



**Submission Harbours District Local Plan  
2020-2041  
Strategic Warehousing Topic Paper**

Date: March 2026

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## **1. Purpose and Structure**

- 1.1 Topic Papers are an important source of information helping to outline and explain how policies in the Proposed Submission version of the Harborough District Local Plan 2020-2041 (Local Plan) have been prepared. For each topic the papers tell the 'end to end' story of how the policies have evolved, setting out the important milestones along the way.
- 1.2 The intention is to signpost rather than to duplicate the detailed technical evidence which is already available in the evidence base and not to repeat the Explanation given under each policy in the Local Plan itself. The main aim is to assist the Inspector carrying out the examination into the Local Plan, as well as others taking part in the Examination Hearing. It is assumed that these parties are familiar with the National Planning Framework and the national Planning Practice Guidance, so these are not repeated.
- 1.3 The structure follows the following format:
- Section 2: Topic and Policies
  - Section 3: Main Issues
  - Section 4: Strategic and Local Context
  - Section 5: Key Evidence Studies
  - Section 6: Chronological of Harborough's Approach to Strategic Warehousing
  - Section 7: Evidence and Consultations
  - Section 8: Strategy and Policy for Strategic Warehousing
  - Section 9: New Evidence
  - Section 10: Concluding Remarks

## **2. The Topic and Policies**

- 2.1 This Topic Paper addresses strategic warehousing and covers the formulation and justification for the following policies:
- DS02 (Parts 7 to 9) Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy (Strategic Distribution: Use Class B8 in units of more than 9,000sqm)
  - SA01 Site Allocations: MP1 Land South of George House, Coventry Road
  - SA01 Site Allocations: MP2 Land at Mere Lane, Magna Park

## **3. The Main Issues**

- 3.1 The key issues addressed include:
- Is the need for strategic warehouses based on robust evidence.
  - Is the scale of land provision for strategic warehouses in Harborough district to 2041 sound
  - Is the approach to focus future growth at Magna Park reasonable.
  - Are proposed allocations MP1 and MP2 justified by the evidence.

- Can the impact of MP1 and MP2 be appropriately mitigated, particularly the cumulative effect on the Strategic Road Network (SRN), local highway network and effects on the environment.

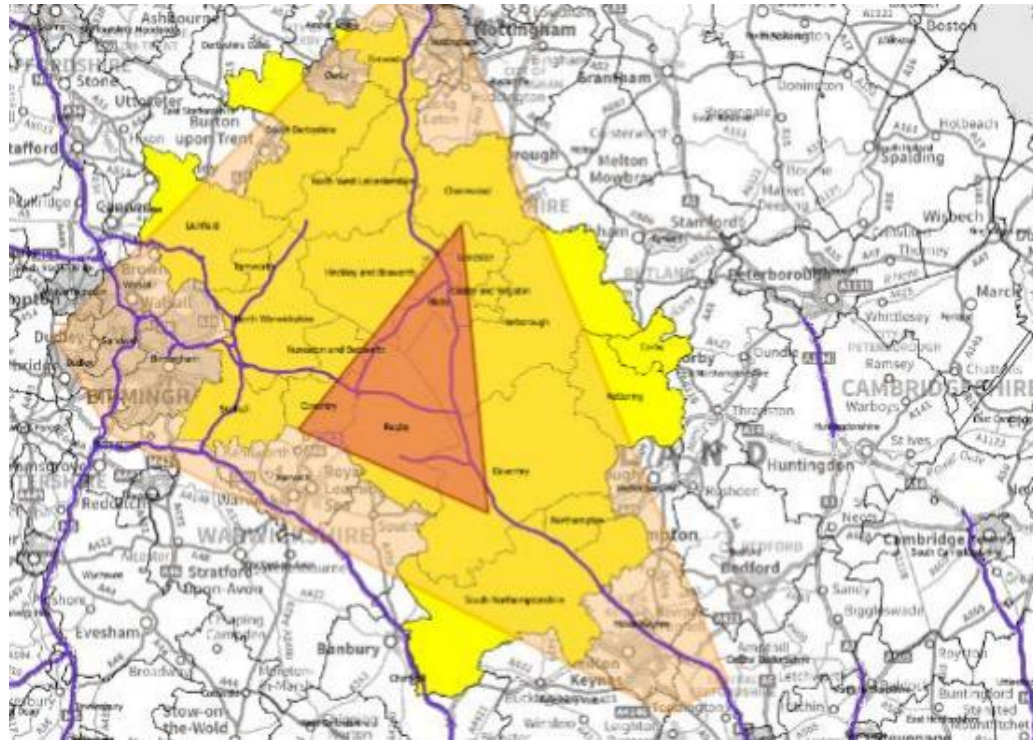
3.2 Matters related to Travelling Showpeople and Area of Separation, relevant to proposed allocation MP2, are dealt with in the Housing Mix and Type Topic Paper (Section 7) and the Green Wedge, Areas of Separation and Landscape Topic Paper (Section 6 Para 6.30-6.32).

#### **4. Strategic and Local Context**

4.1 The logistics industry plays a critical role in enabling an efficient, sustainable and effective supply of goods for consumers and businesses and is important to the national and regional economy. The sector has specific locational requirements with markets that often extend both across and beyond traditional administrative boundaries. The NPPF para 87 requires consideration of these specific requirements when formulating policies. The PPG encourages collaboration amongst policy making authorities to identify the scale of need across relevant market areas and meet need in appropriate locations.

4.2 The Leicester and Leicestershire Functional Economic Market Area (L&L FEMA), which includes Harborough district, lies within the Golden Triangle so called for its logistical advantages. Geographically the Golden Triangle is the area bounded by the M1, M6 and M69 motorways, albeit others consider it to be a larger area. The inner and outer golden triangles and the most interrelated strategic warehousing market for the county of Leicestershire, which includes 21 authorities, are highlighted in Figure 1.

