



**Local Plan Review  
Emerging Options Consultation**

**November 2018**

## Why are we reviewing the Local Plan?

The North West Leicestershire Local Plan was adopted on 21 November 2017. It sets out a strategy for delivering the homes, jobs and infrastructure needed in the district between 2011 and 2031. The council committed to start a review of the plan within three months of the date of adoption.

There are two main reasons why an immediate review was required:

1. A shortage of employment land up to 2031 compared to what is needed (as identified in our [Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment](#), or HEDNA)
2. The possible need to accommodate additional housing arising from unmet needs in Leicester city.

In addition to the above, the [Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan](#), which has emerged since the Local Plan was prepared, represents a change which will influence the future planning of the district.

## What has happened so far?

Work on the Local Plan review began with an [Issues consultation](#), under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, between 21 February and 4 April 2018. We contacted landowners, developers, local residents, neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees, Parish Councils, local interest groups and other stakeholders. The consultation was also publicised on the Council website and via social media. We received 72 responses from a range of individuals and organisations, and those responses have helped to inform our approach to the current consultation. A report summarising the consultation was prepared for the Council's [Local Plans Committee](#) in September 2018.

Between 25 June and 28 August 2018 we undertook further consultation, this time inviting the submission of potential housing and employment sites (through a call for sites exercise for the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – SHELAA), as well as Gypsy and Traveller sites and also seeking nominations for potential local greenspace. Although work on assessing the potential housing, employment and Gypsy and Traveller sites is now underway, we are still accepting further submissions via the [‘submit a site’](#) form on the Council website.

We have also begun to produce/update various parts of our Local Plan evidence base. This will help to inform the next stage of the Local Plan review.

One such piece of evidence is the Sustainability Appraisal of the Review and between 3 September and 15 October 2018, we consulted on the [Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal](#) (incorporating Equality Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment).

## National and sub-regional context

Since we started work on the Local Plan Review, there have been a number of changes that have occurred in the wider planning landscape that will impact upon the review itself.

In July 2018, the revised [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) was published. This replaced the previous NPPF introduced in 2012 and Local Plans (and so the Local Plan Review) need to ensure that they are in accordance with it. Although many of the key aims of the NPPF remain unchanged, there are some key differences in the new version. These include:

- The introduction of a standard methodology to assess housing needs. This will replace the housing need figure identified through the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HEDNA) as a way of identifying our housing requirement figure. The implications of this are considered later on as part of this consultation.
- The requirement to separate strategic and non-strategic policies in a Local Plan. This may have some implications for the Review as the adopted Plan specifically notes that all of the policies in it are strategic, but not all of the policies may meet the new definition of what is a strategic policy.
- The requirement to provide 10% of an authority's housing requirement on sites of no more than 1 hectare.
- The requirement to recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different employment sectors, including storage and distribution sectors at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.

In September 2018, the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities produced a final version of the [Strategic Growth Plan \(SGP\)](#) for approval by each authority. This is currently proceeding through the governance processes of each organisation. It is hoped that a final plan will be in place by the end of 2018. The SGP sets out a strategy for the growth and development of Leicester & Leicestershire in the period to 2050, enabling partners to consider the longer term needs of the area and opportunities which extend beyond the conventional timeframe of a local plan. We will need to take account of the SGP when formulating the Local Plan Review.

## What are we consulting on now?

We are now seeking views on the following issues:

- Page 4 - Making sure that we have sufficient land for housing
- Page 6 - Making sure we have sufficient land for employment
- Page 9 - Should we change the settlement hierarchy?
- Page 15 - Where will new development go?
- Page 16 - How can the review consider the issue of self and custom build housing?
- Page 20 - How can the review address issues relating to health and wellbeing?

## **Making sure that we have sufficient land for housing**

### **How much housing do we need?**

A key role of the Local Plan review is to establish the housing requirements which we need to meet for the plan period to 2036.

The housing requirements in the adopted Local Plan were based on the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HEDNA) produced for Leicester and Leicestershire in 2017. This identified housing requirements to both 2031 and 2036. It had been the intention that the HEDNA would provide the basis for determining the housing requirements to be addressed as part of the review. However the government has introduced a standard methodology to be used by local authorities to inform decisions on future housing requirements. The standard methodology uses a combination of data published by the Office for National Statistics on household growth projections and information regarding affordability of housing (referred to as the median workplace based affordability ratios). More information regarding the standard methodology can be found on the [national planning practice guidance](#) website.

The latest household projections were published in September 2018. When these are applied to the standard methodology it results in a housing requirement for the period 2018-36 of 9,522 dwellings (529 dwellings every year). This is slightly higher than the housing requirement used in the adopted Local Plan (481 dwellings every year) and somewhat higher than the figure in the HEDNA for the period to 2036 (448 dwellings every year). It is also higher than the previous 2014 based projections (368 dwellings every year).

The government is currently consulting on changes to the standard methodology in order to ensure that the government's stated aim of 300,000 new homes being built every year can be achieved. The government is proposing that in the short-term that the 2014-based data should provide the demographic baseline for assessment of local housing need.

It is important to note that this is a consultation and is not confirmed as government policy.

