

***Sustainability  
Appraisal (SA) of  
the North West  
Leicestershire  
Local Plan***

*(Pre-Submission version)*

**SA Report  
(Update)**

**Non  
Technical  
Summary**

**December  
2016**

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# 1. Background to the SA Report

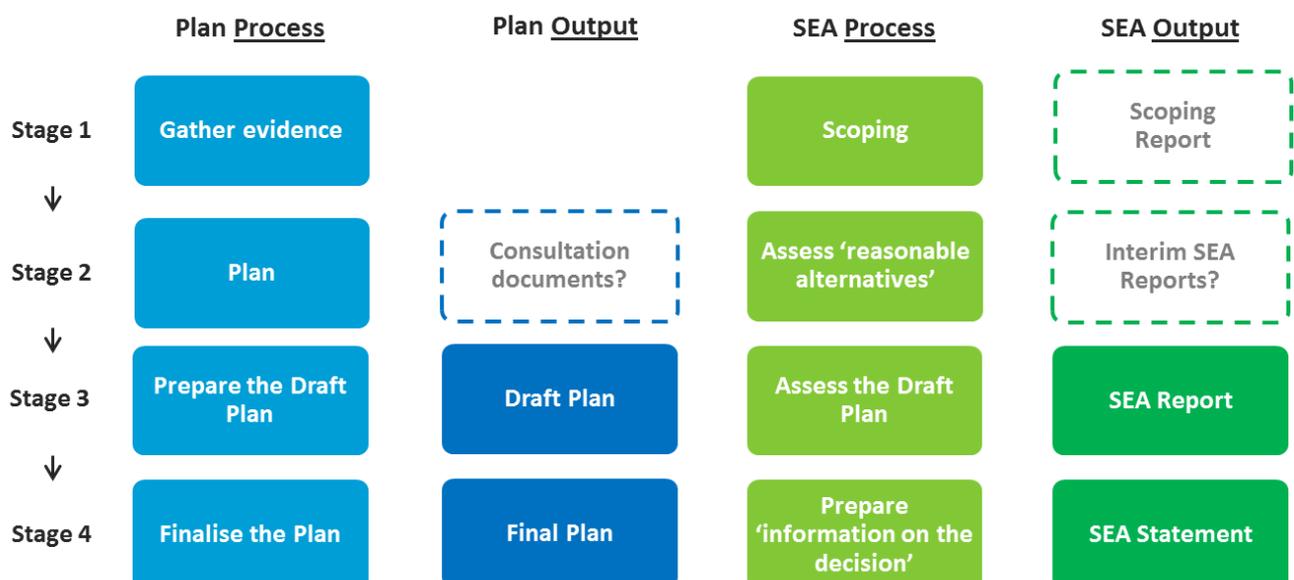
## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the positives. SA of the Local Plan is a legal requirement.
- 1.1.2 The SA Report was prepared to support consultation on the pre-submission version of the Local Plan. Following consultation, the SA Report (and this NTS) has been updated to reflect feedback received. The updates are focused upon the following three elements; to take account of mineral consultation zones; to appraise site options in Measham; to confirm correct appraisal scores for sites A5 and E17.

## 1.2 The SA process

- 1.2.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process for helping to ensure that Local Plans achieve an appropriate balance between environmental, economic and social objectives. SA should help to identify the sustainability implications of different plan approaches and recommend ways to reduce any negative effects and to increase the positive outcomes.
- 1.2.2 SA is also a tool for communicating the likely effects of a Plan (and any reasonable alternatives), explaining the decisions taken with regards to the approach decided upon, and encouraging engagement from key stakeholders such as local communities, businesses and plan-makers.
- 1.2.3 Although SA can be applied flexibly, it is a legal requirement under the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (which were prepared in order to transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive). The regulations set out prescribed processes that must be followed. In particular, the Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The SA/SEA report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses when finalising the plan.
- 1.2.4 SA/SEA can be viewed as a four-stage process that produces a number of statutory and non-statutory outputs. As illustrated in Figure 1.1 below, 'Scoping' is a mandatory process under the SEA Directive, but the publication of a scoping report is a voluntary (but useful) output.

**Figure 1.1:** SA/SEA as a four stage process



## 2. Scoping

### 2.1 Scoping

- 2.1.1 The scoping stage of sustainability appraisal involves the collation of evidence relating to the baseline position and policy context - culminating in a series of key issues that should be a focus for the SA and which helped to establish a sustainability framework.
- 2.1.2 The Sustainability Topics were established at the scoping stage to reflect the headline principles of sustainable development. These topics also reflect those issues referred to in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which are suggested as issues that should be addressed in a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Sustainability Topic	Factors covered	Links to Schedule 2 of Regs <sup>1</sup>
<b>Population and communities</b>	<i>Demographics, health, deprivation, crime, towns and villages</i>	<i>Population, human health</i>
<b>Housing</b>	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Material assets</i>
<b>Economy</b>	<i>The economy, employment and workforce, retail and town centre services</i>	<i>Population</i>
<b>Transport and access</b>	<i>Transport, access to services in main towns and villages, public transport in main towns and villages,</i>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Air quality and noise</b>	<i>Air quality, noise</i>	<i>Air</i>
<b>Climate change</b>	<i>Climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, flooding</i>	<i>Climatic factors</i>
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>	<i>Environmental designations, Biodiversity Action Plan</i>	<i>Fauna, flora, biodiversity</i>
<b>Landscape and land</b>	<i>Landscape designations, landscape character, National Forest, Charnwood Forest, open space, agriculture and land</i>	<i>Landscape, soil</i>
<b>Cultural heritage</b>	<i>Historic designations, Conservation Area Appraisals, Heritage at Risk, history of settlements, historic landscape character assessment, archaeology, built environment</i>	<i>Cultural heritage</i>
<b>Water</b>	<i>Water availability, waste water</i>	<i>Water</i>
<b>Waste and minerals</b>	<i>Waste, minerals</i>	<i>Material assets</i>

## 2.2 What is the plan seeking to achieve?

- 2.2.1 The North West Leicestershire Proposed Publication Local Plan (the Plan) sets out the spatial strategy for the North West Leicestershire District, as well as key strategic planning policies for development.
- 2.2.2 The Plan contains details about the quantity of housing and employment growth that should be planned for and where it should be located, including through the allocation of specific strategic sites.
- 2.2.3 Within the Plan there is a list of fifteen objectives which seek to address the key issues for North West Leicestershire. These are as follows:

*Objective 1 - Promote the health and wellbeing of the districts population.*

*Objective 2 - Support the delivery of new homes balanced with economic growth to provide a stock of housing that meets the needs of the community, including the need for affordable housing.*

*Objective 3 - Ensure new development is of a high quality of design and layout whilst having due regard to the need to accommodate national standards in a way that reflects local context and circumstances*

*Objective 4 - Ensure regard is had to reducing the need to travel and to maintaining access to services and facilities including jobs, shops, education, sport and recreation, green space, cultural facilities, communication networks, health and social care.*

*Objective 5 - Support economic growth throughout the district and the provision of a diverse range of employment opportunities including the development of tourism and leisure*

*Objective 6 - Enhance the vitality and viability of the districts town and local centres, with a particular focus on the regeneration of Coalville, in ways that help meet the consumer needs.*

*Objective 7 - Enhance community safety so far as practically possible and in a way which is proportionate to the scale of development proposed whenever allocating sites for development or granting planning permission.*

*Objective 8 - Prepare for, limit and adapt to climate change.*

*Objective 9 - New developments need to be designed to use water efficiently, to reduce flood risk and the demand for water within the District, whilst at the same time taking full account of flood risk and ensuring the effective use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs).*

*Objective 10 - Conserve and enhance the identity, character and diversity and local distinctiveness of the districts built, natural, cultural, industrial and rural heritage and heritage assets.*

*Objective 11 - Protect and enhance the natural environment including the districts biodiversity, geodiversity and water environment areas identified for their importance.*

*Objective 12 - Conserve and enhance the quality of the districts landscape character including the National Forest and Charnwood Forest and other valued landscapes.*

*Objective 13 - Takes account of the need to reduce the amount of waste produced.*

*Objective 14 - Seek to deliver the infrastructure needs of the area, including Green sustainable development.*

*Objective 15 - Takes full account of the need to safeguard mineral resources including sand and gravel, igneous rock and brickclay.*

- 2.2.4 Figure 2.1 overleaf sets out the geographical extent of the Plan area. Whilst the influence of the Plan policies will be restricted to within this boundary, there could well be effects in neighbouring authorities that will need to be considered in the SA process.

Figure 2.1: Map of North West Leicestershire



## 3. Key issues

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section provides a summary of the key findings from the scoping exercise (as presented in the Scoping Report in February 2015). Where relevant, this section has been updated.
- 3.1.2 The key sustainability issues listed below have been identified through an assessment of the baseline information and the contextual review for each of the sustainability topics.

### 3.2 Population and Communities

- 3.2.1 The following sustainability issues emerged for the population and communities theme:
- There is a need to provide homes to support the growing number of households in the District this will need to be matched by new services to support communities.
  - There is a need to address inequalities within the District, including reducing deprivation in identified communities.
  - The population of the District is aging and this will have an impact on the type of housing that is provided, as well as creating additional demand for accessible healthcare.
  - The District has a low proportion of young adults and this could have an impact on local economic growth, measures will need to be taken to retain and attract young adults to the district, for instance through the provision of family homes.
  - The number of young children is increasing and this will create an additional demand for school places.
  - Much of the population live in rural or semi-rural populations, the needs of these groups must be met including access to services (including healthcare and schools) and support to the rural economy. A possible lack of health service provision in rural areas exists.
  - Crime levels are falling from a relatively low starting point; development must help contribute to this trend.

### 3.3 Housing

- 3.3.1 In terms of housing the following themes were identified:
- The Local Plan must provide homes to meet identified needs, guided by a growth strategy for the area taking into account affordable housing needs and economic growth objectives.
  - There is a need for more affordable housing in all parts of the District, with particular need in areas where housing prices are highest, such as the rural area and in Ashby-de-la-Zouch.
  - New housing and economic growth needs to be spatially linked. Identify a suitable land supply to help implement a sustainable spatial strategy and focus housing growth in locations where it can deliver greatest benefits and sustainable access to services and jobs.
  - There is a demand for a range of housing types, particularly three-bedroom properties for market housing and one-bedroom for affordable housing.
  - An aging population requires smaller homes as these are more likely to be characterised as single person households, as well as maintaining a stock of family homes.
  - Housing for older people and an aging population must take into account their needs, including building to lifetime home standards and increased provision of retirement homes and assisted living accommodation.

## 3.4 Employment and the Economy

3.4.1 For employment and the economy the following issues have been recorded:

- Employment land provision will need to support existing well performing employment sectors, such as storage and distribution.
- In some locations there is a skills and job mismatch, there is a need to provide additional higher skilled jobs in the district to reduce the need for out commuting, including growing the high tech manufacturing sector.
- There is a need to support new local jobs for residents who need to access lower skilled jobs and maintain a distribution of these jobs around the district, including in those areas where residents have fewer qualifications to ensure that people who cannot get to work by car are not adversely disadvantaged.
- The needs of rural businesses must be considered, including allowing appropriate growth of business that need a rural location and diversification of the agricultural economy.
- There is a need to improve the skills base of the district, starting with good access to primary, secondary and future education facilities for all children in the district.
- NWL plays an important role in the sub-region as the focus for employment and LLEP growth objectives.
- The tourism sector is an important part of the local economy, there is a need to protect and enhance the tourism and leisure offer particularly in relation to the National Forest, Charnwood Forest Regional Park and Ashby Canal. The aim should be for a higher per capita visitor spends rather than simply additional visitors, a way this can be achieved is through increasing overnight visitor stays in the District.
- The retail role of main towns and village centres needs to be supported to help reduce vacancy rates and avoid the loss of shop units to other uses, with a particular emphasis on the town centre of the Coalville Urban Area.

