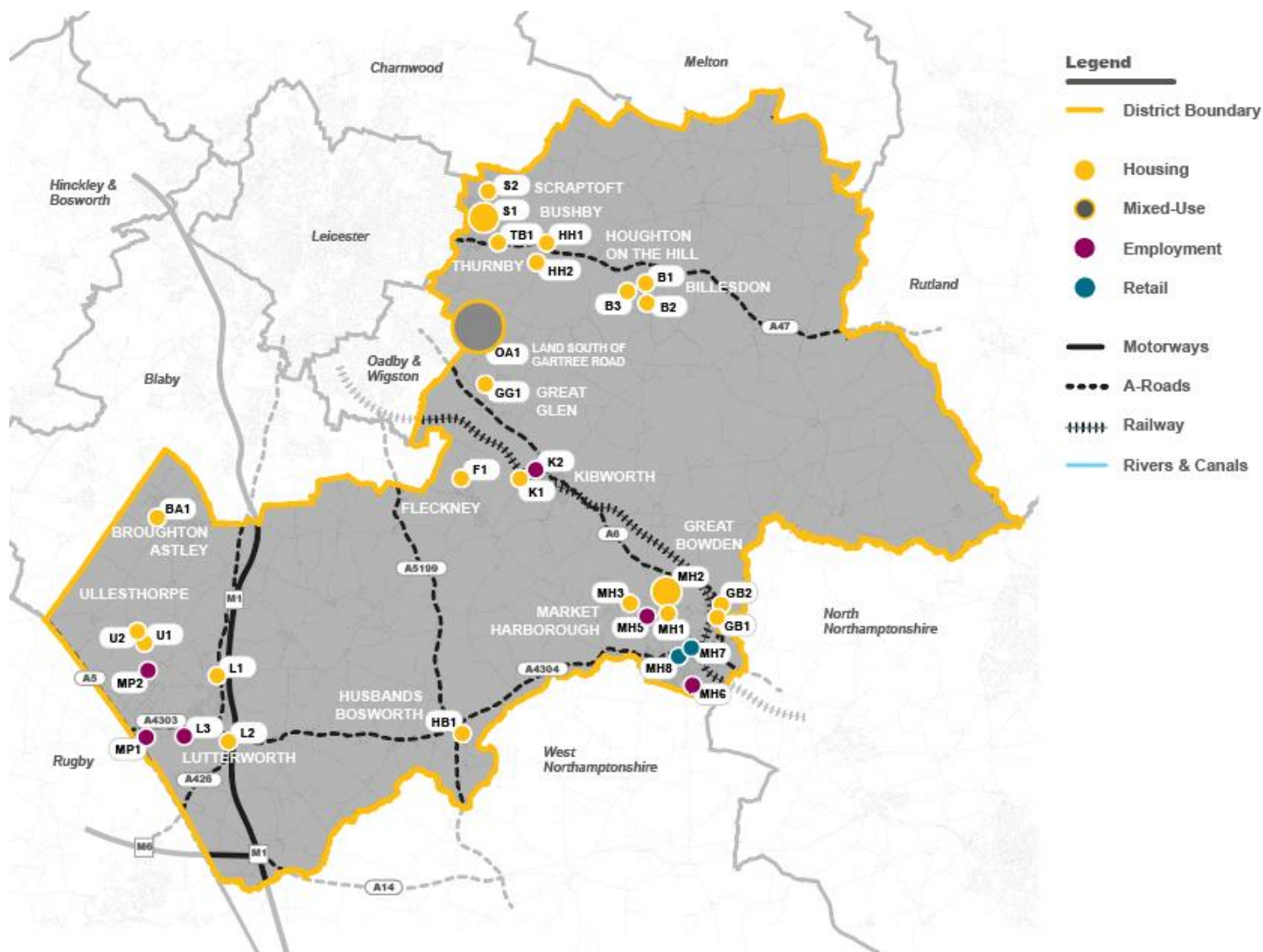


Fig. 3: Local Plan Site Allocations Diagram
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Key development areas (Site Allocations)