We will need to consider what the implications of this are for the housing requirements as part of the review. However, our latest prediction of the number of new homes which are likely to be built on sites with planning permission or allocated for development is that about 8,200 dwellings would be built by 2036. Details about predicted build rates can be viewed [here](#). This is 1,300 dwellings less than is required compared to the 2016 household projections, however it is more than would be required under the 2014 projections.

There is also uncertainty as Leicester City has previously declared that it cannot accommodate all of its housing requirements within the city. The quantity of this is not clear and nor are the implications of the latest results from the standard methodology.

Therefore, at this time there is considerable uncertainty regarding what the future level of housing requirements will be. However, we will begin the process to identify how we might best accommodate new housing.

### **Meeting our needs**

Irrespective of what the final housing requirements are, we will need to ensure that over the plan period the housing requirements are met. If we were to simply allocate sites with dwelling numbers that equal the need figure this would mean that we would have to rely upon every single dwelling

from each allocation being delivered and within the timescales. Such a strategy would risk not being found 'sound' at the Examination stage.

To avoid this we could ensure that sufficient flexibility is built in to the housing provision in the plan. One possible way for doing this would be to include a 'buffer' to the housing requirement (i.e. the housing requirement plus buffer). We would then allocate sufficient land to meet this figure.

We would need to decide what an appropriate buffer would be. The NPPF requires all authorities to maintain a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. It suggests that such supply should include a minimum buffer of 5%, rising up to 10% or as much as 20%, depending upon the circumstances of the authority. We could, therefore, use one of these figures as a buffer.

An alternative approach would be to allocate sufficient land to meet the requirement (without a buffer) and to then identify a number of reserve housing sites which could be brought forward for development in the event that, for whatever reason, the actual build rates did not keep pace with the requirements. We would need to specify under what circumstances sites could be brought forward and in what order. For example, if build rates were below the requirement for x number of years or if they fell below the requirement by a certain percentage.

It is important to recognise that there are significant lead in times for new developments, particularly large scale developments such as urban extensions or new settlements. For example, for planning and designing a new development including new infrastructure and securing the necessary funding and regulatory approvals (not just planning). Therefore, another approach which could be taken in the review is for sites to be allocated which are intended for development towards the end of the plan period (and possibly beyond) with a clear set of requirements to be satisfied before development could be allowed to proceed.

***Question 1 - Should the plan build in a flexibility allowance?***

***Question 2 - If we build in flexibility should the plan include a 'buffer' to the housing requirement figure when deciding how much land to allocate for new housing or should we identify reserve sites?***

***Question 3 - If we were to include a 'buffer' what would be an appropriate figure?***

***Question 4 - If we were to identify reserve sites under what circumstances should sites be released?***

***Question 5 - Should the review build in the potential for sites to be developed which go beyond the end of the plan period?***

***Question 6 - Are there any other ways that the plan can build in flexibility?***

## Making sure we have sufficient land for employment

In terms of employment, the district benefits from its central location at the heart of England with good motorway connections and has the added benefit of East Midlands Airport which provides international links. In recent years, the district has proven very popular with companies wishing to locate here, particularly in the logistics sector.

### How much employment land do we need?

The amount of employment land (excluding strategic B8 - storage and distribution - units of over 9,000sqm) that we need to provide as part of the review is set out in the [Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment](#) (HEDNA) which was published in 2017. This identifies what we need to provide for the period 2011 to 2036:

- For B1a/b (which is essentially offices and research & development) there is a requirement of nearly 56 hectares;
- For B1c/B2 (light and general industry) a requirement of just over 4 hectares;
- For small scale B8 (storage and distribution units of under 9000sqm) there is a requirement of 21 hectares.

(The requirements for strategic B8 (units of over 9000sqm) have been identified separately in another study – see section below)

It is important to note that the figures above do not take into account the many developments that have already occurred in the district since 2011, or planning permissions that we have granted that are still current.

Adding these in shows that overall our need is much less (11 hectares), as we effectively have enough land identified already to meet the requirements for B1c/B2 and small scale B8, but that there is still a particular issue with B1a/b (offices and research & development), with an outstanding requirement of just over 28 hectares.

All figures are in Hectares	B1a/b	B1c/B2	Small B8	TOTAL
Requirements 2011-2036 (not including strategic B8)	55.9	4.1	21.0	81.0
Completions 2011-2018 (allocations)	4.0	0.6	4.8	9.5
Completions 2011-2018 (non-allocations)	3.2	2.0	3.3	8.5
Under construction at 1st April 2018	1.6	0.3	0.0	2.0
Allocated but without permission	5.3	5.3	5.3	16.0
With permission at 1st April 2018	13.5	7.9	12.6	34.0
<b>Residual requirement up to 2036</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>-12.1</b>	<b>-5.1</b>	<b>11.0</b>

In the current Local Plan we have included an allowance of 10 hectares for expected loss of existing employment land to other uses. We are currently undertaking an employment land assessment that will identify how much of our existing employment land we think could be lost to other uses by 2036.

We will therefore also need to identify additional employment land to replace these expected losses on top of the 11 hectares we already have to allocate.