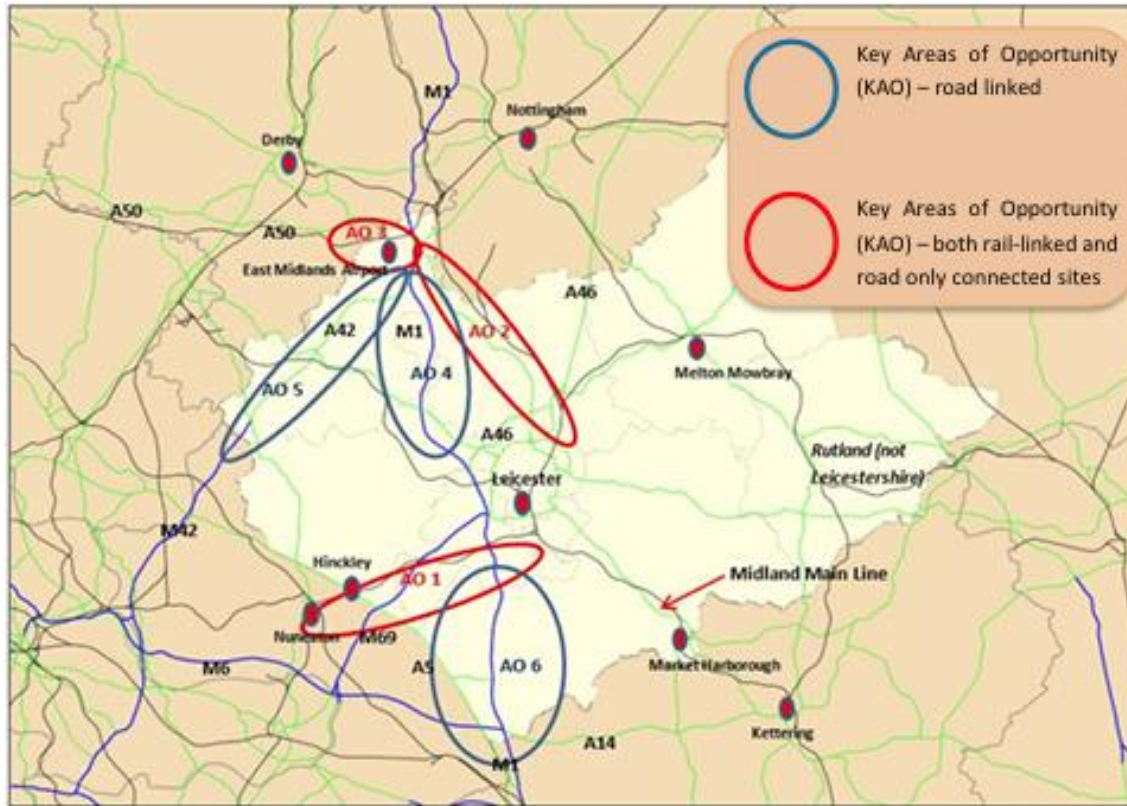
Figure 1: Wider 'Golden Triangle' Study Area



Source: Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and Change (2021), GL Hearn.

4.3 The sector is identified as a strategic cross-boundary matter for the L&L FEMA and neighbouring non-Leicestershire authorities as detailed in the Harborough Duty to Cooperate (Effective Co-operation) Statement of Compliance (S-NLP9). Existing strategic warehousing in L&L is generally located close to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) particularly along the M1 corridor, around East Midlands Gateway Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) and at Magna Park in Harborough district. Historically, six key Areas of Opportunity (AO) for new strategic warehousing have been identified within L&L, meeting the size, scale, location and transport connectivity required by the market, see Figure 2. AO6 (M1 Corridor south of Leicester) affects Harborough district. AO6 lacks rail connectivity (network and railhead) and has no potential for rail-served strategic warehousing.

Figure 2: Key Areas of Opportunity

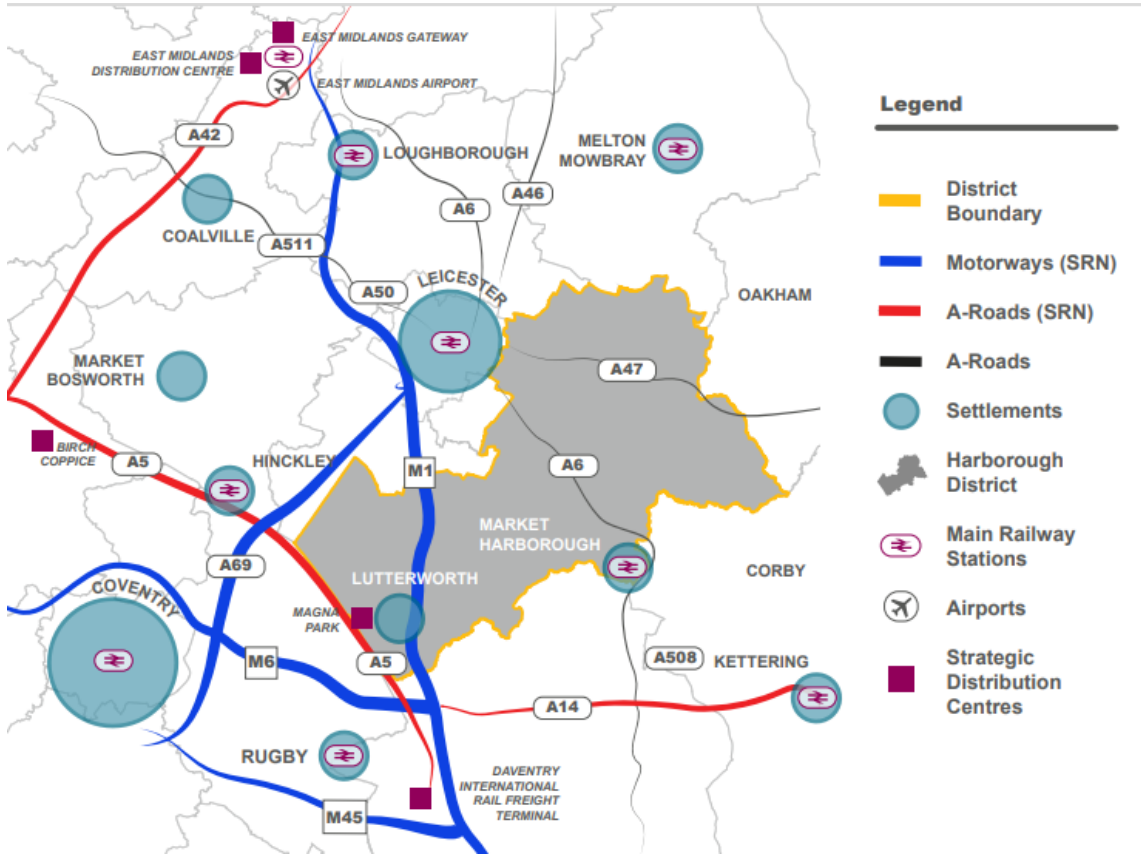


NB: Boundaries of key areas are not definitive and are shown for indicative purposes only

Source: Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and Change

4.4 Access to the SRN is widely accepted as key for the strategic warehouse sector. Direct access onto the SRN in Harborough is limited to M1 J20 and a short stretch of the A5 along the district boundary, both of which are in a small geographical area in the southwestern corner of the district see Figure 3. Magna Park near Lutterworth, reportedly Europe's largest dedicated logistics park with over 1.3million sqm of warehouse space across 50 buildings, is located on the A5 close to M1 J20 in this western part of the district. First established in the late 1980's, the site has since expanded in several phases. The most recent extensions, Magna Park South (MPS) completed in 2024 and Magna Park North (MPN) currently under construction, have delivered an additional 700,000sqm of floorspace in accordance with Policy BE2 of the adopted Harborough Local Plan.

Figure 3: Strategic Road Network -Context



4.5 Magna Park is a focus for economic activity in the district and provides over 12,000 jobs. The site is close to the SRN and accessible by sustainable modes of travel. As well as strategic warehouses, the site contains an extensive country park and the Centre for Logistics, Education and Research (CLEAR), a dedicated onsite training hub. A Truck Park and Innovation Centre are planned alongside the delivery of the MPN extension.