Site Ref	Site Name	Required Use	Numbers of New Homes	Employment Land Hectares or Retail floorspace <small>A hectare is just under 1 and a half standard football pitches</small>
Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Development Area (Leicester Urban Area)				
OA1	Land south of Gartree Road and east of Oadby	Strategic Development Area: Mixed use new neighbourhood	3,150 within Harborough (1,200 homes by 2041) and 850 homes within Oadby and Wigston District	5 Ha
Scraptoft, Thurnby and Bushby (Leicester Urban Area)				
TB1	Land north of A47 and east of Zouche Way	Housing	125	
S1	Scraptoft East, Land between Scraptoft and Bushby	Housing	950	
S2	Land East of Beeby Road	Housing	175	
Market Harborough (Market Town)				
MH1	Land east of Leicester Road and south of Grand Union canal	Housing	250	
MH2	East of Market Harborough Road	Housing	850	
MH3	Land south of Gallow Field Road	Housing, Employment	600	
MH5	Land OS3070, Leicester Road	Employment		0.6
MH6	Compass Point Business Park	Employment		4.3
MH7	St Marys Road	Retail & Leisure		3,000 sq.m gross
MH8	Commons Car Park	Retail		1,000 sq.m gross
Lutterworth (Market Town)				
L1	Land off Leicester Road	Housing	230	
L2	Land at M1 Junction 20/Swinford Road	Housing	90	
L3	Land south of Lutterworth Road / Coventry Road	Employment		3.4
Broughton Astley (Large Village)				
BA1	Land off Frolesworth Road	Housing	475	
Fleckney (Large Village)				
F1	Land north of Kilby Road and land west of Longgrey	Housing	150	

Site Ref	Site Name	Required Use	Numbers of New Homes	Employment Land Hectares or Retail floorspace A hectare is just under 1 and a half standard football pitches
Great Glen (Large Village)				
GG1	Land north of London Road and east of Leicester Grammar School	Housing	400	
Kibworth (Large Village)				
K1	Land west of Warwick Road and south of Priory Business Park	Housing	475	
K2	Land south and west of Priory Business Park	Employment		3.1
Billesdon (Medium Village)				
B1	Land at Gaulby Road	Housing	48	
B2	Billesdon Depot south of Gaulby Road	Housing	10	
B3	Former Lorry Park Gaulby Road	Housing	5	
Great Bowden (Medium Village)				
GB1	Land north of Dingley Road	Housing	15	
GB2	Land off Dingley Road and Nether Green	Housing	85	
Houghton on the Hill (Medium Village)				
HH1	Land north of Uppingham Road	Housing	80	
HH2	Land north of Stretton Lane	Housing	24	
Husbands Bosworth (Medium Village)				
HB1	Land east of Welford Road	Housing	105	
Ullesthorpe (Medium Village)				
U1	Land south of Ashby Road	Housing	30	
U2	Land north of Ashby Road	Housing	50	
Magna Park (Strategic Warehousing)				
MP1	Land south of George House, Coventry Road	Strategic Warehousing (B8)		15.8
MP2	Land at Mere Lane, Magna Park	Strategic Warehousing (B8)		122

