FOREWORD

The Strategic Growth Plan has been prepared by the ten partner organisations in Leicester & Leicestershire to provide a long term vision that will address the challenges we face and the opportunities presented to us. It is a non-statutory plan but it sets out our agreed strategy for the period to 2050. We will deliver the strategy through our Local Plans.

We have listened to the comments submitted in response to our consultation and this document is the final version of the Plan. It explains the approach that we have taken in preparing the Plan, identifies broad locations where we think that development should take place and the infrastructure needed to deliver it. We will now work with local people, businesses, developers, landowners, government and statutory organisations to deliver the strategy and secure the infrastructure which is so critical to its success.

Cllr Trevor Pendleton
Chair, Members’ Advisory Group for the Strategic Growth Plan
LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE TODAY

OUR STRENGTHS:

Great location and connectivity – at the heart of the UK, with nationally significant road, rail and air services, and businesses that have the potential to export more goods and services.

Growing and diverse economy – with employment opportunities ranging from traditional manufacturing, logistics and distribution to cutting edge, research and enterprise, innovation and technology sectors.

Distinctive environmental, historic and other assets - beautiful countryside, valuable flora and fauna, thriving market towns and popular villages, country parks, waterways and canals.

A diverse and multi-cultural city - with a young population, unique history, global tourism appeal, and attractive city centre with great shops, leisure, arts and entertainment.

Three outstanding universities - globally significant in space, engineering and sports science, and high quality FE colleges.

OUR WEAKNESSES:

Congestion on our roads and railways - we are tackling this but further investment is needed to continue improvements and support our long term growth.

Gaps in the road and rail network - travelling north-south is relatively easy (albeit congested) but east-west links are slow and unreliable.

Poor economic productivity per head of population - lower than the national and regional averages.

Low pay structure - many highly skilled employees and graduates move away, travel costs are high for those on a low wage making it difficult to access jobs.

High levels of commuting - some of the most important employment areas are remote from places where people live.

Outside the City, an ageing population, not economically active but relatively wealthy. A strong influence on the number and type of dwellings.

Pressures on existing communities from new development, lack of infrastructure and services such as education and health.

IN SHORT, A COMBINATION THAT OFFERS EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

RECOGNISING THE CHALLENGE

Leicester & Leicestershire has huge potential for growth. Located at the very heart of the UK, with a population of over 1 million, a thriving and vibrant city, distinctive and characterful market towns, three universities and an international airport, our economy contributes some £23bn to the UK economy. We have much to offer in terms of quality of life.

We want to play our part in developing the UK economy, improve productivity and create the conditions for growth. We want to increase the speed of housing delivery, remove the barriers that have slowed progress to date, and ensure that there is a good supply of new housing for people who need it. We also want to protect the places and features that make Leicester & Leicestershire special.

If we are to be successful, we need to plan for the future at a ‘larger than local’ level and for the longer term. This allows us to consider a wider range of possibilities.

The Strategic Growth Plan has been prepared by the ten partner organisations - the City Council, the County Council, the seven boroughs and districts, and the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership – to provide a plan which will shape the future of Leicester and Leicestershire in the period to 2050. It is a ‘non-statutory’ plan but it provides an agreed framework which we will use when preparing our individual Local Plans and other strategies.

The Strategic Growth Plan focuses on four key matters:

- delivering new housing
- supporting the economy
- identifying essential infrastructure, and
- protecting our environment and built heritage.

We have not started with a blank sheet. Government, local and regional agencies are also making plans. Where these already have a measure of support, we have used them as a basis for our work. We have also commissioned evidence to inform our work and this is available on our website.*

FIGURE 1: LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE: A CENTRAL LOCATION

*www.strategicgrowthplan.org.uk

GREAT LOCATION AND CONNECTIVITY - AT THE HEART OF THE UK

FIGURE 1: LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE: A CENTRAL LOCATION

*www.strategicgrowthplan.org.uk
PLANNING FOR OUR GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

CALCULATING OUR HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

2011-31 (AND 2036)

The Strategic Growth Plan covers the whole of the period from 2011-50. It is not possible to produce accurate estimates of the scale of growth that is likely to be required for the whole of the period up to 2050 but we can divide it into stages.

Up to 2036, we can use government statistics and economic forecasts to plan with some confidence. The results are set out in our study of housing and economic development needs which calculates the need for both new homes and jobs. Because our Local Plans are being prepared to end dates of either 2031 or 2036, the study sets out our need for new homes and jobs to the same end dates.