## 3.5 Transport and Access

3.5.1 Focusing upon transport and accessibility the issues set out below emerged:

- Due to the rural character of the District, settlements are dispersed and hence development ought to be located where it would help reduce car use and where people are not disadvantaged by not driving.
- The East Midlands Strategic Distribution centre transport network must be maintained as a rail freight hub.
- There is a need to reduce the high car dependency levels across the District and encourage more people to travel by foot, bike or bus with benefits for carbon emissions as well as improve the health of residents, helping to tackle obesity.
- Improvements to safe and direct cycling routes are required across the District, taking into account the high levels of existing traffic deterring other road users as a result of safety concerns.
- Further planned growth at East Midlands Airport needs to ensure that accessibility by public transport is addressed.
- Improvements in public transport accessibility in the main towns and villages, including evening and weekend services, in particular in those that will be the focus for housing growth, would benefit existing and new residents.

- Some villages have very limited local services, improving and maintaining existing provision will help reduce people's need to drive.

### 3.6 Air Quality and Noise

3.6.1 In terms of air quality and noise the following sustainability issues were recorded:

- There are five AQMA identified in the Local Plan area for which there is a need to avoid further deterioration and which is an essential consideration for new development particularly in terms of potential cumulative effects.
- There is the potential for adverse impacts on wellbeing if inappropriate new development is located near a major source of noise, including the airport and new roads.

### 3.7 Climate Change

3.7.1 The following issues associated with climate change were identified:

- High carbon emissions per head characterise the District. Where possible emissions will need to be addressed in the design and delivery of new development and solutions for existing development.
- There is little renewable energy generated in the District and opportunities to increase capacity, both major renewable development and micro-renewables, should be sought.
- Some parts of the District are at very high risk of flooding. Advice and guidance from the NPPF, Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority (Leicestershire County Council) will need to be followed to ensure development does not increase the risk of flooding on or off-site and reduces flood risk elsewhere where feasible.
- It is important to become more resilient to the wider effects of climate change through adaptation measures. Green Infrastructure presents opportunities to address multiple issues through multifunctional spaces.

### 3.8 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

3.8.1 Within the biodiversity and geodiversity five issues have been recorded:

- The District has few habitats that are of national status or above and therefore needs to protect and enhance the assets that do exist.
- A detailed evidence base of the nature conservation assets exists with the potential to be useful in development planning and protecting/enhancing these assets.
- The River Mease SAC is at risk from adverse effects from waste water treatment outflows that have introduced elevated level of phosphates into the river. This may have implications of the deliverability of housing in the area until additional treatment is available at local waste water treatment works.
- Protect existing areas designated for the geological importance from harm.
- Make use of Green Infrastructure to help protect and enhance wildlife habitats and the connections between them.

### 3.9 Landscape and Land

3.9.1 In terms of landscape and land, the following sustainability issues emerged:

- The District has a varied landscape and development should respect its landscape setting and make a positive contribution to the relationship of rural and urban areas.

- The National and Regional Forests are major assets and helping deliver their objectives could have considerable potential in enhancing the character of the District
- Despite being a rural District, there is a need to deliver new usable open space to meet existing and new resident's needs. A variety of types of open space should be provided in towns and villages, including children's play space and allotments. New residential development should help deliver new open space, including children's play space, to meet the needs of residents.
- The District has relatively few areas that are identified as the best and most versatile in terms of agricultural productivity, therefore there is a need to protect the soil resource.

### 3.10 Cultural Heritage

3.10.1 The following issues emerged for the theme of cultural heritage:

- Recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- Ensure development in or adjacent to conservation areas or listed buildings (and their settings) respects the character and context and enhances the quality of the built environment.
- Deliver high rated schemes based on the ourplace™ scheme or other national housing standards, this should include architectural quality and creation of a 'liveable' place.
- There is significant potential for archaeological artefacts and features throughout North West Leicestershire. New development presents the potential for archaeological features to be discovered, but at the same time could have adverse effects if such features were damaged or lost.

### 3.11 Water

3.11.1 Focusing upon water supply and quality, the following emerged:

- New development should incorporate measures to ensure that water is used efficiently, to help reduce the water demand for the district.
- Protect the River Mease from any further deterioration, including through the Developer Contribution Strategy and implementation of restoration and enhancement measures.
- There may be a need for the capacity at sewage treatment works to be increased to support new development.
- The effective use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems can help to protect and enhance water quality.

### 3.12 Waste and Minerals

3.12.1 In terms of waste and materials the following issues were recognised:

- Deliver a waste management system that accords with the waste hierarchy and reduces the overall quantity of waste going to final disposal.
- Help the Council improve municipal and commercial waste recycling, with the aim of moving NWL in the best performing quartile of local authorities.
- Locate development in recognition of the need to safeguard mineral resources, including sand and gravel, igneous rock and brickclay.

### 3.13 Consultation on the Scope of the SA

- A draft Scoping Report was published as a 'consultation document' in September 2014. The Statutory bodies (Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England), and other stakeholders were given five weeks to provide feedback on its content and approach.
- Following this period of consultation, the comments on the draft Scoping Report were taken into consideration and changes made were documented in an appendix to the Scoping Report (which can be viewed in Appendix E, which contains the Full Scoping Report).

3.13.1 In response to comments, the following notable changes were made.

- The contextual review was updated to include recommended documents relating to heritage, green infrastructure, water, open space, and biodiversity in particular.
- Heritage at Risk was included as part of the baseline position.
- Sub objectives were added to the SA Framework to capture specific issues such as; pollution to watercourses; the potential for enhancing water quality; achieving a reduction in surface water run-off; consideration of natural heritage assets such as parks and gardens; water efficiency, protection of soils.

3.13.2 The final Scoping Report was published on the Council's website in February 2015. It should be remembered that the scope of the SA will continually evolve. As the Local Plan and SA processes progress, so the scope of the SA will be updated and any relevant findings will be presented in subsequent SA Reports.

# 4. SA Framework

## 4.1 The Framework

- 4.1.1 The SA framework is used to predict and evaluate the social, economic and environmental effects of proposed options and policies (and any reasonable alternatives) being considered. It is important that the assessment process is practical and manageable.
- 4.1.2 Drawing on the review of the policy context and baseline information (established through scoping), a range of key sustainability issues were established that identify what the SA should focus upon.
- 4.1.3 These key issues were used as a basis for establishing a series of sustainability objectives and supporting questions (to aid the assessment process) that together make-up the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.
- 4.1.4 The table below outlines the SA Framework. The objectives have been grouped in headline themes to allow the natural overlaps that they have to flow, and to make the document easier to follow and read.
- 4.1.5 To add further structure and to aid in presenting the findings, the SA Objectives have been grouped into ten headline sustainability topics as detailed below in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:** SA topics and corresponding SA objectives

Headline SA topic for presenting appraisal findings	SA Objectives covered	Link to SEA Directive
Housing	<b>SA1. Housing</b>	Material assets
Health and Wellbeing	<b>SA2. Health and Wellbeing</b>	Human health
Communities and town centres	<b>SA3. Communities SA6. Town centres</b>	Population
Economy and employment	<b>SA4. Economy SA5. Employment</b>	Population
Travel	<b>SA7. Travel</b>	n/a
Climate change	<b>SA8. Low carbon energy SA9. Flooding</b>	Climatic factors
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<b>SA10. Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>	Biodiversity, fauna, flora
Landscape and land	<b>SA12. Landscape SA13. Land and Soil</b>	Landscape, soil
Built and Natural Heritage	<b>SA13. Built and Natural Heritage</b>	Cultural heritage
Natural Resources	<b>SA14. Natural Resources</b>	Material assets
Pollution	<b>SA15. Pollution</b>	Water, air, soil

## 4.2 Site Appraisal Framework

- 4.2.1 A framework for assessing strategic sites has also been developed using the SA Framework as a basis for identifying relevant criteria.
- 4.2.2 It is considered appropriate to assess sites using a range of data, as this allows for a consistent and fair comparison between different site options. This data can also be supplemented with qualitative assessments.
- 4.2.3 The site appraisal framework is set out in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2:** Site appraisal framework

Criteria	Decision Rules
Deliverability of sites	<p>The site is considered to be available and/or achievable.</p> <p>The site is considered to be potentially available and/or potentially achievable.</p> <p>The site is not considered to be available and/or achievable.</p>
Access to open space	<p>Within 800m walking distance of facilities</p> <p>Within 1200m walking distance of facilities.</p> <p>More than 1200m walking distance of facilities.</p> <p>Not relevant for employment sites</p>
Access to local food shop	<p>Within 400m of a local food shop / scale of development would support new services.</p> <p>Within 800m of a local food shop.</p> <p>Within 1200m of a local food shop.</p> <p>Not relevant for employment sites</p>
Access to a GP / health centre	<p>Less than a 30 minute journey to a GP/Health centre by foot and/or public transport</p> <p>30-45 minute journey to a GP/Health centre by foot and public transport.</p> <p>More than 45 minute journey to a GP/Health centre on public transport.</p> <p>Not relevant for employment sites</p>
Amenity	<p>Development is unlikely to adversely affect the environmental/amenities experienced by would-be occupiers and/or neighbouring areas.</p> <p>Development has the potential to adversely affect the environmental/amenities experienced by would-be occupiers and/or neighbouring areas unless mitigated.</p> <p>Development is likely to adversely affect the environmental/amenities experienced by would-be occupiers and/or neighbouring areas.</p>
Access to a village / community hall	<p>Within 800m walking distance of facilities.</p> <p>Within 1200m walking distance of facilities.</p> <p>More than 1200m walking distance of facilities.</p> <p>Not relevant for employment sites</p>
Loss of employment land	<p>Yes, employment land still in use.</p> <p>Yes, employment land not in use.</p> <p>No.</p>
Proximity to public transport	<p>Ability to support expanded / new bus routes / Regular bus service within 800m / Low frequency bus service within 400m.</p> <p>Regular bus service within 800m-1200m / Low frequency bus service within 400-800m.</p> <p>Bus service over 1200m away / Low frequency bus service more than 800m away.</p>
Access to main/key employment areas in the local area	<p>&lt;800m from local sources of employment</p> <p>800m-1200m</p> <p>&gt;1200m</p> <p>Not relevant for employment sites</p>

Criteria	Decision Rules
Access to schools	<p>Within 500m walking distance of a primary school / scale of development supports new facilities. / Within 1200m walking distance of a secondary school</p> <p>Within 500-1000m walking distance of a primary school / 2000m of a Secondary school.</p> <p>More than 1000m walking distance from a primary school / &gt;2000m from secondary school</p> <p>Not relevant for employment sites.</p>
Fluvial flood risk	<p>Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>Some of the site is in Flood Zones 2 or 3 (up to 50%).</p> <p>Most of the site is in Flood Zones 2 or 3 (more than 50%).</p>
Impacts upon biodiversity on site.	Ecologist assessment – Qualitative assessment undertaken by Council officers.
Proximity to designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites	<p><b>Effects unlikely</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 400m from a SSSI, SAC or SPA / Over 100m from a local wildlife site.</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential effects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within 400m of a SSSI / Within the River Mease Catchment</li> <li>Within 100m of a local wildlife site, priority species or habitats.</li> </ul> <p><b>Effects likely</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains or adjacent (50m) to a SSSI / Loss of Local Wildlife Site / Contains priority species / Significant development (&gt;3000 dwellings) in the River Mease Catchment</li> </ul>
Qualitative assessment of heritage impacts	<p>Significant effects on the heritage assets and their settings are unlikely / potential for enhancement.</p> <p>Moderate potential to achieve suitable mitigation / effects on heritage assets and their settings</p> <p>Significant effects on heritage assets or their settings are likely / mitigation measures unlikely to prevent harm.</p>
Landscape impact	<p>High potential of achieving suitable landscape mitigation or enhancement.</p> <p>Moderate and Moderate/High potential of achieving suitable landscape mitigation.</p> <p>Low potential of achieving suitable landscape mitigation.</p>
Previously developed land	<p>Site is largely brownfield (&gt;70%).</p> <p>Site is a mix of brownfield and greenfield land.</p> <p>Site is largely Greenfield (&gt;70%).</p>
Agricultural land classification	<p>Majority of the site (&gt;70%) is Grade 1 or 2</p> <p>Significant loss (more than 20ha) of Grade 1,2 or 3</p> <p>Majority of site is Grade 3 (&gt;70%)</p> <p>Majority of site is not Grade 1, 2 or 3 (&gt;70%)</p>
Potential effect on air quality	<p>Development unlikely to have a significant effect on congestion at key junctions</p> <p>Development likely to contribute to increased congestion at key junctions</p>

***Part 2: What has plan making and SA Involved up to this point?***

# 5. Reasonable alternatives

## 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The 'story' of plan-making / SA is described in this section. It describes:

- How, prior to preparing the draft Plan, there has been an appraisal of alternative approaches to addressing a range of plan issues; and precisely how the Council took account of these 'interim' SA findings when preparing the Plan;
- Why alternatives have not been considered for other plan issues; and
- How the SA findings have influenced the development of policies in the draft Local Plan (i.e. through undertaking assessments before the draft Plan was finalised).