Benefits for our communities

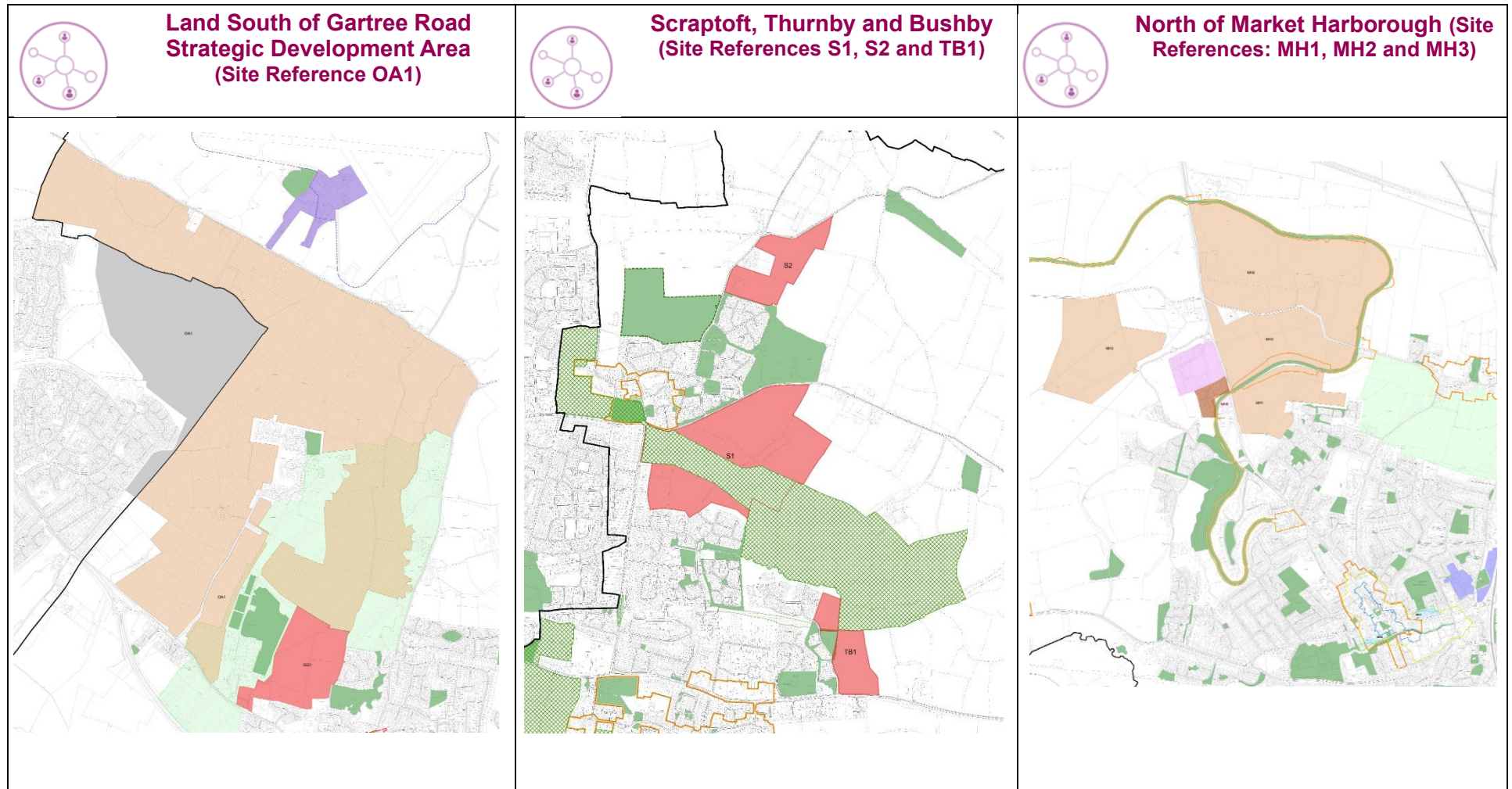





Fig 4

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 <p>Land South of Gartree Road Strategic Development Area (Site Reference OA1)</p>	 <p>Scraptoft, Thurnby and Bushby (Site References S1, S2 and TB1)</p>	 <p>North of Market Harborough (Site References: MH1, MH2 and MH3)</p>
<p>A new residential-led mixed use neighbourhood, straddling Harborough District and Oadby and Wigston Borough, and including 5 hectares of employment land, 1,200 new homes in the plan period, providing for significant infrastructure investment near to Leicester.</p> <p>Key benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shops and leisure: A vibrant new hub (Local Centre) with shops, food outlets, and a community hall will serve as a social and service hub. • Healthcare: A new health centre or expanded and accessible GP practice. • Education: New primary school provision and new secondary places to serve families in the area either by expanding an existing school or creating a new one. • Parks and leisure: High quality new sports places include sports pitches, outdoor recreational spaces, for relaxation and leisure activities. • Sustainable transport: A frequent (minimum 15-minute) zero carbon bus service to the wider public transport network, along with safe cycling and walking routes, will connect residents to key facilities and neighbouring areas. • Area of Separation: Provision of Area of Separation to maintain distinct identity of Great Glen. 	<p>A cluster of developments – enabling 1,250 homes - are expected across this area with high accessibility to Leicester. Designed to minimise impacts on countryside and wider landscape, these developments will be integrated with existing villages in this part of the district.</p> <p>Key benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: Provision of a new 2-form entry primary school with early years facilities to support growing families. • Parks and Leisure: Retaining part of the Green Wedge as designated in the current Local Plan, maintaining green spaces for leisure. • Sustainable Transport: Traffic impact assessments will address local connections and explore ways to reduce congestion. • Green Wedge: Retention and preservation of the Green Wedge. 	<p>A northward extension of Market Harborough will bring 1,700 new homes (1,350 estimated during the plan period) well positioned to take advantage of the town's wide range of employment opportunities, services and facilities, including the district's only railway station. With easy access to the canal and local parks, this development will create a vibrant, connected community.</p> <p>Key benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community halls: Spaces including community halls and additional amenities for gatherings and activities. • Education: A new primary school, a secondary school, and early years provision. • Parks and leisure: Designated green spaces and restrictions on development preventing coalescence with Great Bowden to maintain its distinctiveness and the countryside settling. • Agriculture: Relocation of the agricultural show ground. • Cemetery provision: Provision of much needed land for burials.

Creating new, vibrant communities and places