The detail is set out in Appendix A but, in summary, across Leicester & Leicestershire we need some 96,580 homes and 367-423ha of land for employment use in the period 2011-31 (See Table A).

2031-50

For the period 2031-50, we can use government statistics and economic forecasts only for the period 2031-36. Beyond that, there are no reliable estimates of population growth or household change, nor economic forecasts, but we need to have some understanding of how much growth we might be expected to accommodate. Having this information allows us to consider a wider range of options than if we were to focus only on shorter term needs.

For the purposes of the Strategic Growth Plan, we have chosen to work with an estimate of our housing needs for whole of the period 2031-50.

These are referred to as our ‘notional’ needs and have been produced by projecting forward the annual figures given in our study of housing and economic development needs. This indicates that, across Leicester & Leicestershire, we will need an additional 90,500 dwellings in this period.

The results will need to be monitored and reviewed as Government statistics become available but they are considered to be a reasonable basis on which to proceed. If we do not look to this longer timescale we will not be able to plan for, and secure funding for, the essential infrastructure that we need.

In terms of economic growth, it is very difficult to predict needs with any accuracy beyond 2036. We have decided, therefore, not to quantify the need for additional employment land for this period, at this stage. Again, in accordance with normal practice, we will monitor and review needs as necessary.

Our total requirements for the period 2011-50 are shown in Table A on page 5.

ACCOMODATING OUR HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

We have analysed the amount of development that has already been built, has planning permission or is allocated in adopted or emerging local plans that have been published. This demonstrates that much of our housing and employment land is already provided for in the period 2011-31.

Beyond, 2031, we have assumed that neither Leicester City Council nor Oadby & Wigston Borough Council will be able to accommodate their needs. An important aspect of the Strategic Growth Plan, therefore, has been to consider how any unmet needs might be shared between the other local authorities in Leicester & Leicestershire.

We have decided that these additional needs will be satisfied, in part, by development in strategic locations in accordance with the strategy set out in this Plan.

The agreed distribution will be set out in an agreed statement. In line with the needs of our Local Plans, this will cover the time periods to 2031 and 2036. The statement will be used with the Strategic Growth Plan as the basis for preparing or reviewing Local Plans.

Whether development takes place before or after 2031, it is clear that more homes and jobs will be needed. We need to plan for this now.

ALIGNING GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

We are very clear that significant new development cannot be accommodated within Leicester & Leicestershire without significant investment in infrastructure and services. We welcome government’s recognition of this problem at a national and regional level, and the investment that is already being committed to projects in our area.

We will continue to work with government, landowners, developers and other stakeholders to accelerate development and to align this with essential infrastructure.

Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision for Growth


* Reference: Joint Position Statement on Housing and Employment Land Supply (March 2018)

**Table A: Total Housing and Employment Land Needs 2011-50**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Employment Land (B1/B2/B8)*3</th>
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<tr>
<td>2011-31</td>
<td>96,580*1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2031-50</td>
<td>90,500*2</td>
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Notes:
1. As shown in Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (January 2017)
2. ‘Notional’ needs calculated by projecting forward estimates set out in the Housing and Development Needs Assessment (January 2017)
3. Small scale B8 only (i.e. less than 9,000 sqm): the amount of land needed for strategic distribution facilities has not been quantified because it is so heavily dependent upon property market considerations.
Without additional infrastructure we will be unable to deliver long term growth on this scale, or in the timescale proposed.

To accelerate the speed of development, we will address the lack of essential infrastructure (highway capacity, schools, healthcare facilities, etc.) We will also consider financial viability which can be a problem on some sites. In others, the costs of the necessary infrastructure might need to be shared across several development sites.

We are working with developers, landowners and statutory agencies to remove the barriers to development and will focus on this more intensively as we move forwards. Our highway authorities have already identified key road and rail projects and are progressing these through formal approval and funding regimes. Outside the City, the County Council has summarised the key projects in its ‘Prospectus for Growth’.*

Together the City and the County Councils, as highway authorities, are collaborating on a Strategic Transport Plan which will identify additional projects and set out short and long term aspirations for sustainable transport initiatives including public transport improvements, ways of reducing the use of the private car and green transport initiatives.