## 5.2 Identifying and Appraising Alternatives

5.2.1 The SEA Regulations<sup>1</sup> are not prescriptive with regards to what alternatives should be considered. They only state that the SA Report should present an appraisal of the 'plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme'.

5.2.2 The following chapters describe how, as an interim plan-making / SA step, reasonable alternatives were considered for the following plan issues:

- The amount and distribution of housing and employment land (i.e. the spatial strategy);
- Strategic site options; and
- Affordable housing policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

## 6. Housing growth

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Of critical importance to the growth of housing is the objectively assessed housing need that was determined through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Leicestershire Housing Market Area in 2014<sup>2</sup>.
- 6.1.2 Following the completion of the SHMA and updated reports from Consultants on workplace forecasts, the full objectively assessed need for North West Leicestershire is **10,400 dwellings between 2011-2031**.

### 6.2 What are the Reasonable Alternatives

- 6.2.1 The starting point for determining the reasonable alternatives is to ensure that the objectively assessed housing needs are being met.
- 6.2.2 it is also important to be mindful of existing commitments (developments with planning permission or resolution to grant permission) which as at 1 October 2015 stood at 11,207. The Council project that about 9,600 dwellings would be likely to be built from this source up to 2031.
- 6.2.3 With this in mind, it would not make sense to plan for a target lower than 9,600 dwellings<sup>3</sup>, as this amount of development would potentially come forward anyway.
- 6.2.4 The following three alternatives were identified as reasonable.

Alternative A: Do not allocate further land on the basis that completions and commitments will deliver a significant proportion of the 10,400 requirement.

- 6.2.5 The first reasonable alternative would be to plan for development on the basis that there is no need to allocate further development given that committed development could deliver a significant portion of housing needs for the District. The remaining needs could be met through windfall development, or by relying upon higher rates of delivery than anticipated.
- 6.2.6 Alternative B: Allocate additional housing land to meet the revised OAHN

A second reasonable alternative would be to meet the revised OAHN identified by the council. Therefore, under this approach, there would be a need to provide an additional 800 dwellings on top of commitments and completions (9,600) to ensure that the target of 10,400 is achieved. This approach is consistent with the preferred approach to housing growth set out by the Council in the Proposed Publication Local Plan.

Alternative C – Higher levels of housing growth

- 6.2.7 In representations to the Council, Gladman Developments contend that the appropriate housing land requirement for the District should be 637 dwellings per annum (amounting to a total of 12,760 dwellings). Though the Council are committed to using the robust evidence presented in the JG Consulting study it is considered helpful to present the sustainability implications of planning for housing at such a level. This has therefore been identified as a third reasonable alternative, requiring a further 3,160 dwellings to be planned for above commitments and completions at 1 October 2015.

### 6.3 Unreasonable Alternatives

- 6.3.1 At draft Plan stage, the Council considered that it would be unreasonable to plan for a significantly increased amount of housing (above the OAHN). The rationale behind this was that there was no evidence to plan for more housing than the full OAHN (which already takes economic factors and other policy factors into account).

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<sup>2</sup> Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (June, 2014) Prepared by GL Hearn

<sup>3</sup> At draft Plan stage, commitments and completions were calculated at 9100 dwellings. The alternative tested at this time was based on this figure. The alternatives assessment has been updated to take account of the updated calculations.

6.3.2 In light of consultation feedback, the Council now consider that it is reasonable to test an alternative that exceeds OAHN.

## 6.4 Summary of SA findings

SA topic	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Housing	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓ / ✗
Health and Wellbeing	✓	✓	✓✓ / ✗ ?
Communities and town centres	✓	?	✓ / ✗
Economy and employment	↔	✓	✓
Travel	↔	✗	✗✗
Climate change	↔	✓	✗
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	↔	?	✗?
Landscape, land and soil	↔	?	✗✗?
Built and historic environment	↔	?	✗?
Natural Resources	↔	↔	?
Pollution	↔	↔	✗?

6.4.1 Each alternative would have a positive effect on housing. Alternative B would deliver the full objectively assessed need, having a positive effect on housing and health and wellbeing, whilst Alternative A wouldn't deliver the full objectively assessed need over the plan period. The effect is less positive than Alternative B, which allocates additional land and plans to meet the full need as part of the Local Plan; thereby creating greater certainty. Similarly, alternative C is predicted to have a major positive effect on housing by further increasing choice and flexibility and providing better potential to meet affordable housing needs. However, planning for such a high target could have negative implications by saturating the market, and encouraging in-migration.

6.4.2 Alternative A would have a neutral effect on most other SA objectives, as the level of planned development would be entirely met by committed development. Any further development would therefore not be necessary to meet housing targets, and the Plan would be well placed to reject proposals that would result in harm to the built and natural environment. Given that Alternative B allocates further land, there is potential for negative effects in terms of creating more car travel. There are also potential effects on the built and natural environment as a result of development, but these are difficult to predict given the uncertainty about where this development would be located. Uncertain effects have been identified at this stage, but it is considered likely that new development could be located and designed in a way that mitigates effects and could potentially lead to enhancements in terms of resource efficient housing and green infrastructure networks.

6.4.3 Although the distribution of development is also unknown for alternative C, assumptions can be made about where development would need to be located given the scale of growth that would need to be accommodated. For example, settlements to the north are constrained, whilst it would not be possible to meet needs fully through a dispersed approach alone. Therefore, it is likely that there would need to be increased growth in Coalville and / or Ashby de la Zouch. Given the need to avoid negative effects in the River Mease Catchment, there would also be a need to manage increased growth in Ashby and Measham, pointing towards a greater role for Ibstock and sustainable villages. Taking these factors into account, it is possible to predict the broad effects of alternative C (albeit with strong caveats relating to the unconfirmed distribution of this development). Notably, there would be greater positive effects on health and wellbeing by supporting increased regeneration, town centres, and the local economy. However, the likely effects on environmental factors could be significant. Regardless of distribution, planning for this scale of growth could lead to negative effects upon landscape and travel. Potential effects upon biodiversity, heritage and pollution have also been recorded, though there is greater uncertainty surrounding these factors.

- 6.4.4 Overall, Alternative A would have no significant negative effects, but the positive effects would be slightly less pronounced compared to Alternative B. Although there are some uncertainties about the effects of Alternative B, this approach also offers greater potential for enhancement. Alternative C offers the greatest potential for economic growth and social development. However, this would not benefit all communities, and the effects upon the environment would be significantly worse than alternatives A and B. In the long term, this could have a negative effect on some communities.

## 6.5 Why has the Preferred Approach Been Selected?

- 6.5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that the “Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing ...” it also advises that Local Planning Authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs across a housing market area through the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
- 6.5.2 Whilst the SHMA provides an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN), figure of 350 dwellings per annum for the period 2011-2031 (7,000 dwellings in total), to accord with national policy advice it is necessary to take account of evidence in relation to economic growth potential.
- 6.5.3 The employment requirements to be met in the Local Plan are derived from a study undertaken by the Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC) on behalf of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP) in 2013.
- 6.5.4 In respect of B8 uses (Storage and Distribution) the PACEC study predicts an increase of 3,400 jobs to 2031. There is permitted development for the development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SFRI) west of Junction 24 of the M1 and north of East Midlands Airport (the East Midlands Gateway Rail Freight Interchange). This envisages the creation of about 7,400 jobs, mostly in the B8 Use Class.
- 6.5.5 Clearly not all of the jobs created by the East Midlands Gateway Rail Freight Interchange would be over and above that forecast by PACEC. Some of the jobs would be included within the PACEC forecast of 3,400 jobs for B8 Use Class. This is still significantly more jobs in the B8 Use Class than that forecast by the PACEC study. Particularly as consent has now been given for Rail Freight Interchange, it is considered prudent to consider a greater number of jobs in the B8 Use Class than that forecast by the PACEC study when considering housing requirements.
- 6.5.6 In order to accommodate to ensure that the economic growth outlined above, the Local Plan should seek to ensure that future growth in housing is sufficient to meet these economic needs. Alternative B does this.
- 6.5.7 Alternative A has been discarded, as the housing requirement of 10,400 dwellings would not be met. Although this approach has the fewest environmental implications, it would not help to achieve the plan objectives with regards to housing and employment growth, and is therefore not considered to be an appropriate approach.

Alternative C has been discarded as it presents a scale of growth that is not justified by the evidence and would be difficult to deliver. The SA demonstrates that Alternative C would have the greatest potential for economic growth and social development. However, it is clear that this would not benefit all communities and may cause negative effects on health and wellbeing for some communities. The effects upon the environment could also be significantly worse than Alternative B.

## 7. Housing distribution

- 7.1.1 As described in Chapter 6, the Council has identified a minimum housing requirement of 10,400 dwellings over the plan period. This is supported by robust evidence and an appraisal of alternative growth strategies (see Chapter 6) which concluded that Alternative B was the preferred approach for housing growth.
- 7.1.2 The majority of the housing target will be delivered through existing commitments; with the Council projecting that about 9,600 dwellings would be likely to be built from this source up to 2031. Provision for an additional 800 dwellings is therefore required to ensure that a target of 10,400 is achieved.
- 7.1.3 Another factor that needs to be acknowledged is that since the consultation on the draft Plan, planning permission was permitted in January 2016 for 605 dwellings at Money Hill in Ashby de la Zouch. This is part of a larger potential allocation which has been assessed as one of a number of site options (See 7.2 below). This development has not been included in the calculations for the housing target, which is based on a base date of 1 October 2015. However, it will clearly contribute towards increased housing delivery over the plan period. Therefore, planning for an additional 800 dwellings could lead to the OAN potentially being exceeded.
- 7.1.4 Nevertheless, the strategic appraisal does not take account of the Money Hill permission so as to not prejudice where further development needs could be delivered.
- 7.1.5 The Council considers that planning for a modest overprovision in housing will help to provide flexibility and ensure that the housing target of 10,400 dwellings is achieved.