#### **How should/could we meet our identified need?**

The largest need for employment land based on the HEDNA relates to offices (B1a/b). The evidence suggests that we still have an outstanding need for an additional 28 hectares. Currently this is not being provided by the market. We therefore need to consider how best to address this issue in the Local Plan review. The following options could be considered:

- i. Allocate sufficient sites to meet just the identified shortfall (i.e. for 100% office use) - however this could be seen as quite restrictive given recent preferences for other 'B' employment uses and the relatively low amount of B1 land that has come forward in the district since 2011. It is generally the case that site promoters prefer to have greater flexibility as to the type of uses which can be allowed as it reduces their risk.
- ii. Allocate sufficient sites equal to the shortfall but do not restrict to B1a/b – this approach provides more flexibility for the market but would be likely to mean that the requirement for B1a/b would not be achieved, and would require all sites to be developed to meet our need.
- iii. Allocate sites that are more than the shortfall and require that any future development include a set amount of B1a/b floorspace (either a specific figure or as a percentage of the total floorspace to be provided) - this approach provides more flexibility for the market to bring sites forward and would help to ensure that need for B1a/b is achieved, but would require us to allocate more land for employment uses than our evidence suggests that we need, as our need for B1a/b is much greater than for other employment uses.
- iv. Allocate sites that are more than the shortfall but without any restrictions as to the type of employment use which would be allowed – this would provide flexibility, ensure that our overall employment land need is met, and would provide scope for more B1a/b uses, although it may still mean that the full requirement for B1a/b would not be achieved. Again it would require us to allocate more land than the HEDNA suggests is needed.

***Question 7 - Is the HEDNA an appropriate evidence base on which to formulate our employment land policies?***

***Question 8 - Which of the options set out above would best address the outstanding need for employment land?***

***Question 9 - Are there any other options that we could consider?***

#### **What about large scale storage and distribution uses?**

In terms of large scale storage and distribution uses (strategic B8 - units of over 9000sqm) North West Leicestershire is a very attractive location for such uses, falling within what is known as the 'golden triangle' for the sector due to its central location and excellent transport links. Interest in warehousing and distribution in the district in recent years has been extremely high, with large scale developments

such as East Midlands Distribution Centre, East Midlands Gateway and Amazon at Bardon all either completed or under construction.

The minimum requirements for strategic B8 are set out in the [Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Study](#) 2014, which was updated in 2016. Rather than split this requirement by district, the study sets out a city and county-wide requirement of 472 hectares of strategic B8 by 2036.

Strategic B8 minimum requirement 2011 – 2036 (Leicester and Leicestershire-wide)	472.0 ha
NWL strategic B8 Completions 2011-2018	75.0 ha
NWL strategic B8 Under construction at 1st April 2018 (includes 139ha at East Midlands Gateway)	174.7 ha
NWL strategic B8 With permission at 1st April 2018	74.7 ha
<b>TOTAL supply for NWL</b>	<b>324.4 ha</b>
<b>TOTAL supply rest of Leicester and Leicestershire</b>	<b>345 ha</b>
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY NWL &amp; REST OF LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE</b>	<b>669.4 ha</b>

Taking into account the sites delivered since 2011 in the district, and adding the current supply leaves a minimum of nearly 148 hectares to be found across the whole sub-region. However information obtained from other local authorities shows that the total provision of strategic B8 across Leicester and Leicestershire stood at about 345 hectares in September 2018. This is significantly in excess of the minimum requirements identified.

In addition to being required to allocate enough land to meet our need, the revised NPPF (July 2018) now requires planning policies to recognise and address the specific locational requirements of storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.

We could allocate more sites for strategic B8. However our evidence is telling us that the need across the whole County has already been met. To meet the new NPPF requirement, a further option we have is to identify, as we have done in the adopted Local Plan, strategic B8 sites with permission and include a policy that assumes permission on those sites will be renewed should it lapse for any reason.

***Question 10 - Is the Strategic Distribution Study an appropriate evidence base on which to formulate our strategic B8 employment land policies?***

***Question 11 - What should our preferred approach be to deal with strategic B8?***

***Option 1: Do not allocate any additional sites, as we have already met our need. We could, instead, have a general criteria based policy.***

***Option 2: Identify sites with permission and have a presumption of renewal.***

***Option 3: Allocate more sites for strategic B8 due to current market demand.***

***Question 12 - Are there any other options that we could consider?***



## Should we change the settlement hierarchy?

### What is the settlement hierarchy?

Policy S2 of the adopted Local Plan establishes a settlement hierarchy, the purpose of which is to distinguish between the role and function of the various settlements across the district and to guide where new development should go.

It is based on a combination of population size and availability of services and facilities within individual settlements. For example, the Coalville Urban Area has the largest population in the district and also a wide range of services (such as jobs, shops, schools, health services and leisure opportunities) so that residents do not necessarily need to travel far (although people may choose to do so, for example for work). In contrast there are other settlements which are smaller in terms of population (perhaps only a few hundred people) and have a limited range of services and facilities. For day-to-day needs residents may have to travel some distance, often by car.