Other statutory undertakers will be able to use the Strategic Growth Plan and Local Plans as a clear statement of the proposed growth in Leicester & Leicestershire. This will allow them to identify their own investment priorities. We will support them in their requests for funding, lobbying government and supporting applications for funding through the normal processes.

Maximising the Returns on Investment

Where infrastructure has already been committed, we now have the opportunity to maximise the returns on this investment and use it to the advantage of our local communities. We have taken as one of the building blocks for our Plan, proposals for infrastructure investment that already have a degree of support from government, executive agencies and other organisations. All of the strategic infrastructure in our Plan is acknowledged as being required to resolve national and regional problems.

Through the Strategic Growth Plan we can maximise the benefits of this investment by focusing growth in areas close to new infrastructure proposals. This does not mean to say that these are the only road and rail projects that are needed to support the growth that we will have. Existing schemes are already in the pipeline (e.g. improvements to the A5, the A511 and Melton Mowbray Relief Road) and we are working to deliver these. Additional schemes will be needed to provide better connections to the strategic network. We will also look for ways to improve public transport, cycling and walking.

In undertaking this work, we recognise that, on our own, we cannot deliver growth on this scale. Government, statutory agencies, landowners, developers and local authorities all have an important role to play in this process. The partnership approach that we have achieved to date provides a secure foundation on which to move forward with other organisations. Without additional infrastructure we will be unable to deliver long term growth on this scale, or in the timescale proposed.

The Building Blocks for Our Plan

Other agencies are preparing plans and strategies which will influence what we do. In many cases, we have contributed to these documents so their contents are already aligned with our own aspirations. At the same time, the Strategic Growth Plan must be firmly rooted in the character of Leicester & Leicestershire and must protect our environmental, historic and other assets. This chapter summarises the principal building blocks that we have used to prepare our Plan.

The Existing Settlement Pattern

The first building block for our Plan is the settlement pattern that we already have. Looking beyond the county boundaries, the settlement pattern can be described as a series of separate towns and cities, extending from Derby and Nottingham in the north to Coventry and Birmingham in the south-west, mostly focused around the M1 and the M69 with intervening rural areas. On either side, extensive rural areas separate Leicester & Leicestershire from the West Midlands and Cambridgeshire.

Within Leicester & Leicestershire the settlement pattern is quite distinctive:

- A strong ‘central’ city (Leicester), located at the heart of the County, with suburbs extending into adjoining boroughs and districts. With strong office, shopping, arts, culture, heritage and visitor profiles, the City is a focus for the market towns, rural areas and major employment areas that are linked to it.

Future growth is expected to be in areas that already accommodate substantial populations and are on or near the strategic transport network. Within these areas, the building blocks for future development include growth opportunities in the following areas:

- Towards Nottingham and the East Midlands
- Towards Birmingham and the West Midlands
- Towards the Oxford-Cambridge corridor
- Towards the West Country

In undertaking this work, we recognise that, on our own, we cannot deliver growth on this scale. Government, statutory agencies, landowners, developers and local authorities all have an important role to play in this process. The partnership approach that we have achieved to date provides a secure foundation on which to move forward with other organisations. Without additional infrastructure we will be unable to deliver long term growth on this scale, or in the timescale proposed.

* Reference: Prospectus for Growth, Leicestershire County Council, September 2017
A ring of strong, independent and characterful market towns each connected to Leicester by radial routes and with strong physical, functional, social and economic ties to the City. The market towns contribute much to the character of Leicestershire, are economically buoyant in their own right and are an important focus for local communities.

Extensive rural areas encircling the City and the market towns, villages and hamlets. The landscape is beautiful and varied, and has an economy of its own, from nationally significant agriculture and food production to a growing professional services sector. Together, this mix of urban and rural areas underpins our quality of life. The long-standing relationship between Leicester, the market towns and the rural areas is a feature that we wish to enhance. It is not lost on us that our settlement pattern resembles that of the ‘social city’, a phrase coined by the garden cities movement of the early 20th Century to describe a perfect partnership between town and country.

The Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Partnership has already been invited to do so. *Local Industrial Strategies are prepared by economic partnerships when invited by government.

The National Planning Policy Framework has recently been revised. The emphasis of the new document is very much on strategic priorities, housing delivery and joint working. It includes a number of significant changes:

- the re-introduction of strategic planning
- the use of a ‘standard methodology’ for calculating housing need, and
- the requirement to prepare a ‘Statement of Common Ground’.