### 7.2 What are the reasonable alternatives?

- 7.2.1 In determining the reasonable alternatives for delivering the spatial distribution of housing, it is important to establish whether they are realistic and deliverable. It is also appropriate to have regard to the settlement hierarchy that has been established, to ensure that the distribution of development is broadly in-line with the Plan Vision.
- Coalville (Principal Town);
  - Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington (Key Service Centres);
  - Measham, Ibstock, Kegworth (Local Service Centres);
  - Sustainable Villages and smaller settlements.
- 7.2.2 The following alternatives have been identified as being potentially reasonable approaches for delivering the outstanding housing need across the District. Although these alternatives are based upon a residual need of 800 dwellings, the appraisal also considers potential sites which would deliver more than the residual requirement and so would allow for flexibility in the different spatial approaches and to reflect the opportunities for strategic extensions at some settlements (for example within Ashby de la Zouch and Coalville)

#### Alternatives for delivering a minimum of 800 dwellings

**1a. Focus on Coalville Urban Area** – Under this approach, all of the additional housing (800 dwellings) would be allocated to the Coalville urban area<sup>4</sup>. This reflects the role of Coalville as this is the principal location for growth and the highest level of the settlement hierarchy. This additional growth would also ensure that the proportion of overall homes (compared with the district total) in Coalville does not decrease over the plan period compared to that recorded by the 2011 Census (as it would if the remaining housing need was distributed elsewhere).

**2b. Focus on Ashby de la Zouch** – Under this approach, all of the additional housing would be allocated to Ashby de la Zouch. This reflects the town's position as a Key Service Centre in the Settlement Hierarchy. Without this additional growth in Ashby the rate of growth for Ashby over the

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<sup>4</sup> NB: Following the appraisal of these reasonable alternatives, planning permission has been granted for 650 dwellings at Money Hill in Ashby de la Zouch. If planning to meet a target of 10,400 dwellings, this would reduce the residual requirement to only 450 dwellings. The alternatives assessment is based upon a base date of October 2015, which is the base date for the housing figures set out in the Local Plan. This also ensures that the alternatives assessment is not prejudiced by the planning permission at Money Hill.

Plan Period would be lower than the rate of growth for each of the Local Service Centres, which does not strictly reflect its role in the settlement hierarchy. Ashby also provides several large strategic sites that could be developed as sustainable urban extensions meeting (or exceeding) the full amount of additional housing required.

**2c. Focus on the main towns** – Under this approach the additional housing would be distributed between the ‘key Settlements’, applying the principles of the settlement hierarchy, but taking into account land supply and constraints. This would mean a rough split as follows: Coalville (290) Ashby de la Zouch (170) Castle Donington (50 – due to constraints) Ibstock (130), Kegworth (110) and Measham (50).

**2d. Dispersal option** – Under this approach, the majority of development would be directed to the Local Service Centres and the Sustainable Villages (rest of district) to maintain the proportion of dwellings provided in these areas. If the residual housing need was met elsewhere, the proportion of homes in sustainable villages will decrease over the plan period. The distribution under this alternative could be broadly as follows: 380 dwellings split more thinly between the main settlements - Ibstock (50); Kegworth (30); Measham (40); Ashby de la Zouch (80); Coalville (130); and Castle Donington (50). For the rest of district / Sustainable Villages, the split could be as follows (based on SHLAA site availability) - Appleby Magna (65); Albert Village (45); Blackfordby (40); Coleorton (25); Donnithorpe (40); Moira (30); Ravenstone (40); Swannington (40); Heather (40); Diseworth (25). Worthington (10), Breedon-on-the-Hill (20),

**E. Coalville and Ashby de la Zouch** – This approach would split housing needs between the Principal town of Coalville and Ashby de la Zouch, which is the next largest settlement capable of accommodating significant growth. This is in line with the settlement hierarchy by providing for a large portion of additional growth within Coalville, but directing the residual need to Ashby de la Zouch. Under this approach the broad split would be as follows: Coalville (450), Ashby de la Zouch (350).

## 7.3 Unreasonable alternatives

7.3.1 The following further alternatives were considered, but were determined to be unreasonable for the reasons outlined below.

**A new settlement** – No opportunities for a new settlement have been promoted. The proposed scale of growth is not considered substantial enough to support significant new facilities either.

**Focus on the north** – Given the increase in jobs that are likely to be available to the north associated with the East Midlands Gateway, it seems sensible to direct further growth to the north at settlements including Castle Donington, Kegworth and sustainable villages. This would in theory help to match new homes to those areas where job growth is anticipated to be highest. However, there is not enough land identified to deliver 800 dwellings in this location. There are also significant constraints associated with flood risk and the East Midlands Airport.

**Direct all growth to sustainable villages** – This would be difficult to achieve and would require sites in most villages to be built to high densities. This level of growth in the sustainable villages would also be contrary to the settlement hierarchy and would see an increase in the proportion of housing in ‘rural areas’ compared to the position at the 2011 Census, which would be contrary to the spatial strategy.

**Distribute development to Coalville and / or Ashby de la Zouch and the sustainable villages.** This approach starts from the top of the hierarchy but then skips a layer (*Local Service Centres*) of the settlement hierarchy with no justification or rationale. This approach is therefore not considered to be a reasonable alternative.

## 7.4 Summary of SA findings

SA topic	A: Focus on Coalville	B: Focus on Ashby	C: Main towns	D: Dispersal	E: Coalville & Ashby
Housing	✓?	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓?
Health and Wellbeing	✓✓	✓	✓	✓ / ✗	✓
Communities and town centres	✓✓?	✓✓?	✓✓?	✓	✓
Economy and employment	✓	✓	✓✓	⇔	✓✓
Travel	✗	⇔	✗	✗	⇔
Climate change	✓	✓	⇔	✗	✓
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	✗?	✗	?	?	⇔
Landscape and land	✗✗?	✗	✗✗	✗✗	✗
Built and historic environment	⇔	✗?	⇔	✗	?
Natural Resources	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔	⇔
Pollution	✗✗	⇔	✗	⇔	✗

- 7.4.1 Alternative D would have moderate adverse effect on landscape character and minor negative effects upon a range of other environmental factors. It is also unattractive in that it increases reliance on car travel to access jobs and services, and will place more people in areas with poorer accessibility to essential services and facilities. Overall, this approach is considered less sustainable than the other four alternatives.
- 7.4.2 Each of Alternatives A, B, C and E have a mix of positive and negative effects. Each is more positive or negative in certain aspects than the others, and it is therefore difficult to draw conclusions about which option is the 'most sustainable'.
- 7.4.3 Alternative A scores particularly well by supporting growth and regeneration at Coalville (which has high accessibility) and delivers positive effects on health & wellbeing and employment. However, this alternative does have potential for negative effects on landscape and it is unclear whether substantial housing growth could be delivered at Coalville. Though this alternative would promote growth and regeneration in areas of need, the benefits of development would be focused only in Coalville.
- 7.4.4 Alternative B, although likely to have a positive effect on the economy, town centres and wellbeing, would be to a lesser extent compared to either Alternative A or C. However, this alternative would be less likely to have an effect on environmental factors such as landscape and pollution (compared to Alternatives A, C and D). By focusing all the growth to Ashby de la Zouch, there would also be the potential to secure infrastructure improvements through strategic development opportunities.
- 7.4.5 Alternative C would have a positive effect in supporting local economies and employment and provide benefits for town centres. In particular, this approach would have a major positive effect on housing by providing a range of housing across the district, potentially addressing affordability in a number of settlements. However, it scores poorly in terms of potential adverse effects on landscape character and also presents the potential for negative effects on air quality and biodiversity and patterns of travel.
- 7.4.6 Alternative E would have generally positive effects, as it would have the benefit of splitting development to two locations that are accessible and capable of delivering further growth (though there are some uncertainties around delivery in Coalville). By splitting the growth this way, some of the more adverse effects associated with both alternatives A and B ought to be avoided. But this approach would be less likely to create the economies of scale to support new infrastructure at each settlement.
- 7.4.7 In summary, there are similarities with each alternative, with each generating positive effects for housing, health, communities and employment. However, Alternatives A and C generate more significant negative effects with regard to landscape and pollution, as well as creating potential issues in Coalville associated with increased congestion in the urban area (Which could potentially affect the AQMA). In this respect these two alternatives are less attractive than alternatives B and E, which generally perform similarly across other sustainability factors to Alternatives A and C, yet do not generate these negative effects.

## 7.5 Why has the Preferred Approach Been Selected?

- 7.5.1 The preferred approach is to focus the majority development at Ashby de la Zouch as it is the second largest settlement within the district with an extensive range of services and facilities and is identified within the settlement hierarchy as a main town. Ashby de la Zouch has not seen as much growth in recent years as the principal town Coalville and the other main towns within the district Castle Donington and Kegworth. Therefore by directing growth to Ashby de la Zouch this reflects its position in the settlement hierarchy. Ashby de la Zouch has a buoyant housing market and is attractive to both developers and potential purchasers. The Council has to be sure that what is proposed within the local plan can be delivered in order to meet the districts housing needs.
- 7.5.2 Directing all growth to Coalville, would support the growth and regeneration at Coalville and would deliver positive effects on health and well-being and employment. However, this option has been discounted as Coalville has already seen a large number of commitments and it is considered that the housing market in Coalville may not be robust enough to support additional development. Land values are lower in Coalville than other parts of the district and viability has been an issue for some sites, in addition demand for housing in this area of the district is lower. Therefore by directing further development to Coalville could potentially saturate the housing market.
- 7.5.3 Focusing development on the main towns including Coalville, Ashby de la Zouch, Ibstock, Kegworth, Castle Donington and Measham. Whilst this would have a positive effect in supporting local economies and employment and provide benefits to a number of town and local centres it is not the preferred alternative due to the availability and suitability of sites within the SHLAA that do not already have commitments. There are significant constraints at Castle Donington in relation to flood risk to the north, proximity to East Midlands Airport and Donington Park to the south; whilst development further east would threaten settlements such as Lockington and Hemington. There are again the issues of delivering further housing than is already committed within Coalville and by directing further growth to Kegworth, Ibstock and Measham when taking account of what is already committed wouldn't conform to the settlement hierarchy.
- 7.5.4 Dispersing development around the district to smaller settlements would (with an additional 1100 dwellings) have an adverse effect on the landscape and the built environment. It is also least attractive in terms of accessibility, and would increase reliance on car travel to access jobs and services. Furthermore, whilst there are sites identified within the SHLAA in each of the settlements concerned; these settlements are not as sustainable as Ashby de la Zouch, nor do they offer the opportunity for a strategic mixed-use development.

## 8. Site appraisal: Ashby de la Zouch

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 It has been considered necessary to allocate sites in the Plan to meet the planned housing target of 10,400 dwellings. Allocating sites helps to provide more certainty that the developments will come forward in the Plan period, and hence demonstrate that the spatial strategy is deliverable.
- 8.1.2 It is important to test the sustainability constraints and opportunities associated with potential site options to establish which locations would be most appropriate to accommodate growth.

### 8.2 What are the reasonable alternatives?

- 8.2.1 A number of spatial options were identified and tested through the SA to help determine how the residual housing requirement could be distributed across the district. The preferred approach of the Council to the strategic distribution of housing was to focus the majority of additional growth to Ashby de la Zouch, which was identified as a broadly sustainable location for growth.
- 8.2.2 It is important to acknowledge that planning permission has already been granted at Money Hill for 605 dwellings. Therefore, an element of this residual housing has already been committed. The Council consider that completion of this strategic site offers an attractive and appropriate approach to delivering the outstanding housing needs whilst securing enhancements to community infrastructure. To build out the site, it is estimated that an additional 1145 dwellings could be delivered over and above this permission (a total of 1750). However, only 1500 dwellings would be expected to be delivered in the plan period (an additional 895 dwellings above the 605 permitted).
- 8.2.3 Given that there are other site alternatives in Ashby de la Zouch, it was deemed helpful to appraise a range of alternative site options to compare how they perform in terms of sustainability, and whether they would be better alternatives within the broad location of Ashby de la Zouch (*rather than the build out of Money Hill*).
- 8.2.4 With the housing options limited to sites within Ashby de la Zouch, the following site options have been appraised in the SA to identify how they perform in terms of sustainability. These sites were identified through the SHLAA (2014 and 2015) and exclude sites that have planning consent or where there is a resolution to grant consent.