## 5. Key Evidence Studies

5.1 There is a comprehensive evidence base sitting behind the Local Plan. All the documents are listed and are available in the examination library: [Examination Library](#)

5.2 The key evidence documents relevant to this topic are:

[EMP-NLP 1](#) Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and change (amended March 2022)<sup>1</sup>

[SCG-NLP 1](#) Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground relating to Strategic Warehousing & Logistics Need (Sept 2021)

<sup>1</sup> Published April 2021, re-published March 2022 following minor amendment

- [EMP-NLP 4](#) Strategic B8 Needs Sensitivity Study (December 2024)  
[LAN-NLP 3](#) Area of Separation Study (November 2024)  
[EMP-NLP 6](#) Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment (October 2025)  
[SCG-NLP 23](#) Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground relating to Strategic Warehousing & Logistics Need (Mar 2026)

## **6. Chronological summary of Harborough’s approach to strategic warehousing**

### **Pre-Regulation 18**

- 6.1 The approach to strategic warehousing in Harborough’s proposed submission Local Plan is based on long-term joint working across the L&L FEMA. Future need identified by [EMP-NLP 1](#). Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and Change led to the agreement of the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground relating to Strategic Warehousing & Logistics Need (Sept 2021 [SCG-NLP 1](#)). The latter sets out L&L need up to 2041 and partners’ commitment to cooperate to ensure the needs of the sector are appropriately planned for, including agreeing the distribution (or apportionment) of strategic warehousing across L&L.
- 6.2 Together this evidence and this statement provided the context for the districts approach at the Regulation 18 Issues and Options ([PRE-NLP 2](#)) stage in early 2024. At that time, joint work on the agreed next steps had not progressed sufficiently to apportion the L&L need.
- 6.3 Based on the strategic and local circumstances described in section 4, the Regulation 18 consultation set out the council’s intent to plan; for road-served strategic warehouses, at a scale to reflect need apportioned to Harborough, and focused in the M1 corridor south of Leicester (AO6). The consultation posed questions about the evidence base and the proposed location of future growth.

### **Post Regulation 18 / Pre Regulation 19**

- 6.4 Feedback from the Regulation 18 consultation (summarised in Section 7 below) queried the appropriateness of the 2021 evidence, it being considered out of date by some, and lack of an apportionment figure for Harborough district. This resulted in HDC commissioning new evidence in spring 2025 to support the development of our strategy and policy for strategic warehousing.
- 6.5 The purpose of [EMP-NLP 4](#) Strategic B8 Needs Sensitivity Study (December 2024) was to provide an updated interim assessment of need across L&L and consider what proportion of this might be planned for in Harborough. The study was not intended to constrain or pre-determine the joint L&L apportionment

work, already underway at the time, only to expedite an interim apportionment figure for Harborough as a basis to progress plan-making.

- 6.6 The Strategic B8 Needs Sensitivity Study (December 2024) was independently commissioned by HDC, with the awareness of our L&L partners. Its draft findings on the need for strategic warehousing in L&L indicated a substantial uplift on the earlier 2021 study, from c 2.5million to c.3.8 – 5.1 million sqm. In June 2024 this prompted dialogue with duty to co-operate partners, about the structural shift within the sector post the COVID-19 pandemic and BREXIT and a 'shifting of goalposts' on the scale of future need since the 2021 study. As a result of these discussions the L&L authorities agreed to jointly request a comprehensive needs update to inform the apportionment, (also extended from 2041 to 2046, to cover the breadth of L&L local plan periods) to enable advice on the apportionment of need, and any associated SoCG, to be based on the updated need position for the period 2023-2046.
- 6.7 Whilst the L&L joint work was underway [EMP-NLP 4](#) provided the latest evidence (albeit interim) of potential need and the requirement for Harborough to accommodate. Consequently, its recommendation for Harborough to plan for 100-140ha of additional land for strategic warehousing to 2041 informed the basis of the approach and policy set out in the Proposed Submission Draft Harborough Local Plan (March 2025) at Regulation 19.
- 6.8 Given the uplift in need and recommendation to plan for 100-140ha of additional land for strategic warehousing in Harborough district (with potential to accommodate c. 350,000 – 490,000sqm<sup>2</sup>) the Strategic B8 Needs Sensitivity Study also looked at appropriate locations and assessed candidate sites, within the district, to meet the needs of the sector (see [EMP-NLP 4](#), Appendix). EMP-NLP3, alongside the wider local plan evidence base, was relied upon to select sites and formulate policy for those proposed for allocation in the draft local plan (March 2025). In total, the plan allocates 137.8ha of land for strategic warehousing to deliver 340,000sqm of floorspace in the period to 2041, in addition to commitments at 1/4/23 of 265,300sqm.

### **Post Regulation 19**

- 6.9 Since the council published its Draft Local Plan (March 2025) the jointly commissioned [EMP-NLP 6](#) Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment (October 2025) study has been completed. It updates gross need for L&L for the period 2023-2046 to 5.2 million sqm and identifies an additional floorspace requirement across L&L of 3,969,400 sqm.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on a plot ratio of 0.35 (3,500sqm per Ha) as per EMP-NLP1

- 6.10 Of the additional floorspace requirement for L&L the study apportioned 823,400sqm to broad locations within Area of Opportunity 6 (AO6) (see Figure 6.6 of [EMP-NLP 6](#)), effectively Harborough district, for the period 2023-2046. Pro-rating this for the Harborough plan period (2023-2041) indicates that the local plan should provide for an additional 644,400sqm of strategic warehousing. Taking account of completions in 2023/24 and commitments at 1/4/24, this leaves a residual to plan for of 387,400sqm to 2041, within the range forecast by EMP-NLP3 Harborough's interim evidence on which the draft Local Plan is based.
- 6.11 The allocations proposed in the draft Local Plan, MP1 and MP2 have capacity to deliver a total of 340,000sqm of additional floorspace. Therefore, through completions, commitments and proposed allocations (collectively totaling 597,000 sqm) supply is sufficient to meet the need apportioned to Harborough district until mid-2039, approximately 16.5yrs of the remaining 18 years of the plan period. Extra supply from April 2024 (see para 9.9) and potential extra capacity on proposed allocations MP1 and MP2 (see para 7.20), for consideration as part of the examination, have the potential to provide up to 82,000sqm of supply flexibility and would result in the pro-rata apportioned need being met in full in the district.

*Table 1: Delivering the AO6 Apportionment in Harborough District*

Requirement	Floorspace (sqm)
Apportionment to Harborough / AO6 (2023-2046)	823,400
<b>Pro-rated Apportionment to Harborough / AO6 for Harborough LP Period (2023-2041)</b>	<b>644,400</b>
Harborough Completions 2023/24 & Commitments on 1/4/24	257,000
Proposed allocations (MP1 & MP2)	340,000
Extra Supply from Apr 2024	52,000
<b>Residual to 2041</b>	<b>-4,600</b>
Potential Extra Capacity (MP1 & MP2)	30,000

- 6.12 An updated Statement of Common Ground ([SCG-NLP 23](#)) has been prepared by L&L authorities to reflect the latest 2025 study. It covers collaboration under the Duty to Cooperate and joint working, sets out agreement on the L&L strategic warehousing floorspace need to 2046, and the apportionment of additional floorspace required to district / boroughs to 2046. The statement, which was approved by the L&L Strategic Planning Group in February 2026, is in the process of being signed by authorities and confirms partners' ongoing commitment to cooperate on strategic warehousing.
- 6.13 Sections 7-9 below provide further information on the key evidence documents and staging points throughout the development of the approach to strategic warehousing and the formulation of related policies.