In terms of strategic planning, authorities must now, as a minimum, ensure that there is a plan which addresses the priorities for an appropriate geographical area. It is acknowledged that in many cases, this will highlight the need for collaborative working on a joint plan.

Although the National Planning Policy Framework states the government’s preference for statutory plans, this has come at a late stage in the preparation of our Plan. We consider that the current Plan fulfils many of the government’s requirements. We also have a need for an agreed strategy to set a framework for our Local Plans and investment priorities. For these reasons, we have decided to complete our work on the Plan but we will, of course, consider the need for a statutory plan in line with the requirements of national planning policy as we move forwards.

The second building block of our Plan is an understanding of national policies. These influence what we can do, particularly in relation to our priority areas: housing, the economy, infrastructure and the environment. They also set the government’s agenda for funding so it is important that we reflect these priorities. We want to be ready to take advantage of opportunities that will bring benefits to our area, yet able to control excessive development pressures.

The Government’s Industrial Strategy sets out a long term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. It provides a framework for our own Local Industrial Strategy* and investment by the LLEP. The Strategic Growth Plan considers how existing employment areas can be supported and where new growth should be directed.

We have used the standard methodology to calculate housing needs so that we can compare the results with our own study. We have found that, across Leicester & Leicestershire as a whole, the scale of need is very similar although there are variations at the local level.

In terms of a Statement of Common Ground, our Strategic Growth Plan already fulfils much of what is required: it is a clear statement of acknowledged issues, it identifies our priorities and it sets out an agreed strategy for our Local Plans. It provides a good foundation for future work on our Statement of Common Ground.

* Local Industrial Strategies are prepared by economic partnerships when invited by government. The Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Partnership has already been invited to do so.
The third building block of our Plan is an understanding of the local economy and how it is supported by the Midlands Engine Strategy. The economy in Leicester & Leicestershire is recovering strongly from the last recession but there is still much to be done. Productivity and wages remain below the national average but we have many important growth sectors and key employment locations.

The Midlands Engine Strategy has been prepared by Government and sets out a collective ambition for economic growth and prosperity. It aligns with the national industrial strategy and highlights how the region can build upon existing business sectors and areas of opportunity. It highlights many of our key industries, universities and employment areas as places of national, and even global, significance.

FIGURE 3: ECONOMIC GROWTH AREAS*

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*Places and activities highlighted in the Midlands Engine Strategy (2017)
The fourth building block of our Plan is an understanding of the local road and rail networks and how they are supported by proposals in the Midlands Connect Strategy. A particular feature of the road and rail network in Leicester & Leicestershire is its emphasis on north-south movement and the difficulty of east-west movement. All routes, however, are heavily congested and few have the capacity to support growth beyond 2031.

The Midlands Connect Strategy has been prepared jointly by the Midlands Connect Partnership and government agencies. It supports the Midlands Engine Strategy and sets out a series of long term transport investment priorities to help unlock jobs and growth. It proposes a rolling 25-year programme of strategic road and rail improvements around a series of economic hubs and intensive growth corridors.

The Strategy endorses a number of key rail projects in Leicester & Leicestershire including improved rail services between Leicester, Coventry and Birmingham. Key road projects include improving the A5, M42/A42 and A46 to expressway standard, including a new road to the south and east of Leicester linking into strategic highways to the west.

Whilst the electrification of the Midland Main Line north of Kettering will not now proceed as originally planned, we will continue to press for improvements to the track, stations and services to support our local economy and housing growth.

The improvement of the Leicester-Burton Railway Line does not form part of the Midlands Connect Strategy. Currently, the cost of improving the track for passenger use, re-instating stations and operating services on this line far exceeds available funding and the likely income. If viable funding solutions were to emerge, however, supported by new development in the vicinity of the line such that it could be re-opened for passenger use, the matter could be reviewed in future.