Reference	Site Name
A5	Money Hill, Ashby de la Zouch
A7	Packington Nook, Ashby de la Zouch
A14	Sports Ground, Lower Packington Road, Ashby de la Zouch
A17	Land at Dents Road, Ashby de la Zouch
A18	Land at Junction 12 of the A42
A20	Land East of Mill Farm, Ashby de la Zouch
A21	Land East of Western Close, Ashby de la Zouch
A22	Arla Dairy, Smisby Road, Ashby de la Zouch
A23	Former Playing Field, Prior Park
A24	Ivanhoe Equestrian Centre
A25	North of Moira Road

- 8.2.5 An appraisal of each of these sites options has been undertaken using the site appraisal framework. A summary of the findings is presented below.
- 8.2.6 It is important to acknowledge that the Money Hill site is identified as having the potential to deliver up to 1750 dwellings (though only 1500 is anticipated to be delivered in the plan period). This would be a further 895 dwellings within Ashby de la Zouch (in addition to the 605 dwellings already granted planning consent at Money Hill). Therefore, the site options have been tested in the context of being able to deliver up to 895 dwellings.

8.2.7 To deliver this quantum of development in Ashby de la Zouch, the choice essentially comes down to the following broad alternatives.

- Complete the strategic extension to the North East at A5: Money Hill;
- A strategic extension to the South at A7: Packington Nook (plus a combination of adjacent sites A14, A18, A20, A21
- A combination of multiple sites in the urban area and urban fringe, plus smaller scale development at Packington Nook

8.2.8 Table 8.1 and Table 8.2 summarise the SA findings for the site options both individually and collectively as would be required to deliver the identified amount of housing.

**Table 8.1** Summary of site appraisal findings for Ashby de la Zouch<sup>5</sup>

Site ID	Site Name	Deliverability	Access to open space	Access to food shop	Access to GP/Health Centre	Amenity	Access to a village/community hall	Loss of employment land	Proximity to public transport	Access to key employment sites	Access to primary school	Access to secondary school	Fluvial flood risk	Impacts upon biodiversity on site	Proximity to bio and geo diversity	Heritage impacts	Landscape impact	Previously Developed Land	Agricultural Land Classification	Air quality / congestion	Protection of minerals
A5	Money Hill	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Red*	Green	Amber	Red	Red**	Amber	Green	Green
A7	Packington Nook	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A14	Sports Ground, Lower Packington Road	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A17	Land at Dents Road	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A18	Land at Junction 12 of the A42	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A20	Land east of Mill Farm	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A21	Land to the east of Western Close	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A22	Arla Dairy, Smisby Road	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A23	Former Playing Field, Prior Park	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A24	Ivanhoe Equestrian Centre	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green
A25	North of Moira Road	Amber	Green	Red	Green	Green	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green

<sup>5</sup> \*The agricultural land criterion was incorrectly illustrated as Amber in the SA Report for the Pre Submission version of the Plan. This has been corrected to a red classification in the table 8.1. \*\* More detailed information on biodiversity was identified when appraising E17 (which also covers A5). This meant that the original classification against 'proximity to biodiversity has changed from green to red. All sites in Ashby fall within the SAC catchment and are therefore classified as amber.

**Table 8.2** Summary of effects

Sites	Summary of effects
<b>Extension to the North East of Ashby de la Zouch</b>	
<p>A5      <i>Money Hill</i></p>	<p>Development at Money Hill would be easier to achieve successful mitigation in terms of landscape compared to development to the south, but there is potential for negative effects on views from atop Ashby Castle. There are also fewer constraints with regards to flood risk and potential effects on amenity. Access to services is similar to development at Packington Nook, although Money Hill is better related to employment areas and the town centre. It should be recognised that these are large sites that will have variable accessibility throughout though.</p>
<b>Extension to the South of Ashby de la Zouch</b>	
<p>A7      <i>Packington Nook</i>  A14     <i>Sports Ground, Lower Packington Road</i>  A18     <i>Land at Junction 12 of the A42</i>  A20     <i>Land east of Mill Farm</i>  A21     <i>Land to the east of Western Close</i></p>	<p>Development on sites to the south would be more likely to have a significant negative effect on landscape character (particular to deliver 895 dwellings), given the low potential to achieve mitigation highlighted in the landscape character assessment. Development on A18 would involve the loss of Grade 2 agricultural land (which would not occur at A5 Money Hill). Although mitigation and avoidance would be possible, sites A7, A20 and A21 would also be at a greater risk of flooding compared to development at 'Money Hill'. Development to the south could be affected by noise from the A42, although mitigation measures should be available.</p>
<b>A combination of smaller sites in the urban area and urban fringe</b>	
<p>A17     <i>Land at Dents Road</i>  A22     <i>Arla Dairy, Smisby Road</i>  A23     <i>Former Playing Field, Prior Park</i>  A24     <i>Ivanoe Equestrian Site (Part of Money Hill)</i>  A25     <i>North of Moira Road</i></p>	<p>A17 and A22 are both brownfield sites within the urban area that are fairly well related to the town centre. Development could be achieved without having a significant effect on the environment, but there could be some amenity issues associated with surrounding land uses and there would be a loss of employment land. A24 falls within the broader opportunity area for an urban extension at Money Hill, and would be less attractive as an individual site for development without the supporting infrastructure associated with the build out of Money Hill as a comprehensive development.</p> <p>A23 is a small site within the urban area. Development of this site could potentially affect the setting of Ashby Castle.</p> <p>A25 is a greenfield site option on the urban fringe.</p> <p>Together, a mix of A17, A22, A23 and A25 could potentially deliver up to approximately 500 dwellings, which (together with the permitted development at Money Hill for 605 dwellings) could potentially deliver the Council's proposed target of 10,400 dwellings. However, such an approach would mean that the Money Hill site would not be built out, and the supporting infrastructure that this would bring may not be viable.</p> <p>Sites A22 and A17 are on brownfield land in the urban area and are not sufficient to meet the residual housing target on their own. However, these could be allocated in addition to either of the strategic sites identified above.</p>

### 8.3 Why has the preferred approach been selected?

- 8.3.1 In order to reach the preferred site allocation the remaining sites within Ashby de la Zouch in the SHLAA without planning permission have been appraised to assess the sustainability of the sites; in particular if they relate well to existing services and facilities, employment facilities and whether they can be easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. The sites are also assessed against a set of environmental constraints for example the impact of development on biodiversity and the landscape.
- 8.3.2 The preferred site to the North of at Ashby de la Zouch (A5 - Money Hill) scores well in relation to accessibility, due to the southern part having good access to the town centre, the Tesco's site and existing employment sites. As part of the site appraisal it was identified that the landscape at land to the North of Ashby (Money Hill) has moderate potential to accommodate change through securing mitigation measures. There are no known highway constraints or viability issues which could result in the site not being deliverable over the plan period.
- 8.3.3 Sites A22 and A24 have been incorporated into the allocation at Money Hill (A5).
- 8.3.4 An extension to the south of Ashby, would include Packington Nook (A7) and further allocations from A14, A18, A20 or A21. These sites have all been assessed as being less accessible than the Money Hill site, as they are located further away from the town centre, creating difficulties in terms of transport and access to services by foot. There are no shops or community centres near to the sites to meet day to day activities and the sites are not located near to Ashby's main employment activities which are concentrated to the north of the town. There are also issues in relation to noise due to the proximity of the site to the A42
- 8.3.5 Parts of the Packington Nook site have already been subject to two planning applications which have been refused at appeal. In response to a planning application the Highway Authority considered that development of the site may have a negative impact on the existing highway and transportation network within the surrounding area.
- 8.3.6 Despite the Dents Road site (A17) being promoted by planning consultants on behalf of a landowner, it has not been allocated as there is currently no known developer interest and the industrial unit on site is still in use. Furthermore, it would only deliver a small amount of housing.
- 8.3.7 Site A23 is small scale and on its own would only meet a small portion of housing needs. Furthermore, it is within close proximity to Ashby Castle and is thought likely to have significant negative effects upon the setting of this heritage asset.
- 8.3.8 Site A25 would Site A25 is not as well related to the town centre and all its services and facilities, including a leisure centre and secondary schools, or the main employment sites which are located on the eastern side of the town . There are also concerns about the potential impact upon the small group of dwellings known as Shellbrook which potentially would be subsumed in to Ashby.

## 9. Site appraisal: Coalville urban area

### 9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Although the preferred strategy (Alternative B) does not include development in Coalville. The Council has deemed it appropriate to consider how it should deal with the two outstanding housing allocations within the existing adopted Local Plan. One of these sites is deemed unsuitable for development due to issues with deliverability, whilst the other only provides capacity approximately 100 homes. Therefore, allocation of this site would be negligible in the context of the broad distribution of development to Ashby de la Zouch.
- 9.1.2 The two existing allocated sites are land at Wentworth Road (Policy H4e in the adopted Local Plan) and what is referred to as Broom Leys Road (Policy H4d in the adopted Local Plan). The latter is the remnant of larger sites developed in the 1990's and it would be more accurate to refer to it as being off Waterworks Road.
- 9.1.3 The Wentworth Road site was originally identified in the Coalville District Plan in the late 1970's. There is no evidence to suggest that this site will come forward for development and therefore it is not proposed to retain this allocation. The land at Waterworks Road is owned by the District Council and the intention remains for the site to be developed for housing, with a capacity of approximately 100 dwellings.
- 9.1.4 Rather than rolling this allocation forward automatically (*without consideration of other alternatives in the Coalville urban area to deliver a similar scale of housing*), it has been deemed appropriate to identify and compare alternative site options.

### 9.2 What are the reasonable alternatives?

The Council has identified the following site options as reasonable alternatives to Waterworks Road (which would deliver approximately 95 dwellings) within the Coalville urban area.

**Table 9.1** Summary of site appraisal findings for Coalville

Site ID	Site Name	Deliverability	Access to open space	Access to local centre or food shop	Access to GP/Health Centre	Amenity	Access to a village/community hall	Loss of employment land	Proximity to public transport	Access to key employment sites	Access to primary school	Access to secondary school	Fluvial flood risk	Impacts upon biodiversity on site	Proximity to bio and geo diversity	Heritage impacts	Landscape impact	Previously Developed Land	Agricultural Land Classification	Air quality	Protection of minerals
C19	Stephensons Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
C46	Broomleys Farm	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green
C57	South of Loughborough Road	Green	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green
C67	Waterworks Road	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green

### 9.3 Unreasonable alternatives

9.3.1 The Council has also considered the following alternative, but it was ultimately determined to be unreasonable.

#### **Allocate sites in a different settlement to Coalville**

9.3.2 There are a range of site options available across the district that could be allocated. However, the purpose of this allocation is not simply to provide additional housing within Coalville (or indeed the district as a whole). This site is a long-standing opportunity that the Council wishes to roll-forward from the Adopted Plan into the new Local Plan. The housing target of 10,400 is already being met through the preferred strategy of directing further growth to Ashby de la Zouch, and so deliverability of the plan does not depend upon this site being brought forward.

9.3.3 Furthermore, Coalville is the principal town and top of the settlement hierarchy. Any further development beyond that set out within the spatial strategy, should therefore be focused in this area before looking to settlements further down the hierarchy. Given that three reasonable alternative site options have been identified in the Coalville urban area, it is considered unnecessary to explore site options beyond Coalville.