## 7. Evidence and Consultations

7.1 The need for strategic warehouses in Leicester and Leicestershire is based on two evidence studies published in 2021 and 2024. Together these provided the basis of Harborough’s strategy and policy for strategic warehousing as it evolved between the Regulation 18 and 19 stages of plan-making.

### Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and change (amended Mar 2022<sup>3</sup>)

7.2 The 2021 Warehousing & Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire study was commissioned jointly by the 8 local planning authorities, Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). It replaced an earlier 2013 study which marked the start of joint working across the sub-region on this key cross-boundary strategic matter.

7.3 The study forecasts the need for strategic warehousing as follows:

*Table 2: Rail served sites – Forecast Demand 2020-2041*

Rail-served Sites – for Planning	2026	2031	2036	2041
Rail-served (43% of all new build req.) (sq.m 000's)	237	434	632	829
Margin for flexibility (43% of 5-year completions) (sq.m 000's)	79	145	211	277
<b>Total requirement (sq.m 000's)</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>1,106</b>

*Table 3: Non-Rail (Road) – Forecast Demand 2020-2041*

Non rail-served Sites for Planning	2026	2031	2036	2041
Non rail-served (57% of all new build req.) (sq.m. '000s)	314	576	837	1,099
Margin for flexibility (57% of 5-year completion) (sq.m. '000s)	105	192	279	367
<b>Total requirement (sq.m. '000s)</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>1,466</b>

7.4 The study recommended Leicester & Leicestershire needed to provide for 2,570,000sqm of additional floorspace between 2020 and 2041. The need was split between rail served sites and non-rail-served sites. Considering supply (at the study base date of 1 April 2020) a shortfall of 768,000sqm at rail served sites and 392,000sqm at non-rail served sites was identified. A summary of the modelling, resulting forecasts and preferred scenario is presented in chapter 10 of [EMP-NLP 1](#).

7.5 As there was a shortfall, the study identified six Areas of Opportunity (AoO), through a high-level exercise, as areas where new strategic warehousing could be located to 2041. This included AoO6 (M1 corridor – South of Leicester) which relates to the western part of Harborough district focused around M1 junction 20,

<sup>3</sup> Published April 2021, re-published March 2022 following minor amendment

which was identified for non-rail served provision only. Further detail on the criteria used to identify the broad areas and an indicative map are presented in chapter 11 of [EMP-NLP 1](#).

The key findings and recommendations of the study are set out in chapter 17 (Conclusions and Recommendations) of [EMP-NLP 1](#). The study led to the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities – Statement of Common Ground relating to Strategic Warehousing & Logistics Need (Sept 2021 [SCG-NLP 1](#)) being agreed by all L&L authorities. The Statement sets out; the study findings, an updated shortfall position on 1 April 2021, the authorities' commitment to collaborate to ensure the shortfall is planned for and an ongoing commitment to co-operate on strategic cross boundary matters including agreeing the distribution of strategic warehousing. To address the distribution issue, four next steps as presented in para 3.12 of the SoCG ([SCG-NLP 1](#)) were identified.

- 7.6 For Harborough, the study resulted in a focus on non-rail served provision and AO6 as a location for strategic warehousing growth, which informed the Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation.

#### **Regulation 18 Issues and Options Consultation**

- 7.7 The Regulation 18 Issues and Options ([PRE-NLP 2](#)) consultation for the new Harborough Local Plan was carried out between 16 January and 27 February 2024. The consultation document referenced the Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester and Leicestershire: Managing Growth and Change ([EMP-NLP 1](#)) in respect of strategic warehouses and asked if it was an appropriate evidence base on which to formulate policy for strategic warehouses.
- 7.8 Pending further joint evidence, the consultation document confirmed that Harborough is impacted by Area of Opportunity 6 (M1 corridor, south of Leicester) identified as having potential for non-rail served provision only.
- 7.9 As set out in [PRE-NLP 2](#) alternatives for the scale of strategic warehousing growth in Harborough district were not presented at this stage. The stated intention being that jointly commissioned apportionment evidence would recommend this and be reflected in strategy and policy at the Regulation 19 stage. The consultation did, however, seek views on whether growth should continue to be focussed on Magna Park. Consultation responses to the Issues and Options consultation are described in the Regulation 18 Consultation Statement [PRE-NLP 3](#).
- 7.10 In brief, views from respondents to the consultation were mixed on the evidence base with; opposing standpoints on whether it over or under states the scale of future need, some technical criticisms, and some suggestions that it was out of date. The consultation response on where to focus growth was equally mixed. Most supported a continuation of the current approach to focus growth at Magna

Park but a similar number in total either objected to this, or suggested growth should (instead or also) be directed to other locations within AO6. Overall, greater flexibility of land uses at Magna Park had some support but most did not strongly suggest a move away from its primary purpose as a distribution centre.

- 7.11 The consultation led to the council commissioning the Strategic B8 Sensitivity Study (2024) [EMP-NLP 4](#) to provide an updated assessment of need and consider the amount of provision Harborough should plan for, in advance of further joint L&L evidence work being progressed.

#### **Strategic B8 Needs Sensitivity Study (December 2024)**

- 7.12 The study presents four scenarios for need based on updated data reflecting the latest sector trends. These showed a need for between 3.8 – 5.1million sqm of strategic B8 floorspace across L&L, a significant increase on the level forecast in the 2021 study. Based on the recommended gross completions scenario, with site recycling adjustment for the period 2020-41, and having regard to the pipeline supply position (at 1/4/24) this indicated a residual need for 537ha of land for strategic warehousing to 2041 across Leicester & Leicestershire, which was reduced to 277ha if the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) proposal were consented (since refused).
- 7.13 Overall, the study recommended an appropriate contribution for Harborough district of between 100-140Ha of additional strategic warehousing (with potential to accommodate c350,000 – 490,000sqm<sup>4</sup>) towards meeting the Leicester & Leicestershire residual need. Its recommendation was made on an interim basis pending the completion of the Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment study and any subsequent agreement of the apportionment through an updated SoCG between the L&L authorities. The upper and lower bounds of the recommended contribution are based on two different approaches to apportioning the residual need under the no HNRFI scenario, as detailed in section 6 of [EMP-NLP 4](#).
- 7.14 After consideration, the study concluded that there is a single potential broad location within Harborough district which could accommodate strategic warehousing development when applying the Area of Opportunity (AO) from the 2021 study, which is focused around Lutterworth including the A5 and M1 J20.
- 7.15 Given the requirement to allocate land, the study also presents an assessment of 17 sites promoted for strategic warehousing development within Harborough. The assessment methodology was built on the SHELAA methodology focusing on the suitability and market attractiveness of sites for strategic warehousing. A two-stage process of initial and detailed assessment was used as set out

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<sup>4</sup> Using an indicative plot ratio of 0.35. Source: [EMP-NLP 1](#)

in Chapter 7 of [EMP-NLP 4](#). The assessments were conducted independently by Icen, using the Council's constraint data and drawing on relevant findings from other emerging local plan evidence documents e.g. transport, landscape, and flood risk. Assessments of all the sites considered are also included in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Update 2024 (SHELAA, [HSG-NLP 6](#)) and the Harborough Proposed Submission Sustainability Appraisal ([S-NLP 3](#)).