Creating places for people: Delivering benefits for our communities is a golden thread throughout the plan. The larger, strategic sites will bring significant investments, including new parks and community facilities such as schools. However, it is not just the largest sites that will make a positive difference. Each planned development, across all areas, is designed to bring valuable benefits to both new and existing residents. Developments in larger villages with strong services and sustainable infrastructure will enhance life for everyone, creating a positive impact for both businesses and the community as a whole (see Figure 5).

Keeping us moving: We have carefully considered the impact of transport and congestion in our plan. We understand that with more people living and working in Harborough, there will be more cars on the road, but we are committed to reducing pressure on the transport network. Our strategy is about reducing the need to travel to services and making it easier for people to get around encouraging sustainable travel, such as walking, cycling, and public transport, without relying on cars. We have requirements in place to make sure all larger developments explore ways to manage demand, ensuring that our roads and services can cope with the growing population. This approach will help create a healthier, more sustainable, accessible, and less congested Harborough District.

Lifting design standards: The plan establishes policies for high-quality, environmentally conscious developments. We allow room for design innovation that respect Harborough's existing architectural palette, historic buildings and landscape character. Our building standards drive environmental performance and are part of our response to the threat of climate change.



K1	Land west of Warwick Road and south of Priory Business Park, Kibworth		Contributions to expanding primary and secondary schools where places needed
HH2	Land north of Stretton Lane, Houghton on the Hill		A focus on delivering 100% of homes that help people – especially young families - find a home they can afford

Fig 5 Selected community benefits

Considerate growth: Development in our district is a certainty. There is a national mandate for more house building, and we have significant development needs locally, such as for affordable homes. Our plan ensures that growth will happen thoughtfully, preserving what makes Harborough such a special place to live. **Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner said:** *“Our country is under new management and a new era for economic growth will be built on secure foundations. The Chancellor and I will work in lockstep to kickstart the economy, unleashing housebuilding and powering local growth. Change starts now. We will unblock the bottlenecks and drive forward a transformational package to build the homes people need.”*

4 Enjoying our countryside

Keeping our countryside character: This plan is not about filling the countryside with concrete. Far from it. Green wedges – areas of open land designed to separate towns and villages, helping them maintain their distinct identities and to provide leisure opportunities – remain a feature of the plan. A new ‘Area of Separation’ is planned near Great Glen to stop development and preserve the village's distinctiveness, with another near Magna Park. We will also maintain separation between Great Bowden and the north of Market Harborough. These planning policies will help sustain the countryside feel. The plan also recognises the importance of agriculture to the Harborough District – and includes policies to help these businesses to operate and to remain a thriving part of Harborough’s economy.