### 9.4 Why has the preferred approach been selected?

9.4.1 The land at Waterworks Road is owned by the District Council and it remains our intention for the site to be developed for housing.

9.4.2 Compared to the preferred site, site C57 is not as well related to services and facilities and also has impacts upon a sensitive landscape (the Charnwood Forest) and biodiversity features. It would not, however, be likely to have the same impact upon Air Quality Management Areas as the other potential sites (including the preferred site).

9.4.3 Sites C19 and C46 score similar to each other (and to the preferred site) which reflects the fact that they are adjoined. Both sites are adjudged to have negative impacts upon bio diversity and geo diversity and also in terms of the loss of higher grade agricultural land when compared to the preferred site. However, they are better related to key employment opportunities. Whilst not reflected in the SA Framework, both sites are also located within an area where development would result in the coalescence of Coalville and Whitwick contrary to local expressed opinions.

## 10. Site appraisal: Employment land options

### 10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 The Council has identified a residual requirement of approximately 6 hectares to meet the identified needs of 96 ha over the plan period. This takes account of existing commitments and an allowance for employment losses to other uses.
- 10.1.2 In deciding which site (or sites) should be allocated to address this shortfall the Council have had regard to a range of site options which have previously been notified as part of an Employment Land Availability Assessment (ELAA) we undertook in 2013/14.

### 10.2 What are the reasonable alternatives?

- 10.2.1 The following alternatives have been identified by the Council as reasonable site options for the delivery of employment land.

**Table 10.1: Summary of site appraisal findings for employment land<sup>6</sup>**

Site ID	Site Name	Deliverability	Amenity	Loss of employment land	Proximity to public transport	Fluvial flood risk	Impacts upon biodiversity on site	Proximity to bio and geo diversity	Heritage impacts	Landscape impact	Previously Developed Land	Agricultural Land Classification	Air quality	Protection of minerals
E1	Pegasus Park Extension	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E5	ELAA Measham Road	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E6a	North Pretoria, Whitehill Road	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E6b	South Pretoria, Whitehill Road	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E9	Rycroft Road	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E10	Stephenson College	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E11	TNT Premises	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E12	Bardon Aggregates Land	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E13	Opposite 25 Grace Dieu Road	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E16	TNT Depot East of A42	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E17	North of Ashby, Moneyhill	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	*	Green	Green	*	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E18	Swains Park Industrial Estate	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E19	North of Derby Road	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E20	Redhill Farm, 97 Top Street	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E21	Land at Hermitage Industrial Estate	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	?	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E22	Land at Vulcan Way	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	?	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E23	Land at Snibston Museum	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	?	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E24	Land west of S.Leicestershire Industrial Estate	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	?	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E25	Land off Beveridge Lane	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	?	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
E26	South of Interlink Park	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	?	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow

<sup>6</sup> Table 10.1: Has been amended following consultation on the Pre-submission version of the plan. \*E17 was illustrated as a 'red' for flood risk, when in fact it should have been 'green' (as per the proforma in Appendix). \*\*The effects on heritage have been changed from red to amber to correlate with the potential effects identified for A5 (which overlaps considerably with option E17).

### 10.3 Why has the preferred approach been selected?

- 10.3.1 Having regard to the settlement hierarchy this identifies Coalville Urban Area as the Main Town and so was the first place to be looked at. Whilst there are a number of potential sites within the Coalville Urban Area 31.79 Ha of employment land is already identified as commitments to be delivered within the plan period.
- 10.3.2 In accordance with the settlement hierarchy the next places to consider were Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington. Whilst the ELAA identifies a number of potential sites in the vicinity of Castle Donington it is considered that in view of the fact that there is already a significant amount of employment in this area, along with the consented Strategic Rail Freight Interchange that additional employment would represent an imbalance with housing provision in the locality.
- 10.3.3 In terms of Ashby de la Zouch two potential sites are included in the ELAA – south of Ashby and north of Ashby. It is considered that land at north of Ashby (Money Hill) would be the more appropriate of the two sites.
- 10.3.4 Land to the North of Ashby de la Zouch is the preferred site for employment as this will help to balance out the loss of employment which has occurred in Ashby in recent years. The provision of employment as part of a strategic, mixed use development would represent a sustainable form of development and would relate to well existing employment areas which are largely concentrated on the eastern side of Ashby de la Zouch.
- 10.3.5 On the basis of this assessment the Council concluded that it would be most appropriate to allocate land north of Ashby de la Zouch as part of a comprehensive development involving housing.
- 10.3.6 The Money Hill site scores as one of the poorest sites in the SA due to the loss of agricultural land, presence of local biodiversity assets and flood risk on part of the site and potential effects on the setting of Ashby Castle. However, the Council consider that some of these issues can be overcome due to the strategic nature of the site. Site layout and design would be capable of avoiding areas of flood risk and biodiversity value. Though there could be some effects on landscape character, mitigation ought to ensure that effects are not significant.

# 11. Site Appraisal: Reserve sites in Measham

## 11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 A reserve site has been identified in Policy H3c as a contingency measure should the proposed route of the High Speed 2 Rail link affect the deliverability of site H2e (Land West of High Street).

11.1.2 The Council considered alternatives for development in Measham throughout the plan-making process, determining that:

- This is an issue specific to Measham, and thus alternatives to H2e should be located within this settlement.
- Although there are two large areas identified in the SHLAA within Measham (M6/M7 and M11/M12), there are potential amenity issues with one of these sites (M6/M7), and so the preferred option was the site off Ashby Road/Leicester Road (M11/M12).
- Given the amenity issues at the alternative site (M6/M7) it was not considered to be an appropriate site. Other sites in the area were quite small and had (or now have) planning permission and so these too were not considered to be reasonable.

11.1.3 Notwithstanding the above, the Council received comments during consultation on the draft Local Plan and Interim SA Report (**see Appendix F**). These representations suggest that alternative sites in Measham should be considered as part of the SA process.

11.1.4 In order to address the concerns raised through these representations; further SA work has been carried out to consider alternative reserve site options within Measham.

## 11.2 What are the reasonable alternatives

11.2.1 As part of the iterative SA process, seven site options within Measham have been identified for appraisal. These are all sites identified in the 2014 SHLAA.

**Table 11.1: Reserve site options within Measham**

Site ID	Site Name	Deliverability	Access to open space	Access to food shop	Access to GP/Health Centre	Amenity	Access to a village/community hall	Loss of employment land	Proximity to public transport	Access to key employment sites	Access to primary school	Access to secondary school	Fluvial flood risk	Impacts upon biodiversity on site	Proximity to bio and geo diversity	Heritage impacts	Landscape impact	Previously Developed Land	Agricultural Land Classification	Potential effect on air quality	Mineral resources
M2	Chapel Street, Measham	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green
M4	Land off New Street, Measham	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green
M5	Land at Ashby Road, Measham	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green
M6	Land adjacent to Atherstone Road	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green
M7	Oaktree House, Measham	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
M11	Land off Leicester Road	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green
M12	Land off Ashby Road, Measham	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green

### 11.3 Why has the preferred approach been selected?

- 11.3.1 The preferred approach remains the same as within the pre-submission version of the Local Plan (*i.e. the Council proposes to identify land at Ashby Road/Leicester Road Measham as a reserve site in the event that Land West of High Street is not developable*).
- 11.3.2 The original reasons for selecting the site options (M11/M12) as a reserve site allocation remain valid; with amenity concerns being identified for alternative site options of a sufficient size (M6/M7) to compensate for potential loss should the Route of the HS2 mean that committed development cannot come forward.
- 11.3.3 The SA reveals that M6/M7 (combined) could present the potential for greater adverse effects upon the historic environment and landscape (compared to the preferred site option M11 and M12 combined) and has poorer access to bus links.
- 11.3.4 Two of the individual options (M12 and M7) form part of larger parcels of land and given the amount of development required, it is unlikely that these smaller sites on their own would be suitable as reserve sites. Site M12 forms a logical part of site M11, by 'rounding off' development and providing a link to Ashby Road.
- 11.3.5 Sites M2, M4 and M5 are also too small individually to offset potential loss due to HS2. A combination of the small sites could help to offset potential loss due to HS2, but this would still not be enough to fill the likely gap; and would be less likely to secure improvements to social and physical infrastructure on site.

## 12. Affordable housing

### 12.1 Introduction

- 12.1.1 Affordable housing is one issue for which it is possible to define alternative provision; however, it is not clear that there is necessarily a choice to be made. It is not considered to be beneficial to formally appraising alternatives to the affordable housing target for different settlements. This matter is considered further, below.

### 12.2 What are the Reasonable Alternatives?

#### Outline reasons for not appraising alternatives for Affordable Housing

- 12.2.1 Affordable housing is a major issue for the Local Plan. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA<sup>7</sup>) study completed to inform the Local Plan estimated the level of annual need for affordable housing over the period 2011-2031 was 212 dwellings. This means that there is a need for about 40% of the number of new homes delivered over the plan period (535 per annum) to be affordable. However, achieving this amount of affordable housing is a challenge.
- 12.2.2 The Council must set a policy that will maximise affordable housing delivery, whilst not negatively impacting on development viability to the extent that developers will be dissuaded from building homes in the District. As such, the decision regarding affordable housing policy must be guided by technical evidence regarding development viability locally. There is no need for the decision to be guided by Sustainability Appraisal. It is not the case that there are draw-backs, in terms of any sustainability objective, to maximising delivery of affordable housing.

### 12.3 Why has the Preferred Approach Been Selected?

- 12.3.1 As mentioned above, there is a need for about 40% of the number of new homes delivered over the plan period (535 per annum) to be affordable.
- 12.3.2 A separate viability study has been undertaken which looked at the potential impact of all of the policies in the Local Plan upon the viability of new development. The report establishes six market value areas covering twenty eight development site archetypes, as a representative sample of sites likely to come forward. These different archetypes have been tested for delivery and viability against draft local plan policies considered to have a direct or indirect effect on development viability.

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<sup>7</sup> Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (June, 2014) prepared by GL Hearn, see [http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/leicestershire\\_shma\\_report/Leicestershire%20SHMA%20Report%20%20June%20%28Final%29%20reduced.pdf](http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/leicestershire_shma_report/Leicestershire%20SHMA%20Report%20%20June%20%28Final%29%20reduced.pdf)

# 13. *Alternatives for other plan issues*

## 13.1 Introduction

- 13.1.1 Thematic planning policies (for example, to consider issues such as ‘design’ and ‘environmental protection’) can be prepared on the basis of a robust evidence base without the need to rigorously assess a series of options as part of the SA at each stage of policy development.
- 13.1.2 A range of options are often presented at an early stage to invite input from stakeholders on what approaches they would prefer. This is a useful exercise, but it is not always productive or necessary to undertake detailed sustainability appraisal on such ‘options’. Rather, the sustainability appraisal framework can be used to help guide policies as they develop, so that the principles of sustainability are ‘frontloaded’. Sustainability Appraisal can then be used more purposefully to inform policy approaches at a later stage of plan development when there is more policy detail (i.e. the ‘preferred options’).
- 13.1.3 For these reasons, it has not been considered necessary or proportionate to undertake an assessment of alternative policy approaches relating to the following issues:
- Heritage;
  - Design;
  - Environmental protection;
  - Climate change;
  - Infrastructure provision; and
  - Town centres.