- 7.16 A total of 10 sites were ruled out at the initial stage with 7 progressing to the detailed assessment stage. At the detailed assessment stage, 2 sites were recommended for allocation, 4 were recommended as potential allocations and 1 was not recommended for allocation. Table 7.1 of [EMP-NLP 4](#) and its Appendix: Assessment of Potential Sites detail the assessment methodology used and contain a summary of the findings together with maps and proforma for individual sites.
- 7.17 Following testing through local plan transport evidence the two recommended sites were taken forward by the Council as proposed allocations MP1 (Land south of George House) and MP2 (Land at Mere Lane, Magna Park) in the plan. The sites, including their selection and policy requirements, are discussed in Section 8 below. The impact of strategic warehousing on housing needs in Harborough and other areas is tested in the Harborough Local Housing & Employment Land Evidence (Feb 2025, [EMP-NLP 5](#), Para 13.68-13.110). This concludes that no additional adjustments are necessary to balance homes and jobs and there is no requirement for an increased draw of workers in proportional terms from other surrounding areas into Harborough district to support growth.

#### **Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan Consultation**

- 7.18 The Regulation 19 consultation took place between March and May 2025. A summary of representations received is presented in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement, Feb 2026 ([S-NLP 10](#)). Policy DS02, which set out the strategy for strategic warehousing, received a significant number of negative responses, with concerns raised about scale and a lack of justification for growth. When looked at alongside responses to Policy SA01: MP1 and MP2 which allocate sites for this use, objection is widespread. Respondents highlight concerns predominantly about the range of transport and environmental impacts of expanding Magna Park, particularly on the SRN, the local highway network, and nearby villages.
- 7.19 Some supported or accepted growth at Magna Park while others, mainly land promoters, raised concern about overreliance on too few / large sites and a lack of flexibility, advocating for higher growth and additional (or alternative) allocations. Some respondents suggest the expansion of the sector conflicts with the Plan's vision and environmental / climate change objectives and policies as well as aspirations for a more diverse economy.

7.20 MP2, and to a lesser extent MP1, attracted significant opposition for a wide variety of reasons, many related to the principle of development rather than the site. Objections (from residents, Ullesthorpe Parish Council and Highway Authorities) focus on traffic, visual impact, maintaining separation from Ullesthorpe incl. the effectiveness of the proposed Area of Separation (AoS), and other environmental effects. MP1 and MP2 were supported by GLP, the site promoter, who has suggested amendments to several aspects of the policy to improve soundness. GLP's representation indicates potential extra floorspace capacity for MP1 and MP2, a combined increase of 30,000sqm.

## **8 Strategy and Policy for Strategic Warehousing**

8.12 The plan seeks to create jobs and diversify the local economy reflecting the national policy requirement to build a strong, competitive economy. Strategic warehousing operations are already focused on certain locations within L&L, including at Magna Park (Lutterworth). The evidence tells us that more and larger strategic warehouses are required in Leicester & Leicestershire to meet future needs and enable the sector to evolve and grow. The western part of Harborough district served by M1 J20 and the A5 is the only area with direct access to the SRN and has an important and continuing role to play.

8.13 The strategy recognises the specific locational requirements of the sector and makes provisions to further expand Magna Park following collaboration, and in co-operation, with partner authorities in the FEMA. The policy approach is evidence led based on an interim update and apportionment of need to Harborough district and an assessment of candidate sites. Focusing future growth at Magna Park is a reasonable and sustainable approach which builds on established infrastructure and fulfils the specific locational requirements of the sector.

### **Policy DS02 (Parts 7 to 9) Development Strategy: Creating Jobs and Diversifying the Economy**

8.14 The development strategy plans positively for additional land for strategic warehousing and makes a strong contribution towards meeting the L&L need. The policy makes provision for an additional 340,000sqm of floorspace (on sites totaling 137.8Ha<sup>5</sup>). The scale of growth reflects the lower bound in terms of floorspace, and the higher bound in terms of Hectares, of the range recommended on an 'interim' basis by [EMP-NLP 4](#) and is based on the promoted developable area and capacity of the two sites recommended as allocations by the evidence. The scale of growth also meets the floorspace requirements apportioned to the District in the Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment (October 2025) ([EMP-NLP 6](#)) and the associated Statement of Common Ground.

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<sup>5</sup> EMP-NLP1 quantifies need in both sqm and Hectares, recommending sqm as the primary metric.

- 8.15 Spatially provision is made within AO6, as defined in the 2021 study, and focused at one broad location Magna Park (A5 South), as defined in the 2025 study, served by M1 J20. Locating additional growth within and as a further extension to Magna Park, reflects the sequential approach to identifying and allocating sites recommended by the 2021 study (Para.11.19 [EMP-NLP 1](#)). It also makes efficient use of existing connections on to the SRN and highway / transport infrastructure and improves deliverability. Magna Park's established status, its relationship with Lutterworth and access to labour make concentrating development here preferable to a more dispersed approach in sustainable development terms. No new connections to the SRN are required and the development will make use of existing SRN junctions in accordance with [DfT circular 01/2022](#). National Highways consider the sites deliverable as per agreements set out in the National Highways and Harborough District Council Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground (April 2025) ([SCG-NLP 25](#)). The location is already accessible by sustainable modes of travel, including walking, cycling and public transport. Further development in this location therefore makes best use of existing transport infrastructure and offers opportunities for potential improvement, helping to limit the need to travel by private vehicles and offering a genuine choice of transport modes in accordance with the NPPF.
- 8.16 Part 8 of Policy DS02 has its foundation in an effective policy within the adopted local plan and safeguards Magna Park as a strategic warehousing centre. An important component of demand for strategic warehousing units is driven by the need to replace older stock. Acknowledging that Magna Park has units built pre-2010 and is an optimum location (i.e. an existing logistics site with strong SRN access), as discussed in chapter 5 of [EMP-NLP 4](#) and section 4 (para 4.53-6.64) of ([EMP-NLP 6](#)), this part of the policy seeks to encourage on-site recycling as older units become functionally or physically obsolete. In tandem with part 7, it supports the efficient use of land in accordance with the NPPF and provides the potential for businesses to expand in-situ and for local jobs to be retained.
- 8.17 Part 9 of Policy DS02 applies to all large-scale development for business uses over 2,500sqm, predominately although not specifically strategic warehouses, and seeks to increase residents' access to jobs. The Harborough Local Housing & Employment Land Evidence, drawing on the HENA (2022) indicates that the district has a net outflow of residents for jobs<sup>6</sup>, resulting in a district commuting ratio of 1.006 (Census 2021 based). The district is part of the L&L FEMA lying close to the county boundary and has other centres e.g. Hinckley, Rugby and Coventry close by, so commuting is to some extent normal and expected.
- 8.18 The evidence concludes that available labour in Harborough (to 2041) can accommodate the growth in additional workers arising from Policy DS02, including strategic warehousing. However, it also shows that in 2021 only c14% of the

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<sup>6</sup> Table 13.15 (Commuting Patterns – Harborough) of [EMP-NLP 5](#)

workforce of Magna Park live in Harborough district. Part 9 of the policy therefore seeks to encourage greater access to jobs by residents, to improve the districts' commuting ratio. In combination with other plan policies and policy requirements, this is intended to minimise trips and prioritise active travel modes to help tackle climate change.

