



Harbrough District Council Local Plan Viability

HDC12 - Harbrough District Council Local Plan Viability
January 2025 Whole Plan Viability Assessment – IDP Update
Addendum

11th September 2026

Quality Assurance

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Introduction

AspinallVerdi produced a Whole Plan Viability Assessment (WPVA) on behalf of Harborough District Council (the Council), dated January 2025, to provide an evidence base to assist in identifying the viability impacts of emerging planning policies. The WPVA comprised a full viability assessment of the draft policies and proposed site allocations in the emerging Harborough Local Plan 2020 – 2041.

The emerging Local Plan went to Regulation 19 consultation in March 2025. Following approval at Extraordinary Council on 16th March 2026, Harborough District Council formally submitted the Harborough Local Plan 2020-2041 to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 17 April 2026.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was significantly updated in August 2026. However, the Local Plan has been prepared and will be examined under the December 2023 NPPF in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out in the previous NPPF.

Emerging Local Plan Context & January 2025 WPVA Conclusions

The emerging Local Plan sets a blanket target of 40% affordable housing provision on development across the District. The Council's existing policy is 40% across the district, and we understood the Council's preference was to retain the same blanket rate moving forward for ease of implementation, subject to the outcome of the WPVA.

AspinallVerdi's January 2025 WPVA provided a series of conclusions and recommendations regarding the level of policy contributions and affordable housing sought through the emerging Local Plan, and its corresponding impact on viability.

Our assessment split the District into three broad 'value zones' (lower, medium and higher value). The viability of all the typologies tested in the medium and higher value areas was positive, with most typologies providing a significant buffer, even when accounting for all policy costs and the 40% affordable housing target.

Our sensitivity analysis showed that even with shifting market conditions, these typologies remained viable. Conversely, challenging viability conditions were identified in the lower value greenfield typologies and brownfield typologies.

Despite challenging viability within lower value greenfield and brownfield typologies, our January 2025 WPVA concluded the Council could reasonably seek to retain a blanket target rate of 40% affordable housing across the District, due to the vast majority of proposed allocations being situated within the medium and higher value greenfield context.

Harborough District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan, February 2025

During our assessment, we had regard to the Council's emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which was published in full in February 2025.

The IDP was split into two parts. Stage 1, the Baseline Infrastructure Needs Assessment, was completed in July 2024, in advance of the publication of the proposed Submission Draft Local Plan.

This set out a baseline understanding of infrastructure capacity and needs within Harborough, and anticipated infrastructure implications for future growth across the district. This part of the IDP informed decisions on the preferred growth strategy for the new Local Plan.

Stage 2 comprised the Infrastructure Assessment, and set out specific infrastructure schemes currently anticipated to be required to support the growth proposed in the Local Plan. Stage 2 of the IDP set out further details on infrastructure costings, delivery mechanisms and prioritisation.

Our January 2025 WPVA considered specific costings associated with infrastructure schemes relating to strategic sites. Our approach involved collaboration with site promoters and the Council to ensure a reasonable and proportionate level of cost for infrastructure and S106 requirements was included in our testing on a strategic site specific basis.

Our assessment also included S106 allowances for our typology testing to account for the requirements emerging from the IDP on a District wide basis.

Updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan, September 2026

We understand through discussions with the Council that there have been subsequent updates to the IDP, such that the most accurate current-day infrastructure requirements arising from the emerging Local Plan can be fully understood.

In this context, we have been instructed to consider the updated IDP costings and whether there is likely to be any material impact on the viability of the plan as a result.

The updated IDP includes a review of infrastructure capacity and needs, as well as providing an updated position in respect of specific infrastructure schemes anticipated to be required to support the growth proposed in the Local Plan.

We compare the overall costs arising from the February 2025 IDP and the Updated September 2026 IDP in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Cost	February 2025 IDP	September 2026 IDP	Difference
Total Cost	£339,453,640	£319,537,976	-£19,915,664

Source: Harborough District Council, September 2026.

The above illustrates that there has been an overall reduction of c. £19.9m / 6% in infrastructure requirements since the February 2025 IDP.

In addition to the above, the education costs, which form a significant part of the overall infrastructure requirement, include the costs attributable to Oadby & Wigston, a neighbouring borough. As such, the total costs provide a worst case scenario, and would further decrease when attributed only to the requirements emerging from the planned growth in Harborough.

Whilst we reiterate that our January 2025 WPVA illustrated the plan to be viable and deliverable, the updated position set out in the September 2026 IDP indicates there is further viability headroom.

We note that the figures referenced above are subject to change, as requirements and schemes evolve. However, we consider that the reduced overall infrastructure cost requirements indicate that there will be increased viability headroom in the round.

We understand the updated IDP will be published in full and provided to the Planning Inspectorate in addition to this report, and would therefore recommend that the two are considered in conjunction.

We advise that any further changes to the IDP and their consequent impact on viability are kept under review.

Summary and Conclusions

Overall, the updated September 2026 IDP points to a reduced overall infrastructure cost over the plan period, relative to the February 2025 IDP. The overall reduction in costs amounts to c. £19.9m / 6%

We consider that the impact on the viability of the plan can be viewed favourably in this regard.

The education costs, which form a significant part of the overall infrastructure requirement, include the costs attributable to Oadby & Wigston, a neighbouring borough. As such, the total costs provide a worst case scenario, and would further decrease when attributed only to the requirements emerging from the planned growth in Harborough.

Whilst we reiterate that our January 2025 WPVA illustrated the plan to be viable and deliverable, the updated position set out in the September 2026 IDP indicates there to be further viability headroom.

This will ultimately allow for flexibility and pragmatism moving forward, as development schemes are worked up in more detail and ultimately delivered.

We advise that the viability of the plan is kept under review moving forward, as infrastructure requirements continue to evolve, to ensure the continued deliverability of the plan and key strategic sites therein.

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