The settlement hierarchy, therefore, seeks to direct the largest amount of development to the larger settlements. In effect, the further up the settlement hierarchy it is more likely that development will be considered acceptable in principle.

In summary, the settlement hierarchy identifies (in descending order of scale):

- Principal town (Coalville Urban Area)
- Key Service centre (Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington)
- Local Service Centre (Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham)
- Sustainable Villages (17 villages)
- Small Village (16 villages)
- Hamlets

This approach is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that *“Significant development should be focussed on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes”*.

### Should the settlement hierarchy be changed?

Whilst seeking to ensure that most development is located where it will be environmentally sustainable in terms of accessibility to services and facilities, the NPPF also recognises that in rural areas *“planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs”*.

In the settlement hierarchy the opportunities for new development beneath the level of Sustainable Villages are limited. In Small Villages development is restricted to the conversion of existing buildings or the redevelopment of previously developed land or is an exceptions site for affordable housing. In Hamlets development is even more restrictive.

There are three aspects to sustainability; environmental, social and economic. It is the case that the current Settlement Hierarchy addresses the environmental aspects. However, the lack of opportunities to provide new homes in the smaller settlements can have a negative impact upon social aspects of sustainability. For example, a young person may be forced to move elsewhere if there are no opportunities to purchase a house in the village they live in, or they may be forced to stay in the parental home. On the other hand an elderly person may live in a house which they find difficult to maintain but moving elsewhere will take them away from family and friends. Similarly a bigger home

may be needed to accommodate a growing family but without having to move children to another school.

### How could the settlement hierarchy be changed?

We have looked again at the Settlement Hierarchy and how it could be made more flexible in terms of meeting local needs. One possible approach would be to allow development in Small Villages when that development is to meet a local need.

A balance would have to be achieved between supporting development to meet a genuine local need whilst continuing to maintain the overall thrust of policy S2 in terms of environmental sustainability. This could be done by including a ‘local connection’ test which an applicant would need to satisfy for a development to be considered as a ‘local need’. In addition:

- A Section 106 Agreement (planning obligation) could be required so that the property would initially have to be occupied by the applicant and to remain available for local needs in perpetuity. So in the future when a property was being sold the person buying it would also have to satisfy the ‘local connection’ test;
- The size of the proposed property should reflect the actual need (i.e. seeking a 4 bed property when only a 2 bed property is needed).

In terms of Hamlets as these are settlements with no services and facilities it would not be appropriate to allow for much development. Therefore, it is not proposed to make any change to how hamlets are considered.

A possible revised Policy S2 is set out below. The additional wording is shown as underlined>.

### Policy S2 – Settlement Hierarchy

***The following Settlement Hierarchy will be used when assessing the suitability of a settlement for new development, with the general principle being that those settlements higher up the hierarchy will take more growth than those lower down and that the type of development proposed is appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement and its place in the hierarchy.***

<b>Settlement Classification</b>	<b>Settlement(s)</b>
<p><b>Principal Town</b></p> <p><b><i>The primary settlement in the district which provides an extensive range of services and facilities including employment, leisure and shopping and which is accessible by sustainable transport from surrounding areas and to other large settlements outside the district. The largest amount of new development will be directed here, including retail development, to support the regeneration of Coalville Town Centre.</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Coalville Urban Area which comprises of Coalville, Donington-le-Heath, Greenhill, Hugglescote, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick as well as the Bardon employment area.</i></b></p>
<p><b>Key Service Centre</b></p> <p><b><i>Smaller than the Principal Town in terms of population and also the range of services and facilities they provide, they</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Ashby de la Zouch</i></b></p>