Similarly, the railway lines from Leicester to Melton Mowbray and from Melton Mowbray to Nottingham/Newark do not feature in the Midlands Connect Strategy. Improvement of these lines would also improve connectivity and provide additional public transport options to support growth. At present, however, the cost of improved lines and services requires further investigation to establish the economic case and availability of funding solutions.
The fifth building block in the Plan is a recognition of the assets that are most important to us. We have identified key features and designations to help us make decisions about areas that need to be protected (See Fig 5). We have few national or international constraints but there are key features that are important to Leicester & Leicestershire, not least the National Forest, Charnwood Forest, Bosworth Battlefield, areas separating urban areas (our ‘green wedges’), valuable landscape and townscape, local nature conservation designations, civic heritage, conservation areas, etc. Many other places are important locally and these too need to be protected.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL, HISTORIC AND OTHER ASSETS

In a strategic document such as this, it is impossible to convey the range of assets that we have. This information has been assembled, however, and is available on our website. Further detailed information is held by each of the local authorities and will be used to make decisions about potential development sites. Balancing the need for growth with protection of our assets has been a critical consideration.

Difficult decisions have had to be made but we know, from previous experience, that unplanned growth can bring even more unacceptable consequences. We will continue to gather evidence about our assets and how they can be protected as we continue our work on Local Plans.

FIGURE 5: ASSETS

Key:

AGRICULTURAL LAND GRADES:
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3

NATIONAL FLOOD ZONES:
- Level 3
- Level 2

Other Designations:
- Scheduled Monument
- River Mease Catchment Area
- River Mease SAC
- Conservation Areas
- National Nature Reserve
- Geology
- LNRs and Wildlife Sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Archaeological Alert
- HS2
OUR OVERALL APPROACH

We acknowledge that Leicester & Leicestershire will grow. Our population is increasing and we need more homes. We have clusters of businesses, universities and research institutions that operate on a world stage. There is a national and regional imperative to provide more homes and jobs.

But we also know that too much growth in particular locations, and insensitive development, is having an adverse impact on our local communities and on our environment. The lack of essential infrastructure is also slowing the pace of delivery.

The Strategic Growth Plan is our proposal for balancing these competing interests. By providing a long term strategy and a framework for our Local Plans, the Strategic Growth Plan gives us the opportunity to identify strategic development locations and the infrastructure that is essential to their delivery.

OUR PRIORITIES

During the course of our work we have identified four priorities. They are:

- creating conditions for investment and growth – balancing the need for new housing and jobs with protection of our environment and built heritage.
- achieving a step change in the way that growth is delivered – focusing more development in strategic locations and less on non-strategic sites.
- securing essential infrastructure that is needed to make this happen – taking advantage of proposals to improve national and regional networks (as set out in the Midlands Connect Strategy) and maximising the benefits from them.
- maintaining the essential qualities of Leicester & Leicestershire and delivering high quality development.

This sets an agenda for growth which is based on achieving a better relationship between homes, jobs and infrastructure, increasing the speed of delivery and ensuring that development does not damage the special places that we cherish.

INVESTMENT AND GROWTH

Analysis of population and household statistics tells us that Leicester & Leicestershire will continue to grow whether we plan for this or not. New jobs continue to be created particularly in Leicester city centre, in the northern part of the county and around the market towns.

More new jobs are expected in the LLEP’s priority sectors of life sciences (medical technologies); advanced manufacturing and engineering; advanced logistics; space and digital technologies; and textiles. These reflect the priorities of the Midlands Engine Strategy and the growth of the national economy.

More locally, individual authorities are focusing on tourism, leisure, health and wellbeing and supporting the rural economy. The Strategic Growth Plan provides a spatial framework within which this investment and growth can occur.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS OF DEVELOPMENT

To date, the majority of new housing in Leicester & Leicestershire has been built on small and medium-sized sites in the City, market towns, villages and rural areas. Some of this development has been unplanned. Often these developments make little or no contribution to infrastructure or services and, instead, rely on existing facilities. This has created significant problems. Some communities feel overwhelmed by the speed and scale of change. Others are disadvantaged by pressures on local schools, health centres and recreation facilities. Congestion on local roads and public transport is a frequent cause of complaint.

Sometimes those who want to live in good quality homes close to their place of work find that there is little available within their price range. Several major employers and clusters of economic opportunities are located towards the edge of the County. Not all are close to housing so a great deal of commuting takes place. This is a problem not least for those who do not have a car – public transport is often limited.

Our strategy proposes to build more development in major strategic locations and to reduce the amount that takes place in existing towns, villages and rural areas. This will allow us to plan for new housing and employment together with new and improved roads, public transport, schools, health services, local shops and open space.

Our analysis has demonstrated that, through our existing and emerging Local Plans, and planning permissions, we can make provision for the amount of new homes and jobs we need in the period up to 2031. This will be achieved through a mixture of major strategic sites already identified in Local Plans (about 40%) and smaller scale growth on non-strategic sites (about 60%).