Greener spaces, connected places: A big part of the local plan strategy is to provide new and improved natural spaces that reinforce and retain the rural character of the Harborough District. From rewilding projects at Wistow Park to a new country park in Lutterworth and an expanded network of green spaces near Oadby. These green spaces will be linked to one another, creating a network of places for residents to enjoy – places to walk and cycle, explore, and appreciate nature. The plan expects all developments of ten or more homes to provide open space as standard.



Fig 6: Photograph of Lutterworth Country Park, © Osborne Photography

Places to enjoy: Beyond homes and jobs, the plan is also about creating sustainable communities and places for residents to not just live in, but to really enjoy. We want to keep and create places to have fun! New leisure facilities in the new site near Oadby as well as throughout the district will provide more opportunities for recreation and entertainment, making it easier for people to find – and travel sustainably to – something fun to do in their own area. This plan is not just about accommodating growth; it's about enriching life in Harborough, protecting its heritage and celebrating all it has to offer.

5 Listening to our communities

Tailoring the spatial strategy to the district: During the initial 'Issues and Options' consultation in early in 2024, we heard what matters most – protecting green spaces, reducing pressure on local services and preserving the character of villages. We have used your feedback to define the spatial development strategy. This focuses growth where it can be best supported by new infrastructure and services, such as public transport and schools to meet the needs of new residents as well as serve existing communities.

Strategies that did not fit: As we planned, we considered and tested different approaches. This included:

- **Focusing the majority of new development in Market Harborough and Lutterworth:** While these areas have higher access to service and amenities, we heard your concerns about the scale of planned growth in Lutterworth following the last plan. Given this and its smaller size, Lutterworth is not a major focus for growth under this plan.
- **Expanding all towns and villages equally ('proportional growth'):** This approach seems fairer on the surface but risked a mismatch with service provision – infrastructure is needed at the right place and at the right time for communities to be sustainable.
- **Building a single large new town:** The level of infrastructure that would be required is uncertain, thereby risking the

delivery of new homes. Therefore, a new town is not proposed.

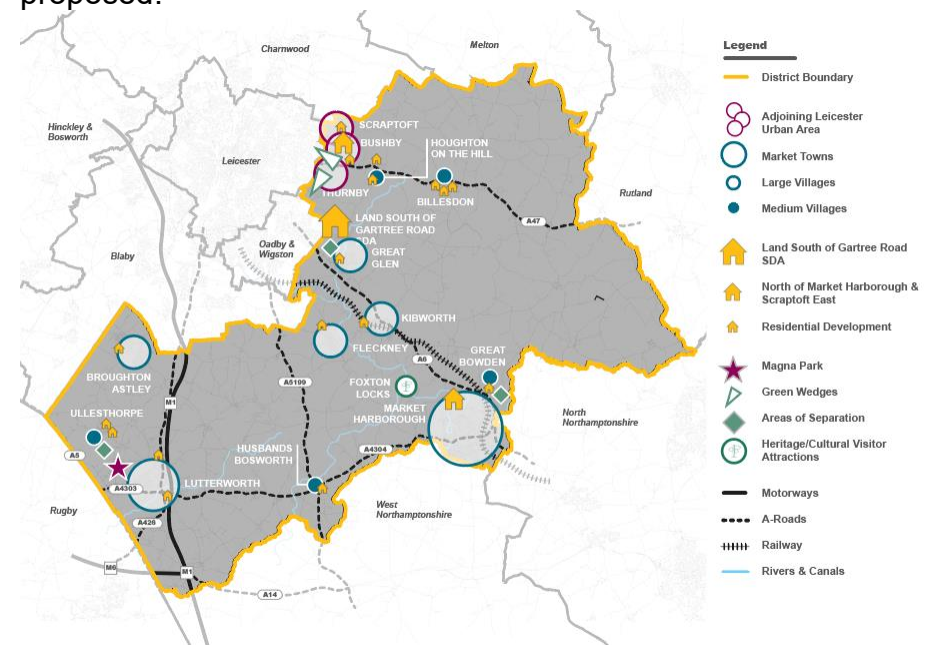


Fig 7: A 'key diagram' illustrating the spatial strategy in our plan
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6 What's next for Harborough's local plan