### ***Part 3: What are the appraisal findings and recommendations***

# 14. Appraisal of the draft plan

## 14.1 Determining effects

- 14.1.1 The appraisal of the draft Plan uses the SA framework as a basis for identifying and evaluating any 'likely effects' on the baseline / projected baseline associated with the Plan approach.
- 14.1.2 It should be noted that effects are predicted based upon the criteria presented within the SEA Regulations<sup>8</sup>. So, for example, account is taken of the nature of effects (including magnitude, spatial coverage and duration), the sensitivity of receptors, and the likelihood of effects occurring as far as possible. The potential for 'cumulative' effects is also considered.<sup>9</sup>

## 14.2 Presenting findings

- 14.2.1 The effects are identified taking into account characteristics including magnitude, scale, duration, frequency and reversibility (i.e. the 'extent' of the effects), the sensitivity of receptors, and the likelihood of effects occurring.

**Table 13.1** Determining the effects of the Local Plan chapters

<b>S</b> = An assessment of the significance of effects in light of the effect characteristics.			
↑	Positive effect	↑	Significant +ve effect
↓	Negative effect	↓	Significant -ve effect
↔	No effect / neutral	?	Uncertainty
<i>*In some instances it may be appropriate to present both positive and negative effects against the same SA Objective. This reflects the fact that a policy/the Local Plan could have positive effects on an SA objective in one respect, or in one geographical area, and negative effects in other respects / or different areas.</i>			

## 14.3 Plan policies

- 14.3.1 Table 13.2 below sets out the key chapters and policies within the draft Local Plan.

**Table 13.2** Policy content within the draft Local Plan.

Chapter	Policy	
<b>Spatial Strategy</b>	S1	Future housing and economic development needs
	S2	Settlement Hierarchy
	S3	Countryside
<b>Design</b>	D1	Design of new development
	D2	Amenity
	D3	Telecommunications
<b>Housing</b>	H1	Housing provision: planning permissions
	H2	Housing provision: resolutions
	H3	Housing provision: new allocations
	H4	Affordable Housing
	H5	Rural Exception Sites for Affordable housing
	H6	House types and mix
	H7	Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
<b>Economy</b>	Ec1	Employment provision: Permission

<sup>8</sup> Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>9</sup> In particular, there is a need to take into account the effects of the Local Plan acting in combination with the equivalent plans prepared for neighbouring authorities. Furthermore, there is a need to consider the effects of the Local Plan in combination with the 'saved' policies from the [Old Local Plan].

Chapter	Policy	
	Ec2	Employment provision: new allocations
	Ec3	Existing employment areas
	Ec4	East Midlands Airport
	Ec5	East Midlands Airport: Safeguarding
	Ec6	East Midlands Airport Public Safety Zones
	Ec7	Donington Park
	Ec8	Town and Local Centres: Hierarchy and Management of Development
	Ec9	Town and Local Centres: Thresholds for Impact Assessments
	Ec10	Town and Local Centres: Primary Shopping Areas – Non-Shopping Uses
	Ec11	Town and Local Centres: Primary Shopping Areas – Hot Food Takeaway Balance
	Ec12	Local Centres
	Ec13	Tourism development
	<b>Infrastructure and services</b>	IF1
IF2		Community and Cultural Facilities
IF3		Open Space, Sport and Recreation facilities
IF4		Transport Infrastructure and new development
IF5		The Leicester to Burton Line
IF6		Ashby Canal
IF7		Parking provision and new development
<b>Environment</b>	En1	Nature Conservation
	En2	River Mease Special Area of Conservation
	En3	The National Forest
	En4	Charnwood Forest
	En5	Areas of Separation
	En6	Land and air quality
<b>Heritage</b>	He1	Conservation and enhancement of North West Leicestershire's historic environment
	He2	Shopfront Design
<b>Climate change</b>	Cc1	Renewable Energy
	Cc2	Water - Flood Risk
	Cc3	Water - Sustainable Drainage Systems
<b>Implementation and monitoring</b>	IM1	Implementation and monitoring of the Local Plan

## 14.4 Conclusions

- 14.4.1 The majority of housing and employment being planned for over the plan period is committed. There is limited potential for the Local Plan to affect the delivery of this development. Having said this, there will be further development (including housing and employment allocations at Money Hill in Ashby de la Zouch) that will be directed to settlements that are broadly well served by facilities and with access to jobs (i.e. The principal towns and key service centres). This should help to support the local economy and have positive effects on health and wellbeing. Potential negative effects on environmental factors (such as landscape, built heritage and biodiversity) are considered unlikely to be significant given that policies in the Plan will seek to provide suitable mitigation. The Plan also has the potential to have a significant positive effect on biodiversity through enhancement measures, and will help to secure higher quality design in new development, particularly in terms of improving the water efficiency of new homes.
- 14.4.2 Negative effects upon the experience of Ashby Castle (views from atop) have been identified as a result of the Money Hill development. Whilst much of this area already has planning permission, further development is only likely to exacerbate any changes to the setting of the countryside viewed from atop the castle. It is important that the next phases of development are carefully designed to ensure that long range views from the castle are protected, as well as introducing landscaping measures to ensure that development is well supported by green infrastructure and open space. Despite mitigation on site, an element of change will still occur, so negative effects are recorded. However, these ought to reduce over time as construction phase's end and new trees/vegetation matures.
- 14.4.3 Generally, the Plan has been positively prepared, and there was little scope for suggesting mitigation measures, as few negative effects were identified. However, as the plan was being developed, the draft policies were subjected to SA, and a small number of mitigation and enhancement measures were suggested through the SA. This led to positive changes to policies Ec2, Ec3, , En1 and En4 as outlined in the previous section.
- 14.4.4 Table 13.3 below presents a summary of the effects identified for each SA topic.

**Table 13.3** – Summary of cumulative effects of the Local Plan on the SA objectives

SA1 Housing	SA2 Health	SA3 Communities	SA4 Economy / SA5 Employment	SA6 Town centres	SA7 Travel	SA8 Low carbon energy	SA9 Flooding	SA10 Biodiversity	SA11 Heritage	SA12 Landscape	SA13 Land and soil	SA14 natural resources	SA15 Pollution
↑	↑	↔	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑ ↓	↑ ↓	↑	↓	↑	↑ ↓

Summary of effects	Monitoring measures
<b>Housing (SA1)</b>	
<p>The spatial strategy (with supporting housing policies) will have a <b>significant positive effect</b> on the baseline by seeking to meet the objectively assessed housing need for the district (which takes into account the need to support economic growth). Given that a large proportion of this housing is already committed, the likelihood of this housing being delivered is considered to be high (although market factors will clearly be important). A further strategic housing allocation in Ashby de la Zouch will also help to deliver affordable housing in an area of relatively high house prices, which is positive for local communities in this area.</p> <p>In general, the development management policies in the plan are supportive of housing growth, and are likely to add to the attractiveness of development, rather than act as a barrier.</p> <p>The plan is considered likely to have a <b>significant positive effect</b> on the baseline position.</p>	<p>Annual number of housing completions and percentage of annual targets/projections.</p> <p>Annual number of affordable dwellings delivered and percentage of target.</p>
<b>Health and wellbeing (SA2)</b>	
<p>The Plan incorporates measures delivering <b>not significant positive effects</b> on the health and wellbeing of the District's population. The Plan aims to provide sufficient housing (including affordable housing) and employment opportunities for the District's population which would have a positive effect on their wellbeing. In addition, the Plan incorporates policies (including EN1-EN6, S4, and IF3), which aim to protect and enhance the natural environment, and open space throughout North West Leicestershire, which would have a positive effect in terms of promoting healthy lifestyles in the district.</p> <p>A requirement to deliver new community services and facilities throughout North West Leicestershire and improve existing services and facilities (IF1 and IF2) should have a not significant positive effect on the health and wellbeing of the District's population through ensuring good access to key services and facilities.</p> <p>Only Policy Ec2 in the Local Plan is determined to have a <b>significant positive effect</b> on the baseline by providing employment opportunities in Ashby de la Zouch. In combination however, there could be synergistic effects which could lead to a further <b>significant positive effect</b> on health and wellbeing in the longer term. For example, residents would be more likely to be able to access a job and affordable housing, have access to good quality environments and community facilities, and have better facilities for walking and cycling. Together, these factors could make a difference to health and wellbeing, which is the product of a complex relationship between multiple factors.</p>	<p>Net change in the amount of open space.</p> <p>Financial contributions to open space provision.</p> <p>Net loss / gain in community facilities.</p> <p>Health profile monitoring.</p>

Summary of effects	Monitoring measures
<b>Communities, town and village centres (SA3 / SA6)</b>	
<p>There is a strong focus in the Plan to ensure vitality and viability of existing town and local centres. By directing an appropriate level of growth to settlements, this should help to support local businesses, without having an undue adverse effect on the character of settlements, which is important in terms of community identify and attracting visitors.</p> <p>Growth at towns and villages may offer the opportunity to enhance community infrastructure through securing developer contributions. The Plan sets out an appropriate policy framework for achieving this.</p> <p>Economic policies are likely to have a <b>significant positive effect</b> on the town and village centres baseline position. In combination with other policies in the Plan, the overall effect would still be a <b>significant positive effect</b> on the town and village centres.</p>	<p>Vacancy rates in town and village centres.</p>
<b>Economy and Employment (SA4 / SA5)</b>	
<p>The Plan seeks to provide sufficient land to support employment opportunities throughout the District. There is also support for economic diversification in rural areas, increased visitor attractions and protection of good quality employment land.</p> <p>The policies in the Plan seek to provide sufficient housing to support economic growth and to improve accessibility through infrastructure improvements. Overall, a <b>significant positive effect</b> is predicted.</p>	<p>Employment land lost to other uses.</p> <p>Number of visitors / day trips to visitor attractions.</p> <p>Commuting trends.</p>
<b>Travel (SA7)</b>	
<p>As a large proportion of development has already been committed, infrastructure will have been secured that minimise impacts on transport. For any further development, the Plan directs housing and employment towards the main settlements which will help to ensure that existing facilities and public transport links will be in close proximity. However, Increased development in the main towns (as directed by the settlement hierarchy) is likely to lead to further travel by private car, which is the most prevalent form of travel in the District. In areas of greatest development such as Coalville and Ashby de la Zouch, this could lead to increased congestion at peak times.</p> <p>Plan policies encourage the development of sustainable modes of transport in new development, seek to ensure that infrastructure is upgraded as necessary, and also support the re-opening of the National Forest Rail Line. These measures will each help to minimise additional car traffic and promote sustainable modes of travel.</p> <p>Overall a <b>not significant positive effect</b> is predicted. Whilst the Plan will encourage shorter trips, and more sustainable modes of travel, the influence of the policies is not considered to be high; given that the majority of development (and mitigation) has already been established, and the predominant mode of travel would remain the private car.</p>	<p>Financial contributions towards transport infrastructure improvements.</p> <p>Ratio of workplace- based employment to residence-based employment.</p> <p>Proportion of new housing developments within 400m of a bus stop/rail station, primary school.</p> <p>Peak time congestion and traffic count monitoring.</p> <p>Public transport use monitoring.</p>

Summary of effects	Monitoring measures
<b>Climate change: Low carbon energy (SA8)</b>	
<p>The spatial strategy is unlikely to have a significant influence on whether development is able to achieve carbon emissions reductions.</p> <p>Most policies in the Plan could have positive implications for climate change mitigation and adaptation, but they are unlikely to have an effect on the baseline position as they reflect principles set-out in national policy. However, identifying potentially suitable areas for wind energy is an important step towards the development of such energy schemes. Consequently, a <b>not significant positive effect</b> is predicted overall.</p>	<p>Renewable energy capacity installed by type.</p> <p>Domestic emissions per capita (tonnes).</p>
<b>Climate Change: Flooding (SA9)</b>	
<p>The distribution of housing and employment (through committed development) could potentially lead to development in areas at risk of flooding such as Castle Donington and Kegworth. However, a large amount of development has already been examined through the planning system and flood risk assessments will have formed part of this process as necessary.</p> <p>Any further development (guided by the settlement hierarchy) would also need to satisfy policy requirements on flooding, which would ensure that development did not take place in areas at risk of flooding and / or would secure appropriate mitigation. A <b>neutral effect</b> is predicted.</p> <p>Policy Cc2 will help to ensure that flood risk does not increase as a result of new development, whilst Cc1 encourages the use of sustainable drainage systems and green infrastructure to manage flooding. This should lead to a <b>not significant positive effect</b>.</p>	<p>Number of strategic flood risk assessments undertaken.</p> <p>Applications granted contrary to Environment Agency advice.</p> <p>Net change in surface water run off rates.</p>