<p><i>play an important role providing services and facilities to the surrounding area and are accessible by some sustainable transport. A significant amount of development will take place in these settlements but less than that in the Principal Town.</i></p>	<p><b>Castle Donington</b></p>
<p><b>Local Service Centre</b></p> <p><i>Settlements which provide some services and facilities primarily of a local nature meeting day-to-day needs and where a reasonable amount of new development will take place.</i></p>	<p><b>Ibstock</b></p> <p><b>Kegworth</b></p> <p><b>Measham</b></p>
<p><b>Sustainable Villages</b></p> <p><i>Settlements which have a limited range of services and facilities where a limited amount of growth will take place within the defined Limits to Development.</i></p>	<p><b>Albert Village, Appleby Magna, Belton, Blackfordby, Breedon on the Hill, Coleorton (the Lower Moor Road area only), Diseworth, Donisthorpe, Ellistown, Heather, Long Whatton, Moira (including Norris Hill), Oakthorpe, Packington, Ravenstone, Swannington, Worthington.</b></p>
<p><b>Small Village</b></p> <p><i>Settlements with very limited services and where development will be restricted to <u>sites within the Limits to Development and where the proposed development is limited to a single dwelling to meet the needs of a person(s) who satisfies one of the following local connection requirements:</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i><u>Existing resident in the parish within which the application is located for a continuous period of at least 10 years prior to an application being submitted; or</u></i></li> <li>• <i><u>The person requires frequent attention and/or care due to age, ill health, disability and/or infirmity as demonstrated by written evidence from a medical doctor or relevant statutory support agency and therefore has an essential need to live close to a close family member who currently reside in the parish within which the application is located and have done so for a continuous period of at least 10 years and; or</u></i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Battram, Coleorton (the part not considered to be a Sustainable Village), Griffydam, Hemington, Lockington, Lount, Newbold, Newton Burgoland, <u>Normanton-le-Heath</u>, Osgathorpe, Peggs Green, Sinope, Snarestone, Sweptstone, Spring Cottage, Tonge, Wilson.</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>The person has an essential need to provide support , as demonstrated by written evidence from a medical doctor or relevant statutory support agency, for a close family member who currently reside in the parish within which the application is located and have done so for a continuous period of at least 10 years; or</u></li> <li>• <u>The existing accommodation of the proposed occupant must be located within the parish and be no longer suitable for their needs due to its size or is difficult to get around due to ill health or disability as demonstrated by written evidence from a medical doctor or relevant statutory support agency; or</u></li> <li>• <u>No longer resident in the parish within which the application is located but has previously resided in the parish for a period of at least 10 years within the last twenty years</u></li> </ul> <p><u>The applicant will be required to demonstrate that there are no suitable properties, of a scale commensurate with their need, available in the parish which would meet their needs</u></p> <p><u>The proposed development must be of a scale commensurate with the need.</u></p> <p><u>The proposed occupant must have been accepted on to the council's self and custom build register prior to the submission of an application.</u></p> <p><u>A planning obligation will be required which restricts the initial occupancy to the applicant for a period of at least three years and secures that the dwelling remain available to somebody who meets the local connections criteria in perpetuity.</u></p>	
<p><b>Hamlets</b></p> <p><i>Small groups of dwellings with no services and facilities and where development will be considered in the context of the countryside policy (Policy S3).</i></p>	

*The re-use of previously developed land (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) will be supported where it is compatible with the settlement hierarchy set out above. The redevelopment of previously developed land for housing should be within or well-related to the Principal Town, a Key Service Centre, Local Service Centre, Sustainable Village or Small Village.*

***Any development provided for within this policy which discharges wastewater into the Mease catchment will be subject to the provisions of policy En2. Any such development which does not meet these provisions will not be permitted.***

For the avoidance of doubt a close family member would be defined as being mother, father, daughter, son, sister or brother.

#### **What other options could be considered?**

##### **Option 1 – no change**

Whilst this approach would ensure continuity with the existing policy, for the reasons outlined above it can be considered to inadequately address the issues of local needs.

##### **Option 2 - Merge small villages and hamlets**

Under this approach all settlements which fall in to these categories would be treated the same and some development, provided it involved the conversion of an existing building or the reuse of previously developed land or affordable housing in accordance with the exceptions policy, would be potentially acceptable.

This approach would have the advantage that it is simple and easy to use.

However, it would encourage development in locations which are not suitable for development due to a lack of services and facilities (particularly in hamlets) contrary to the stated aim of the NPPF to reduce the need to travel by private car and so would not be a reasonable option.

##### **Option 3 – define Limits to Development around Small Village**

This would provide some form of guidance as to where development was considered to be acceptable in Small Villages and be less of a restrictive ‘blanket’ approach.

Defining Limits to Development would have resource issues.

Unless the scope for the type of development considered to be acceptable in a Small Village was widened from that currently allowed, it would not change anything significantly. Therefore, it is considered that this is not a reasonable option.

##### **Option 4 – widen the scope of development allowed in Small Villages**

Rather than restricting development to that using previously developed land or conversion of existing buildings, new build development small in scale (say a single dwelling on a site) would also be considered appropriate.

Policy would need to be worded in such a way as to ensure that an individual site was not developed for more than one dwelling.

Unless this was combined with Option 2 it would make it difficult to resist development anywhere in the vicinity of a settlement and so could potentially result in development poorly related to the settlement pattern. It is considered that this would run counter to the NPPF and so would not be a reasonable option.

**Option 5 – define Limits to Development around Small Villages and widen the scope of development considered to be acceptable to include small scale development**

This would combine Options 2 and 3 so that development was restricted to that which is small in scale and within defined Limits to Development.

This would represent a more flexible approach than the current policy, but would allow the Council to retain some degree of control as to where development goes.

Defining Limits to Development would have resource issues.

The policy would need to be worded very carefully to make clear what is envisaged by small scale development

**Option 6 - define Limits to Development around Small Villages and widen the scope of development considered to be acceptable**

Under this option the scope of development would be widened to allow for any development within the defined Limits to Development (subject to normal planning considerations).

Whilst this would overcome the disadvantages to Options 3 and 4 in terms of how to word the policy, it would mean, in reality, that there would be nothing to distinguish it in policy terms between a Sustainable Village and Small Village (other than the scale of development relative to the scale of the settlement). For this reason it is considered that it not be reasonable option.