Where we are now: The plan is at the Regulation 19 stage, named for the regulations that guide this stage of plan-making. The plan was approved at Council in March 2025 and has now been published for comments between 9am on Monday 10 March and 9am on Tuesday 6 May 2025. No comments will be accepted outside of this period so please try and reply within the consultation period and well ahead of the final deadline

The next stage of plan making: We will submit the plan in Autumn 2025, and your comments and the evidence we have used to prepare the plan to the Planning Inspectorate will also be submitted. A Planning Inspector will be appointed to test the local plan to make sure it is 'sound' and aligns with national policies, is positive development, and is justified and deliverable (explained in the: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2, pages 11 to 12). You can find out more about independent examinations and the meetings, known as hearings, that are part of this in this series video: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwvNeOAdprpFJ5JT1B6qJpwbOhKMVzl7s>.

Your chance to have a say: We think the plan is the right approach. However, we know how important this is to you, and we want the best outcomes for our communities, so we are really interested in your thoughts and feedback.

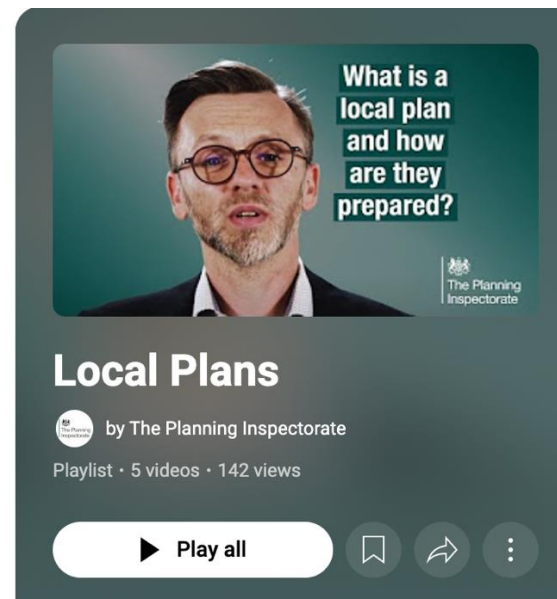


Fig. 8: Image of Local Plans,' by the Planning Inspectorate You Tube Video Collection

The independent examination timetable is set by the Planning Inspector, but we expect it to start in early 2026 with hearings (public meetings) taking place in mid-2026. Our target date for adoption of the plan is the end of 2026.

7 Share your views with us

We are currently running a consultation on the new local plan for Harborough District until 9am on 6 May 2025.

Further information

You are very welcome to join us at our drop in events to find out more about what the plan means for your town or village or for your business.

If you have specific questions about any aspect of the plan (or you would potentially like to take part in the independent examination itself) or you would like to express your support for the plan, we can answer questions and explain how you can share your feedback.

Date	Venue
Wednesday 19 March 4pm-7pm	Scraptoft - Community Hub (Lounge), Malsbury Avenue, Leicestershire LE7 9FQ
Tuesday 25 March 3pm-7pm	Lutterworth – The Wycliffe Rooms (Community Room), LE17 4ED

Tuesday 1 April 3pm-7pm	Great Glen - Village Hall, Main Street LE8 9GG
Wednesday 2 April 2pm-7pm	Market Harborough - Council Chamber, Harborough District Council, The Symington Building, Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough LE16 7AG
Monday 7 April 4pm-8pm	Broughton Astley - Broughton Astley Village Hall (Alan Talbot Room), Station Road LE9 6PT
Wednesday 9 April 3pm -7pm	Kibworth – The Old Grammar School (Main Hall), School Road LE8 0JE

Have your say on the plan: You can read the full plan and share your feedback on our website at:
www.harborough.gov.uk/localplan.

Find out more: Please contact:
planningpolicy@harborough.gov.uk or call: 01858 821160 for further information.