SHIFTS IN PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

We are working with developers and Homes England to increase the speed at which development sites come forward and are built out. We will continue to seek funding for essential infrastructure to support development.

In December 2018, Local Plan Proposals We are working with developers and Homes England to increase the speed at which development sites come forward and are built out. We will continue to seek funding for essential infrastructure to support development.

Our vision is that:

“Our vision is that:

“By 2050, Leicester & Leicestershire will have established itself as a driver of the UK economy, exploiting opportunities for linkages across its diverse economic base, supporting its urban and rural centres, and taking advantage of its exceptional location. Growth will contribute to people’s health, happiness and well-being through the timely delivery of well-designed and high quality development, raising the bar in terms of environmental standards, quality of life and local distinctiveness.”

SECURING ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Delivering sustainable growth, before and after 2031, needs new infrastructure, not only road and rail improvements but also schools, healthcare facilities, venues for sports and leisure, open space, community halls, etc. Through our work on Local Plans we have already identified the road and rail improvements that are needed to support growth in housing and jobs up to 2031. Statutory agencies also have the information that they need to organise their investment priorities. The problem has been aligning this provision across a number of delivery agencies. Solving this problem will lie at the heart of delivering growth in the early stages of our plan.

Beyond 2031, the scale of infrastructure and service provision is such that significant investment by government will be needed. Our strategy makes provision for more of our growth to be provided in strategic locations. To do this, we need to:

- deliver the infrastructure and services that have already been identified in Local Plans and planning applications; and
- secure public sector funding for new strategic infrastructure which will open up sites for development.

In terms of road and rail projects, we recognise that the lack of funding, or the ability to secure finance, and a range of other factors have caused delay. We need to resolve these problems if we are to create high quality developments with a sense of place and everything that they need to create real communities. Growth after 2031 is also very much dependent upon earlier infrastructure being put in place.

We have considered how these road and rail improvements could support strategic development in Leicester & Leicestershire. We have concluded that there are major opportunities for strategic development in locations that relate well to areas of housing need and economic opportunity. It makes great practical and financial sense to maximise the benefits that are offered by these schemes.

We recognise that, if high quality sustainable development is to be achieved, these schemes will need to be supported by public sector investment in local road and rail improvements, and in public transport. The City and County Councils, as highway authorities, are already starting to identify what will be needed but decisions cannot be finalised until specific development sites have been identified in Local Plans. The Strategic Transport Plan will provide more information on what these improvements are and how they will be delivered.

DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

We have decided that our common agenda will be delivering 21st century garden towns, villages and suburbs within our strategic growth areas. This reflects the settlement pattern of the City and County, and establishes a framework for protecting the valuable assets that we have. It also allows us to develop a strong agenda around social, economic and environmental priorities.

The scale of opportunity in Leicester & Leicestershire assists these choices. Our strategy focuses development along transportation corridors and close to important employment centres. At a local level, we could expand existing settlements or create new ones. We could plan for some new development in existing urban areas. Indeed, given the scale of opportunity, several of these options could be delivered in combination. The decisions will be made in our Local Plans but the intention is that individual decisions will be made in line with this strategy.

The Garden City concept allows us to plan for new development which captures the very best of town and country. It would ensure that new development is planned with strong social, economic and environmental foundations, and that communities are placed at the heart of planning. This is the common agenda to which we will work as we bring forward, through our Local Plans, the major development opportunities in the Plan.

FIGURE 6: THE SOCIAL CITY CONCEPT OF THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

Credit: Town And Country Planning Association
Our spatial strategy acknowledges the scale of growth that is already in the pipeline as a result of Local Plans and planning permissions. It also builds upon known road and rail infrastructure opportunities or commitments. In delivering the strategy we will enhance the role of Leicester at the heart of the county and maintain the close relationships between the City, the market towns and rural areas. In doing so, we will prepare Local Plans in line with this spatial strategy to ensure that growth is delivered in a way which responds positively to our aspirations.

**LEICESTER: OUR ‘CENTRAL CITY’**

Leicester has a pivotal role to play in the strategy. We propose that it should develop its role as the ‘central city’ supporting the market towns and rural areas around it. More jobs, leisure, arts, culture and entertainment facilities would be provided within the City Centre. The strategic regeneration area along the Waterside will develop as a mixed use area, extending the economic opportunities available within the centre of the City, but balancing new jobs with the need for new homes.