***Question 13 - Do you agree that the settlement hierarchy policy should be amended so as to allow for some development in small villages where it can be demonstrated that it is to meet the needs of somebody with a local connection?***

***Question 14 - Do you agree with the suggested criteria for identifying somebody with a local connection? Are there any additional criteria which should be included?***

***Question 15 - Are there any other options which we should consider if we are to address local needs? Do you agree with our assessment of these options?***

## Where will new development go?

As set out above we know that there is a need for additional land for both housing and employment, although we do not know the exact amounts. The adopted Local Plan establishes a settlement hierarchy which is used to guide where development should go. Whilst we are suggesting some changes to the settlement hierarchy policy the principles would be largely unchanged. We will need to consider how new development should be distributed having regard to the settlement hierarchy.

As already noted a [Strategic Growth Plan](#) is being prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities. A key part of the strategy is the identification of the northern part of the district (together with the northern part of Charnwood Borough) as the Leicestershire International Gateway. The proposed end date for the review (2036) is part way through the plan period of the Growth Plan and so we will need to consider what this might mean for the review in terms of how new development should be distributed across the district.

Any options we develop will need to be assessed as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.

## How will potential sites be assessed?

Once we have identified a preferred way for distributing development, we will then need to consider which sites are the most appropriate. A long list of potential housing and employment sites has been identified through the [Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment](#) (SHELAA) call for sites process – which has involved two call for sites since 2016, including in Summer 2018. We have also identified sites where planning permission has been granted or previously sought for housing and employment uses.

Depending upon the scale of need we may not need to fully assess all of the sites identified in the SHELAA. Instead we would undertake an initial sieve of sites against national policies and the locational strategy, removing those which perform poorly. The remaining sites would then be thoroughly assessed against a wide range of criteria and the Sustainability Appraisal. It is likely that there will also need to be a degree of planning judgement.

***Question 16 - Is this general approach to site assessment methodology an appropriate one?***

***Question 17 - Are there any specific criteria that we should include when assessing sites?***

## How should we meet the needs for self and custom house building?

### What is self-build and custom house building?

Self-build and custom housebuilding is a key element of the government’s agenda to increase the supply of housing, both market and affordable.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 amended the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 to include that self-build and custom housebuilding means the building or completion by:

- “(a) individuals,*
- (b) associations of individuals, or*
- (c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, of houses to be occupied as home by those individuals.”*

The National Custom and Self Build Association summarises a self-build as being *“projects where someone directly organises the design and construction of their new home”* and custom build as *“those where you work with a specialist developer to help deliver your own home.”* The former involves an individual taking on a greater level of responsibility than the latter.

As such, legislation has been introduced in recent years that places duties on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to:

- Maintain a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authorities area for their own self-builds and custom housebuilding.
- To grant sufficient planning permissions for suitable serviced plots to meet the demand on the self-build and custom housebuilding register.

It does not include however where a developer delivers speculative units for profit, or the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specification decided or offered by that person (e.g. a volume housebuilder).

### What is the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the district?

Having regard to the self-build register there is a demand for self-build and custom house build plots within North West Leicestershire. The level of demand is established by the number of entries added to the authority’s register during a base period which runs from 31 October to 30 October each year. The local authority then has 3 years from the end of each base period in which to permit an equivalent number of plots. For our district this demand equates to an overall total of 44 plots to be permitted by 2021.

### How might the Local Plan Review address the need for self-build and custom house building in the district?

As part of the Local Plan review there are a number of policy approaches that could be taken to address the issue of self and custom build and help assist the council meet the demand for suitable plots. Listed below are a number of policy options accompanied by the potential advantages or disadvantages of such approaches. The policy wording suggested is not definitive and comments on both the principle and the wording is sought through this consultation.



### Strategic Self and Custom Build Policy

A strategic policy could provide the Council’s overarching approach to the provision of self and custom build plots. For example:

*The Council will support the provision of self and custom building housing by:*

- *Holding and maintaining a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire service plots of land to bring forward self-build and custom house building projects;*
- *Encouraging the inclusion of self and custom build opportunities as part of new housing development;*
- *Encouraging the inclusion of policies or the identification of specific sites for self-build and custom house building projects as part of Neighbourhood Plans;*
- *Working with communities to further understand their requirements and encouraging them to develop their own proposals.*

This approach is straightforward and provides the Council’s strategic approach. However it does not provide any specific requirement although it is considered that it would be more appropriate to include this as part of more detailed and specific policies.

### Housing Mix policy

As part of a Housing Mix policy, proposals should seek to address need and demand for affordable, market housing and starter homes, including self-build and custom-build housing. For example:

*New housing development of 10 dwellings or more should include an appropriate mix of house size, type, price and tenure to address identified needs and market demand and to support mixed communities.*

*Proposals should seek to address the need and demand for affordable, market housing and starter home including self-build and custom-build housing.*

This approach is straight forward but a potential disadvantage could be that it does not provide any specific guidance or requirement and this may affect the likelihood that it would help to meet the requirements.

### Percentage Mix policy

Have a policy which requires a proportion (expressed as a percentage) of allocated or windfall sites over a certain size to make provision for self and custom housebuilding usually in the form of serviced plots. For example:

*To support prospective self-builders and custom builders on sites of more than [XX] dwellings, developers will supply at least [XX%] of serviced dwelling plots for sale to self-builders or custom builders.*

This approach could provide clear guidance regarding what is required and so is more likely to help address the identified needs. However it would be necessary to justify the threshold i.e. the scale of development to which it is to be applied, as well as the percentage to be applied. The threshold and percentage that may be applied is the subject of this consultation, and in considering the appropriate level it will be necessary to have regard to the potential implications of site viability.