#### **SA01 Site Allocations: MP1 Land South of George House, Coventry Road**

- 8.19 The site forms a functional part of the existing Magna Park estate, effectively infill development, and its allocation reflects the recommendation of the evidence [EMP-NLP 4](#) (Appendix: Assessment of Potential Sites). The site is in the Magna Park (A5 South) broad location within AO6, and has capacity to deliver 55,000sqm of development. All the candidate sites assessed impact on the same distinct part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) within the district, focused on M1 J20 and the A5. This is the only part of the district with good access to the SRN and selecting alternative sites or dispersing provision across more / smaller sites in this area would not make best use of existing transport infrastructure or offer a genuine choice of transport modes. The site does not require a new connection to the SRN or local road network as it makes use of existing access arrangements on the A4303.
- 8.20 The site has few constraints. Evidence identifies a surface water flood risk, and the sequential test has been applied. Requirement 1 of MP1 reflects the SFRA Level 2 [EN-NLP 7](#) Site Screening findings SFRA Level 2 10595 Site Table.

#### **SA01 Site Allocations: MP2 Land at Mere Lane, Magna Park**

- 8.21 The site is in the Magna Park (A5 South) broad location within AO6, and has the capacity to deliver 285,000sqm of development. The site forms an extension of the existing Magna Park (North / Central) estate, and its allocation reflects the recommendations of evidence Appendix of [EMP-NLP 4](#). Therefore, it offers an opportunity to make best use of existing transport infrastructure serving the Magna Park estate offering a choice of transport modes with potential for improvement. The site does not require a new connection to the SRN and offers the potential opportunity to improve sustainable travel options to the area.
- 8.22 The site has several constraints, and development will have a range of impacts - not least due to the scale of development proposed. The policy requirements for MP2 have their foundation in policy criteria of the adopted local plan for previous extensions to Magna Park which have guided development effectively. Each requirement addresses matters identified by proportionate evidence for the local plan and deals with issues raised via representations (at the Regulation 18 and subsequent Regulation 19 stages), most notably regarding transport, maintaining separation between Magna Park and Ullesthorpe and other environmental matters. A proposed modification is suggested to SA01:MP2 of the Draft Plan to add a

criterion requiring a comprehensive masterplan for this site, to respond to multiple representations and for consistency with other allocations of a strategic nature. The requirement for masterplan will ensure relevant stakeholders are involved in the development of the proposal as it progresses towards the planning application stage.

- 8.23 The council's transport evidence has considered the high-level and cumulative impact of the Draft Plan's proposed allocations, including MP2, on the highway network. Development of MP2 does not require a new connection to the SRN. National Highways consider the sites deliverable as per agreements set out in the National Highways and Harborough District Council Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground (April 2025) ([SCG-NLP 25](#)).
- 8.24 The councils Area of Separation evidence [LAN-NLP 3](#) recommends an Ullesthorpe and Magna Park separation area to avoid coalescence. This is identified by Policy DS04 (part 2d) and defined on the Policies Map. The boundary of the Area of Separation (AoS) is as recommended by the evidence, containing only those land parcels that contribute to maintaining separation between the village and the proposed development<sup>7</sup>. The AoS extends into MP2 to provide; layout and design flexibility at the masterplan stage, a physical connection to the country park within Magna Park North, and to encourage the AoS to be treated as a multi-functional resource to support policy compliance e.g. BNG and the delivery of mitigation to address environment impacts.

## 9. New Evidence.

- 9.1 Since the council consulted on the Draft Local Plan at Regulation 19 the jointly commissioned [EMP-NLP 6](#) Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment (October 2025) study has been completed. It updates gross needs for L&L for the period 2023-2046 to 5.2 million sqm and identifies an additional floorspace requirement of 3,969,400 sqm across L&L.

### **L&L Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment (Oct 2025)**

- 9.2 The study was commissioned jointly by the eight local planning authorities and Leicestershire County Council as a follow on to EMP-NLP1, to consider the apportionment of need between Areas of Opportunity (AO) and districts / boroughs as a basis for plan-making. The apportionment was to be based on the findings of the 2021 Warehousing and Logistics in Leicester & Leicestershire study which advised strategic warehouse floorspace needs for the 2020-2041 period.

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<sup>7</sup> Green Wedge & Area of Separation and Landscape Topic Paper, para 5.31-5.33 for detail.

- 9.3 After the apportionment work was commissioned, several authorities (including Harborough) received representations made through Regulation 18 consultations questioning whether the 2021 report’s findings on need were sufficiently up to date. Separately the draft findings of Harborough’s independent evidence (EMP-NLP3) indicated a substantial uplift in need since the earlier 2021 study. As such the partner authorities asked the consultants to widen the scope of the study and advise on the current need position (extended to 2046, to cover the breadth of L&L local plan periods) and to reflect this in their advice on the apportionment of need across Leicester & Leicestershire. The publication of the report was therefore postponed, to allow for this consideration.
- 9.4 The joint Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment was completed in October 2025. It explored a variety of models which forecast need of between 2.4 - 5.1 million sqm across L&L. Based on the study, the preferred model indicates a need for 3,969,400 sqm of additional floorspace for strategic warehousing over the 23-year forecast period (2023-2046). For reference the 2021 study forecast a (lower) need of 2,571,000sqm for a 21-year period (2021-2041). The higher need now forecast (as detailed in Section 4 of [EMP-NLP 6](#)), takes account of more recent trends and data than was available in 2021 and reflects a structural shift in the logistics market (discussed in Section 3 of [EMP-NLP 6](#)) that has occurred since the earlier study was undertaken. The demand / supply balance presented in the study is as per Table 4 below:

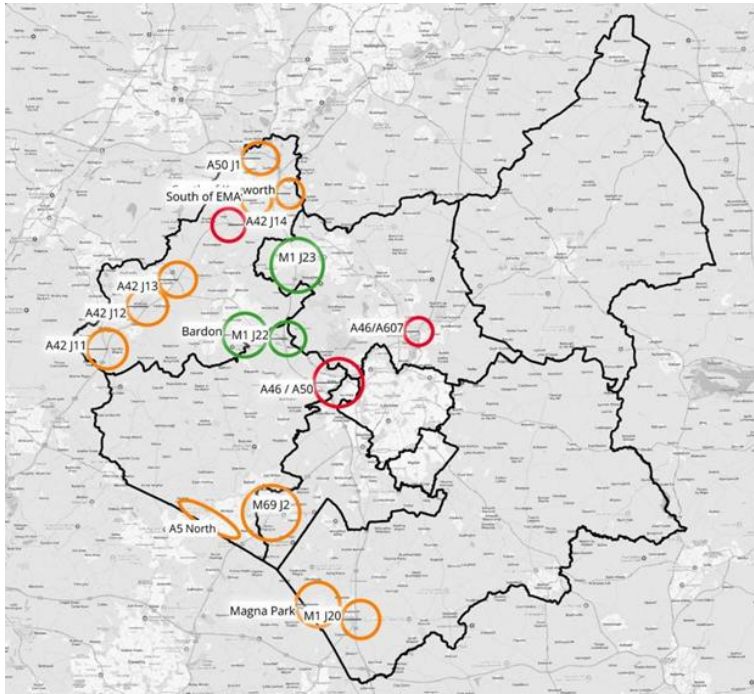
*Table 4: Supply / Demand Balance (2023-2046) (sqm)*