Summary of effects	Monitoring measures
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity (SA10)</b>	
<p>Given that the majority of housing development is already ‘committed’, there is limited potential for the Local Plan to influence where the bulk of housing will come forward and therefore, the effects on biodiversity are limited.</p> <p>Allocations for additional housing growth in Ashby de la Zouch could lead to further discharge from Pockingham waste water treatment works, with the potential for negative effects on water quality (and thus biodiversity) in the River Mease Catchment. However, there is currently sufficient capacity at the works to accommodate this development, and Policy En2 would seek to manage further development that could have an adverse effect on the River Mease Catchment. The site appraisal identified that there are potential local wildlife sites that could be affected. Development would, however, be required to adhere to policies in the Local Plan seeking to avoid effects on biodiversity and enhance green infrastructure; which is potentially positive. Consequently an <b>uncertain effect</b> is identified with regards to effects on local wildlife.</p> <p>In combination, there is potential for the policies in the Plan to have a <b>significant positive effect</b> on biodiversity associated with new developments through policies that seek to reverse habitat fragmentation, enhance green infrastructure, protect water quality and implement natural drainage systems. Potential <b>not significant negative effects</b> could occur as a result of strategic and local highways improvements.</p>	<p>Net loss / gain in priority habitats and local wildlife sites.</p> <p>Biodiversity enhancement secured through new development.</p> <p>Habitat Regulations Assessments undertaken</p> <p>Development requiring compensation and % with appropriate schemes secured.</p>
<b>Landscape and land (SA12 / SA13)</b>	
<p>The majority of development proposed in the Plan is already committed, and it is assumed that potential impacts on landscape have been deemed to be acceptable. The Plan directs further proposed new development towards the larger settlements thereby helping to protect rural landscapes from potential adverse effects. Policy S4 also provides stringent measures for the protection of landscape for new development in the countryside, which is a <b>significant positive effect</b>. New housing and employment development has the potential for negative effects, but these are not considered to be significant as there would be a need to adhere to the policies within the Local Plan that seek to protect and enhance landscapes.</p> <p>The Plan also emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing landscape character; specifically within Areas of Separation, within the National Forest and Charnwood Forest Regional Park. It is probable that development contributions will be secured to contribute to enhancements in these areas, which in combination would also be considered a <b>significant positive effect</b>.</p> <p><b>Not significant negative effects</b> are also predicted as there would be a loss of agricultural land classified as best and most versatile as part of the allocation of Money Hill. As further developments come forward there is also potential for further effects on agricultural land and landscape.</p>	<p>Community perception of changes to their settlements.</p> <p>Landscape character assessments undertaken.</p> <p>Development permitted in the countryside (Ha)</p> <p>Financial contributions towards enhancements in the National Forest.</p> <p>Net loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.</p>

Summary of effects	Monitoring measures
<b>Built and historic environment (SA11)</b>	
<p>Policy H3 locates a significant development within proximity of the Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area and within the setting of Ashby Castle. The predicted effects upon the Conservation Area are not likely to be significant given that policy He1 and D1 will need to be implemented. However, the development of Money hill for housing and employment presents the potential for <b>significant negative effects</b> on the experience of the castle (on views from atop the castle) in the short term, and <b>not significant effects</b> in the longer term (once construction phases have been completed and any new trees/vegetation has matured). Though it ought to be possible to reduce the effects of this development, some change to character is inevitable and so a not significant negative effect is predicted. The Council has amended policies H3 and Ec2 in response to these concerns, and thus the magnitude and likelihood of effects occurring ought to be reduced somewhat (potentially reducing the significance of the negative effect in the short term). This is positive, but a degree of uncertainty remains, as the success of the policy clauses will depend upon appropriate measures being agreed at design stage and these being implemented successfully. Careful monitoring is recommended.</p> <p>Where new (or 'full') applications for development are submitted, or where existing planning permissions expire, there is potential for the policies in the Local Plan (particularly He1 and D1) to have a not significant positive effect in terms of ensuring the need to protect and enhance the District's built and natural heritage.</p> <p>The in-combination effects of all the plan policies are not considered to be significant because they are largely reflective of national policy principles and legislation, which would already provide protection and enhancement for the historic environment.</p>	<p>Conservation Area Assessments – Changes in character compared to previous assessments.</p> <p>Change in the number and condition of heritage assets 'at risk'.</p> <p>Community perception of changes to their settlements.</p> <p>Feedback on customer experiences at Ashby Castle.</p> <p>Planning conditions established to ensure that significant effects on the setting of Ashby Castle are minimised during construction and occupancy of the development at Money Hill.</p>
<b>Natural Resources (SA14)</b>	
<p>Although it is reasonable to assume that new development will lead to increased use of natural resources and increased generation of waste, much of this development is already committed, and so these effects cannot be attributed directly to the Plan.</p> <p>For further development that comes forward, the Plan is likely to have a limited influence on the ability to secure developments that make the use of resource efficient materials and minimise waste. These factors are largely dealt with through National Housing Standards and Building Regulations. However, the Plan seeks to distribute development to areas that make best use of existing infrastructure, which should help to reduce the need for new construction materials.</p> <p>Policy Cc1 also identifies areas of potential suitability for wind energy development, which is a not significant positive effect.</p> <p>Overall, a <b>not significant positive effect</b> is predicted.</p>	<p>Cost of waste disposal per capita.</p> <p>Levels of recycling, composting and reuse.</p> <p>% of housing developments achieving water efficiency standards.</p>

Summary of effects	Monitoring measures
Pollution (SA15)	
<p>The level of new development planned over the plan period will increase demand for water resources, increase emissions to the air and increase discharges to water, potentially affecting the quality of these resources. However, as the majority of new housing and economic development required already benefits from planning permission, it is assumed that the potential impact on water resources and quality, air, light and noise pollution was considered and deemed to be acceptable (taking mitigation and cumulative effects into account).</p> <p>Development management policies in the Plan are considered appropriate to minimise the effects of further development upon air quality, water quality and residential amenity (noise and light pollution). In particular, policies that promote the development of pedestrian and cycle links, and seek to achieve enhancement to the quality and amenity of water, should help contribute to a <b>not significant positive effect</b> on the baseline situation.</p> <p>Development of Money Hill in Ashby de la Zouch is expected to increase car travel, which would have a <b>not significant negative effect</b> on air quality in this area.</p>	<p>Air quality monitoring.</p> <p>Achievement of water framework directive targets.</p>

## 15. Mitigation and Enhancement

- 15.1.1 As the plan was being developed, the draft policies were subjected to SA, and a small number of mitigation and enhancement measures were suggested through the SA.
- 15.1.2 Generally, the draft Local Plan has been positively prepared. There was little scope for suggesting mitigation measures, as no significant negative effects were identified. However, there was some scope for enhancement of positive effects, as well as mitigation where not significant negative effects were identified.
- 15.1.3 Table 14.1 below sets out the measures suggested through the SA below and the response taken by the Council. In some instances, this led to policy changes, which has been reflected in the SA findings.

**Table 14.1: Proposed mitigation and enhancement measures**

Issue	Mitigation / enhancement	Response
Increasing the proportion of low carbon energy generation is an important objective that the Local Plan should seek to support	It could be made explicit in Policy Ec3 that low carbon facilities will be supported at existing employment sites.	The Council consider that the Local Plan will allow for and encourage suitable facilities on employment sites such as waste management centres. Therefore, no amendments to this policy are considered necessary.
Proposed policy Cc1 has the potential to be overly restrictive with regards to wind energy.	Proposed policy Cc1 set out that wind energy schemes would 'not be granted' unless they had community support. This could be restrictive, as wind energy is not always popular. It is suggested that the wording is changed.	The Council has amended the policy to state that proposals will be 'supported' where there is community support. This change is beneficial with regards to low carbon energy generation.
Whilst Policy En4 will help to protect the character of Charnwood Forest (which may correspond with the protection of wildlife habitats), the emphasis of the policy is on the landscape and cultural heritage of the area. It is therefore less likely that there would be significant enhancements with regards to biodiversity.	Policy En4 should also give priority to proposals that enhance biodiversity and reverse habitat fragmentation, in particular lowland heathland and deciduous woodland.	The Council have amended Policy En4 to include the following as a priority proposal for support. <i>Enhance the biodiversity of the CFRP, consistent with the aims of the Charnwood National Character Area profile (SEO3);</i>
A number of policies propose increased visitors to the countryside, National Forest and Charnwood Regional Park. This could create increased recreational pressure on areas of importance to biodiversity.	Policies Ec13 En1, En3 and En4 could include a clause relating to managing visitor pressure. For example... <i>Proposals should demonstrate how access and visitor management (on biodiversity) will be addressed as part of the development.</i>	The Council has amended policy En1 and Ec13 to take account of this issue.

Issue	Mitigation / enhancement	Response
A new strategic development at Money Hill has the potential for negative effects in the character of Ashby de la Zouch Conservation Area	Although planning applications for the site would need to be considered in relation to Policy He1, Policies Ec2/H3 ought to make reference to the importance of ensuring new development on the site protects and where possible enhances the Ashby de la Zouch conservation area.	The Council has amended policies Ec2 and H3 to make more explicit reference to the historic environment.
There is evidence to support a higher standard for water efficiency in new development	A clause could be included requiring developers to secure the higher optional water standard (110l/day) subject to viability This approach was proposed at the draft Plan Stage.	This policy has since been removed due to the potential negative impacts this could have on water quality in the River Mease.
A new strategic development at Money Hill has the potential for negative effects on the experience of Ashby Castle.	Notwithstanding the fact that a large proportion of Money Hill already has planning permission, further effects upon views from the castle could be minimised by ensuring that existing belts of trees/vegetation are retained and structural landscaping secured to achieve screening and a less intrusive urban form to the development.	The Council has made specific reference to the need to consider views from atop Ashby Castle in the design and layout of development at Money Hill. Changes have been made to policy H3(a)(v) and within Ec2.

## 16. Next steps

- 16.1.1 An SA Report was prepared to support the Proposed Publication Local Plan. Following consultation on the Plan, the Council took account of consultation responses and findings of the SA before submitting the Local Plan for examination.
- 16.1.2 Updates have been made to the SA Report to reflect comments received during consultation. This was principally to:
- Take account of mineral consultation zones
  - Appraise site options in Measham
  - Rectify incorrect site appraisal scores
- 16.1.3 The next step is for the Council to submit statements and updated evidence before dates for Examination in Public are established.
- 16.1.4 The timetable moving towards adoption of the Plan is set out in Table 14.1 below.

*Table 15.1 – Timetable*

Date	Milestone
January 2017	Examination in Public
September 2017	Adoption

- 16.1.5 At each of these stages, it may be necessary to undertake additional iterations of SA to account for changes/modifications to the Plan.

### Monitoring

- 16.1.6 At the current stage (i.e. within the SA Report), there is a need to present measures envisaged concerning monitoring. Table 13.3 suggests measures that might be taken to monitor the effects (in particular the negative effects) highlighted by the appraisal of the Plan.