### **Allocating land for self and custom house building**

Land specifically for self-build and custom housebuilders could be allocated in the local plan, for example, through the identification of Council-owned sites which are suitable for self-build and custom build housing, and then promoting these to people on the self-build register, as well as to developers. Alternatively privately owned land could be allocated. For example:

*Land at XX is allocated for self and custom build housebuilding to address identified local requirements for self and custom-build homes as detailed in the North West Leicestershire self and custom build register.*

The Council does not own a significant amount of land, so it is likely that any such sites would provide only limited opportunities. It would also have financial implications for the Council which would need to be fully understood.

In terms of other land ownership, there would need to be a landowner who is willing to make the land available at a price that would be likely to be less than if they sold it to a developer on the open market.

### **Supporting Neighbourhood Plans**

Neighbourhood Plans are community prepared plans which enable local people to guide the future of the area they live and work in and provide an opportunity to play a direct role in the planning of their area. Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by Town or Parish Councils or neighbourhood forums (community groups that are designated to take forward neighbourhood planning in areas without a parish or town council) and can be used to establish planning policies for the development and use of land within a specific neighbourhood area.

A Neighbourhood Plan approved at referendum will form part of the development plan for the local authority area and decisions on planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan for the local authority area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Local Plan could provide support for Neighbourhood Plans to identify sites for self and custom build. For example:

*Communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans will be encouraged to consider the identification of sites specifically for self and custom-build projects within their neighbourhood area.*

This approach is straight forward but a potential disadvantage could be that it does not provide any specific guidance or requirement and this may affect the likelihood that it would help to meet the

requirements. However, it does recognise the role Neighbourhood Planning has to play in the development of the district and is advantageous in that it is prepared by local communities.

***Question 18 - Should we include a specific policy on self and custom build?***

***Question 19 - Which of the options do you prefer and why?***

***Question 20 - If a percentage approach is supported, what threshold and percentage would you apply and why?***

***Question 21 - Should the Council allocate sites for self and custom housebuilding properties only and/or seek to identify opportunities for self and custom plots as part of allocated housing sites?***

***Question 22 - Should the occupation of these 'allocated' plots be restricted, in the first instance, to those on the Council's self and custom build register?***

***Question 23 – Are there any other options we should consider?***

## How can the Local Plan help to address issues relating to health and wellbeing?

### Health in Planning

It is recognised that there is a close relationship between planning and health and that planning can contribute to positive health outcomes in a variety of ways, for example, provision and access to green spaces and community facilities, public realm and social interaction, good quality housing, sustainable travel, protection of amenity and safe and accessible environments.

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) identifies that the social role of planning is ‘to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities’ and specifically states that policies should aim to achieve the creation of healthy, inclusive and safe places.

### Adopted Local Plan Policy

Objective 1 of the adopted Local Plan (2017) seeks to ‘*Promote the health and wellbeing of the district’s population and its policies, promote health and wellbeing of its communities and the creation of healthy living environments.*’ This is addressed explicitly and implicitly in several of its policies. For examples the Local Plan includes policies supporting:

- The delivery of the district’s housing needs supporting the creation of vibrant communities
- A sustainable pattern of development providing access for all and opportunities for active travel, such as cycling and walking, and sustainable transport
- High quality and well-designed development, supporting the creation of vibrant and mixed use communities
- The creation of public realm and provide opportunities for social interaction
- The protection of residential amenity and mitigation against the potential harmful impacts of noise, pollution and lighting
- The retention of key services and facilities and improvements in terms of quality, accessibility and levels of provision, providing opportunities for social interaction and inclusive communities.
- The provision and protection of open space, sport and recreation facilities providing opportunities for physical activity, play, sport and recreation and participation in healthier lifestyles
- A suitable balance of food takeaway uses in parts of the district to in part allow consideration to be given to any health issues due to the number of such premises.

### Health Matters in the District

The Council is currently working with partners to develop a Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the final strategy will be finalised shortly. The health profile of the district suggests that the overall picture for North West Leicestershire is one of general good health compared with many other areas of the country. However there are a number of key findings that show a number of issues:

- Depending on where you live in the district there is a potential for a 10-year difference in life expectancy
- The number and proportion of over 65’s will rise to 26.9% of the population by 2041

- Adult obesity is higher than the national average
- There has been a rise in the number of obese children within the age group of 10-11 years
- The number of hospital stays for self-harm has increased
- There is a high number of inactive adults, the third highest when compared to the rest of Leicestershire

### **How can the planning function deliver positive health outcomes?**

Whilst the adopted Local Plan does go some way to addressing health matters, the Local Plan Review provides an opportunity to further the role of the planning function to deliver positive health outcomes. It allows for consideration to be given to any steps that could be taken to enable the planning process to contribute further to health and wellbeing in North West Leicestershire.

There are a number of policy approaches that could be taken to address health matters and help assist the Council meets its objective with respect to the health and quality of life of its residents. Listed below are a number of policy options. The policy wording suggested is not definitive and comment on the wording is sought through this consultation.