	Rail Served (34%)	Road-Served (66%)	Total
Gross Need			5,256,000
Land Recycling			-1,286,600
Additional Floorspace Required	1,349,600	2,619,800	3,969,400
Completions 2023-24	0	112,500	
Commitments April 2024	0	797,700	
Balance	1,349,600	1,709,600	3,059,200

Source: Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment (Iceni, Oct 2025), Table 5.3

- 9.5 The study uses a multi-step methodology, which includes refining Areas of Opportunity defined by the 2021 study to identify and rate broad locations with potential to accommodate strategic warehousing (see Figure 4 below, and Section 6 of [EMP-NLP 6](#)), to apportion 823,400sqm of total need to AO6 for the period 2023-2046. Two broad locations, defined as buffer zones around relevant junctions, are identified within AO6 and affect Harborough district, Magna Park (A5 South) and M1 J20.

Figure 4: RAG Rating of Broad Locations



Source: Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Floorspace Needs Update and Apportionment (Iceni, Oct 2025)

### **Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities Statement of Common Ground relating to Strategic Warehousing Need (March 2026)**

- 9.6 An updated Statement of Common Ground (add link) has been prepared by L&L authorities to reflect the latest 2025 study. It covers collaboration under the Duty to Cooperate and joint working, sets out agreement on the L&L strategic warehousing floorspace need to 2046, and the apportionment of additional floorspace required to district / boroughs to 2046.
- 9.7 The statement, which was approved by the L&L Strategic Planning Group in February 2026, is in the process of being signed by authorities and confirms partners' ongoing commitment to cooperate on strategic warehousing.

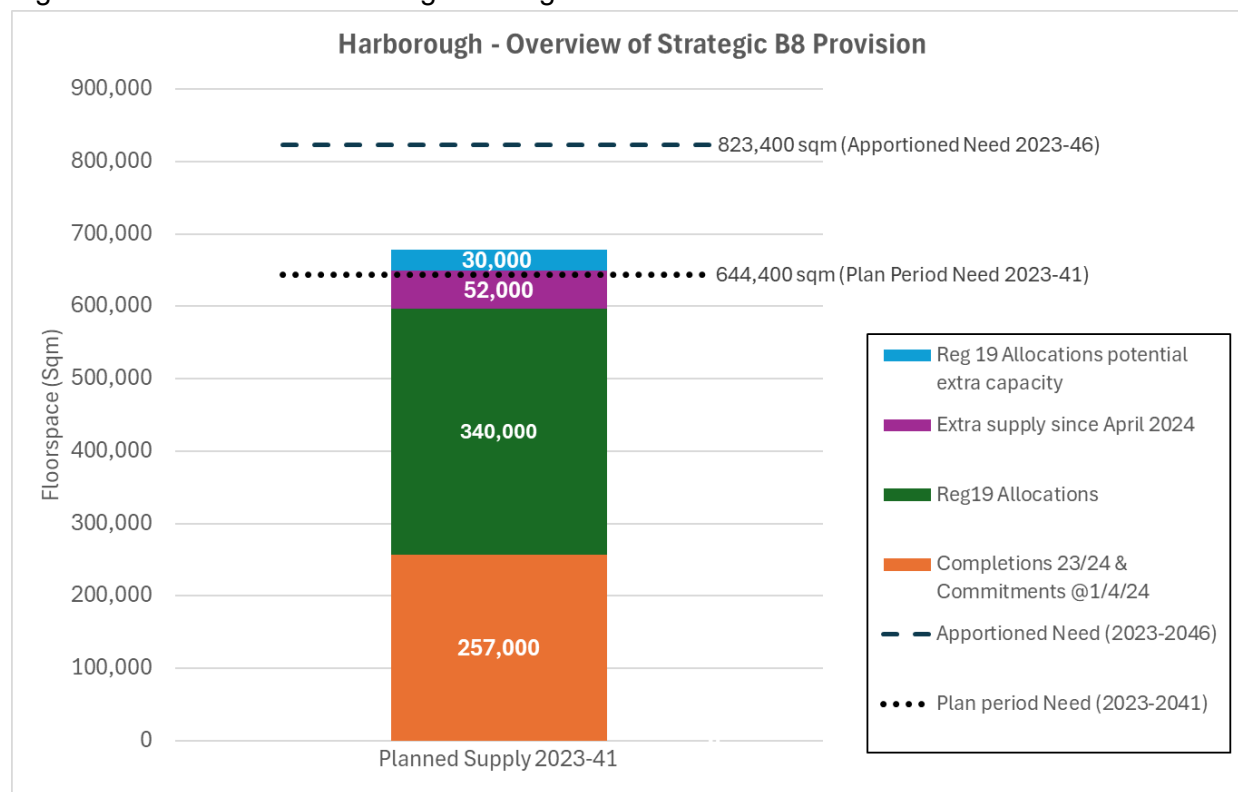
### **Implications of New Evidence**

- 9.8 The implications of this new evidence for the Draft Local Plan have been considered and the apportioned need for Harborough district (AO6) is 823,400sqm for 2023-2046. The pro-rata figure for the Harborough Local Plan period (2023-2041) is 644,400sqm, with a further 179,000sqm (5 years of need) to be delivered post 2041. Taking account of completions and existing commitments with planning permission (totaling 257,000sqm) this leaves a residual of 387,400sqm to plan for, slightly

higher than the 'interim' figure on which provision in Policy DS02 of the Draft Local Plan is based.

9.9 The allocation of 340,000sqm in the Draft Local Plan, in addition to completions and commitments, therefore, provides sufficient land supply to accommodate the apportioned need up to c mid-2039. Extra supply from April 2024 (up to 52,000sqm) and potential extra capacity on proposed allocations MP1 and MP2 (c. 30,000sqm) have the potential to provide up to 82,000sqm of supply flexibility to 2041 and would result in the identified need for strategic warehouses apportioned to Harborough district being met in full (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Overview of Harborough Strategic Warehouse Provision



9.10 The 2025 study continues to consider AO6, subsequently refined into two broad locations (M1 J20 and Magna Park A5 South) both with amber assessment ratings, as having potential to accommodate future strategic warehousing needs. This new evidence therefore has no implications regarding the site assessment and selection process (set out in [EMP-NLP 4](#)) on which the Draft Local Plan relies.

9.11 The strategy and policy proposed for strategic warehousing in the Draft Local Plan remains sound. The approach is justified and positive, based on the identified need apportioned to Harborough in the interim and subsequent evidence studies. Planned land supply could notionally deliver until mid-2039, before which a full Local Plan review would be expected or may be triggered, in accordance with Policy IM01 Part

2c. Notwithstanding this, the small shortfall to 2041 (47,400sqm, c 1.3yrs supply) has potential to be addressed either by increased capacity on proposed allocations MP1 and MP2 (c30,000sqm in total) or by supply flexibility of up to 52,000sqm at Lutterworth East where a conditional planning consent has recently been varied (24/00932/VAC<sup>8</sup>) to allow either strategic (units >9,000sqm) or non-strategic warehousing (units <9,000sqm).

## 10 Concluding Remarks

- 10.1 Within the context of joint working on this strategic matter within L&L, the development strategy for Harborough and the need to deliver growth, the policies set out above ensure that the Plan and future development proposals:
- Provide sufficient land to accommodate the identified need for additional strategic warehouses apportioned to Harborough in a sustainable, effective and deliverable location.
  - Maximise the potential for on-site recycling at Magna Park
  - Increase residents' access to jobs in a growing sector.
- 10.2 As outlined the evidence on strategic warehousing has evolved during the preparation of the Draft Local Plan. Whilst provision for strategic warehouses is made based on an interim apportionment position, it has been demonstrated that the Council is justified in its approach as this position broadly accords with the apportionment to AO6 and Harborough district under the later joint L&L evidence (completed Oct 2025). The Council's policies reflect and accord with a joint approach to meet the identified needs of the sector within L&L, as set out in the updated L&L Statement of Common for strategic warehousing.
- 10.3 Policy for strategic warehousing is positively prepared and ensures that proposals for allocated sites assess and mitigate their impact. In combination with other plan policies, particularly on development standards, Policy DS02 will enhance the role of Magna Park as a strategic warehousing hub and contribute towards the achievement of the local plan vision and objectives.

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<sup>8</sup> Committee decision 3 December 2025, issue of decision notice pending.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Candidate Site Assessment Summary

Table 7.1 Candidate Site Assessment Summary

SHELAA Ref	Site Name	Site Area (Ha)	Stage 1 – Initial Assessment	Stage 2 – Detailed Assessment
<b>From 2021 SHELAA</b>				
21/8192	Land east of Broughton Astley and North of Dunton Bassett and Ashby Magna	414	Site not considered suitable given accessibility characteristics.	
21/8139	Land at Bruntingthorpe	32.79	Site not considered suitable given accessibility characteristics.	
21/8212	Land east of Fleckney Road	7.13	Does not meet minimum size thresholds and not considered suitable given accessibility characteristics.	
21/8133	Land at Moorbarns Lane	2.35	Does not meet minimum size thresholds	
21/8136	Land off Moorbarns Lane	6.69	Does not meet minimum size thresholds and not considered suitable given accessibility characteristics.	
21/8217	Whetstone Pastures Garden Village	69.09	Site not considered suitable given accessibility characteristics.	
21/8105	Warren Farm (West)	44.72 (developable area of 20ha)	Site meets minimum size threshold requirements and is within 5 mile proximity of SRN	<b>Potential Allocation:</b> Commercially attractive location reflecting proximity to M1 J20 but improvements would be required to public transport access to make suitable; with moderate sensitivity to change reflecting landscape and heritage considerations which reduces developable area to around 20 ha. Single ownership and promoted for development but potential ransom issues in achieving site access and currently no known developer involvement. Available and potentially suitable. Site is well located but the feasibility of achieving suitable access arrangements and infrastructure could impact on deliverability and delivery timescales.
<b>From SHELAA 2024</b>				
24/10398	Land west of Rockingham Road	2.6	Does not meet minimum size thresholds and not considered suitable given accessibility characteristics.	
24/10470	Land off Kettering Road	1.14	Does not meet minimum size threshold requirement	
24/10481	Land to N of A6 & E of Melton Road Services (MH)	19.4	Site not considered suitable given accessibility characteristics.	

24/12213	Land to N of A6 & E of Melton Road Services (MH)	3.0	Does not meet minimum size thresholds and not considered suitable given accessibility characteristics.	
24/10595	Land South of George House, Coventry Road.	15.8	Site meets minimum size threshold requirements and is within 5 mile proximity of SRN	<b>Recommended for Allocation:</b> Site suitable, forming functional part of the existing Magna Park estate. It is available and controlled by GLP who are promoting the site for development. Potential for delivery in short-term (Yrs 1-5), given consent for alternative HGV parking/refuelling scheme south of Mere Lane.
24/10522	Land off Rugby Road, Cotesbach	70.6 (developable area of 46ha)	Site meets minimum size threshold requirements and is within 5 mile proximity of SRN	<b>Potential Allocation:</b> Overall site is more sensitive to change than a number of other locations. Combination of close proximity to a range of listed buildings, presence of higher grade agricultural land, flooding issues and weak current public transport accessibility mean lower suitability performance. Developable area of c. 46 ha. Would result in degree of coalescence between Cotesbach and Lutterworth.

24/10536	Land North West of Catthorpe Interchange, Shawell, Leicestershire	76	Site meets minimum size threshold requirements and is within 5 mile proximity of SRN	<b>Potential Allocation:</b> Overall site relates relatively poorly to existing larger settlements and has poor public transport accessibility. It sits relatively close to the A5 and DIRFT but overall is not considered a sustainable location. Site considered potentially deliverable subject to investigation of potential access and public transport provision.
24/10255	Land south of Gibbet Lane	16.27	Site meets minimum size threshold requirements and is within 5 mile proximity of SRN	<b>Potential Allocation:</b> Whilst site benefits from access to A5 (SRN) it is located in a rural location away from larger settlements and has weak public transport accessibility weakening its locational attractiveness. Improvements to local access also potentially required. Potentially deliverable site subject to feasibility of delivering a new roundabout on A5 to provide site access, and for development to fund this and other off-site highways works.

24/10238	Land north of the A4303 and west of Lutterworth	46 ha of which 10.6 ha proposed for strategic B8	Site meets minimum size threshold requirements and is within 5 mile proximity of SRN	<b>Not Recommended for Allocation:</b> Long, thin layout of the site constraints potential layout of development. Is separated from existing Magna Park development by woodland buffer (Magna Wood). Would result in merging of Lutterworth and Magna Park. Not considered suitable. Potentially deliverable site, but ownership and infrastructure issues and sensitivity of site make delivery more challenging. Potential for medium-term delivery if site was considered suitable.
24/12227	Land at Mere Lane, Magna Park	122.8	Meets minimum site threshold and is within 5 mile proximity of SRN	<b>Recommended for allocation:</b> Site is suitable, forming an extension of the existing Magna Park estate. Potential archaeology requires investigation prior to development. Development needs to preserve physical separation between Magna Park and Ullesthorpe. Site is available and controlled by GLP who are promoting the site for development. Potential for delivery in short-term given limited infrastructure improvements required.

Source: Icen Projects analysis