### **A Strategic Health and Wellbeing Policy**

Health and wellbeing are cross cutting themes and it is suggested that the Local Plan could include a strategic policy to be read alongside other policies that address the wider determinants of health.

This policy could form part of the strategy section of the Local Plan and given its status as a strategic policy it would apply to all development proposals. For example:

*The wellbeing and health of communities will be maintained and improved by:*

*a) Working in partnership with the health authorities to improve the health and well-being of North West Leicestershire's residents, and supporting the provision of new healthcare facilities and improvements to existing facilities which provide services important for the physical health, mental health and general wellbeing of communities.*

*b) Requiring development to contribute to creating an age friendly, healthy and equitable living environment through:*

*i. Creating an inclusive and built environment.*

*ii. Promoting and facilitating active and healthy lifestyle, in particular walking and cycling.*

*iii. Preventing negative impacts on residential amenity and wider public safety from noise, ground instability, ground and water contamination, vibration and air quality.*

*iv. Providing access for all to health and social care facilities.*

*v. Promoting access for all to green spaces, sports facilities, play and recreation opportunities*

*c) Promoting allotment and gardens for exercise, recreation and for growing locally produced food.*

*d) Controlling the location of, and access to, unhealthy eating outlets.*

### Health Impact Assessment

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a process which ensures that the effect of development on both health and health inequalities are considered and responded to during the planning process.

The Local Plan could include a policy that requires developments above a certain size to be supported by a HIA. This could be used as a tool for assessing the development against, and identifying significant, health issues, and to inform the design of a development or of potential mitigation measures required to address any potential issue. Evidence would be needed to support this approach and to inform the issues on the HIA toolkit - for example the proposed criteria against which a development should be considered. We would also need to identify whether there is public health capacity to assist in the preparation of and/or assessment of any submitted checklist. A Supplementary Planning Document would be prepared which would provide guidance in respect of the type and nature of any assessment.

An example of a policy could be:

*Development proposals will be required to assess their impact upon the health and wellbeing of the district through Health Impact Assessments in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document[to be prepared]*

*All residential development proposals of xx or more dwellings and non-residential development proposals of a combined gross floorspace of more than xxxx sqm will be required to submit a Health Impact Assessment screening statement. The statement will measure the potential impact and demands of the development proposal upon the existing services and facilities.*

*For developments where the initial screening indicates more significant health impacts, a more comprehensive, in depth Health Impact Assessment will be required.*

*Where significant impacts are identified, planning permission will be granted where measures to mitigate the impact are provided, either onsite and/or off site through the use of planning conditions or obligations.*

### Controlling Take Away Uses

The [National Planning Practice Guidance \(NPPG\)](#) advises that planning has a role to play in supporting opportunities for communities to access a wide range of healthier food production and consumption choices. The role of the Local Plan could be to include policies to limit the proliferation of hot food take away uses in identified areas, where there is a need for planning permission. Relevant issues may include the proximity of take away uses close to locations where children and young people concentrate (schools, playgrounds), evidence of high obesity levels, deprivation and poor health in specific locations and the clustering of uses. It is noted that there are a number of existing hot food take away uses within the proximity of schools. However a future policy would only be able to address future planning applications for new take away uses.

Policy wording could seek to protect an 'exclusion zone' around a particular location, or seek to restrict the opening hours of the premises to specific times of day. This approach must be supported by a robust evidence base in order to establish whether this is a specific health-related issue which needs to be addressed and whether this is relevant to the district as a whole or to a particular area(s).

An example of a policy could be:

The Council will not grant planning permission for hot food take away premises that fall within an exclusion zone of [xxxx] of the boundaries of a primary or secondary school as shown on Map XXX

***Question 24 - Should we include a policy (or policies) to address health and wellbeing issues as part of new development?***

***Question 25 – Should we have a strategic policy which would support the health and wellbeing of North West Leicestershire’s residents?***

***Question 26 – Do you support the use of a Health Impact Assessment Screening Statement to demonstrate the potential impact of a proposal, and to identify whether a more in depth Health Impact Assessment is required?***

***Question 27 - If we required a Health Impact Assessment what threshold should be used above which a Health Impact Assessment would be required?***

***Question 28 - Would you support the inclusion of a policy which would restrict further take away uses within a specific distance of the boundary of a school?***

***Question 29 - If yes, what evidence do you have to support this approach? What specific distance would you suggest and why?***

***Question 30 - Are you aware of any evidence that demonstrates health issues suffered by residents within the district that would justify a restriction on further take away uses?***

## Responding to this Consultation

Details of the consultation can be found at [www.nwleics.gov.uk/localplanmysay](http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/localplanmysay)

Visit this website to fill in our online response form or to download a MS Word version.

Please make sure you clearly identify which questions you are responding to.

Responses can be sent to [planning.policy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk) or Planning Policy, North West Leicestershire District Council, Whitwick Road, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 3FJ

Copies of the consultation material can also be found in all Council libraries and at the main Council offices in Coalville during normal opening times.

**The deadline for responses is the end of 11 January 2019.**