The population of the urban area, in and around Leicester City, is about 650,000 and increasing rapidly. We are working collaboratively to accommodate all of the homes that the City needs in places that are well-connected to it. Given the scale of housing need and the potential for new jobs, the City needs to grow. This needs to be done in such a way that we can make full use of existing services and infrastructure within the City. Also, by providing more homes close to jobs in the City Centre and other employment centres, we will be able to relieve development pressures in other parts of the surrounding authorities.

We will enhance the role of Leicester and maintain the close relationships between the city, the market towns and rural areas.

**FIGURE 7: STRATEGY PLAN**
THE A46 PRIORITY GROWTH CORRIDOR

The ‘expressway’ proposal for the A46 is critical to our strategy. It not only provides an alternative route to the M1 but also creates the opportunity for significant development to the south and east of the City. The expressway proposal is included in the Midlands Connect Strategy and proposes a new road extending from a new or improved junction on the A46 and continuing to the south and east of Leicester, with a new junction on the M1 (J20a). The new road will re-join the existing A46 to the north-east of the City. The precise route of the new road will have significant implications for encouraging growth in Leicester and Leicestershire and will be the subject of consultation at various stages in its routing and design.

Improvements to the railway lines and services between Leicester, Coventry and Birmingham are also proposed.

The combination of new and improved roads and railways in this area creates the opportunity for major development along a corridor extending around the southern and eastern fringes of Leicester. The proposed new road is of national and regional significance but it also provides the opportunity for strategic development in Leicester & Leicestershire. We estimate that this corridor has the potential to accommodate about 38,000 new homes and additional new jobs.

The Midlands Connect Strategy proposes that the A46 and A5 expressways will be built by the early 2030s. Increased capacity on the railways is proposed within the same timeframe. As planning progresses on these road and rail projects, and Local Plans make provision for future development, the Plan proposes that we should start to shift the balance of new growth away from small and medium-sized sites, towards major strategic locations within this corridor.

WE ESTIMATE THAT THIS CORRIDOR HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ACCOMMODATE ABOUT 38,000 NEW HOMES AND ADDITIONAL NEW JOBS

THE LEICESTERSHIRE INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY

The Leicestershire International Gateway is focused around the northern parts of the A42 and the M1, where there are major employment opportunities, notably East Midlands Airport, East Midlands Gateway (strategic rail freight terminal) and HS2 station at Toton nearby. The authorities have already made provision for strategic new growth in this area (e.g. the centres of Coalville, Loughborough and Hinckley). This need to be completed as a matter of priority to provide the opportunity for people to live close to their places of work. At the same time, some parts of the area (e.g. the centres of Coalville and Shepshed) are in need of regeneration and the physical fabric needs to be improved. In our Local Plans we intend to explore the theme of ‘forest towns’ suggested in the National Forest Strategy. This could be a way of enhancing the physical fabric of the towns and villages in this area and making the most of our environmental assets. It would also support investment in tourism and leisure facilities and the health and wellbeing agenda.

Loughborough, with a world class university, has also made provision for a science and enterprise park and this needs to be delivered in conjunction with improved access from J25 on the M1, now funded.

Overall, we estimate that the area has the potential to accommodate about 11,000 new homes. Improvements to the A42, the M1, railway lines and services – all set out in the Midlands Connect Strategy – support this opportunity.

THE A5 IMPROVEMENT CORRIDOR

The A5 provides a long distance strategic route running from the south-east to the north-west. The route acts as an alternative to the M6 motorway between J12 and the M1 but suffers from increasing congestion and lack of capacity to serve as a strategic route when there are problems on the M6. Also, it is expected to experience increased traffic growth in the future from advanced manufacturing and logistics developments such as the MIRA Enterprise Zone & Technology Park, phase three of DIRFT near Daventry and Magna Park in Lutterworth.

Improvement of the A5 corridor is essential to reduce congestion in the area, to deliver already planned housing growth and to support delivery of major industrial sites which already have Local Plan allocations and/or planning permission. Managing the delivery of consented/allocated sites in and around Hinckley will be achieved through Local Plans.

There are long-standing proposals, promoted by the A5 Partnership*, to improve the A5 from Dodwells to Longshoot, widening to dual-carriageway a short section of the A5 near Hinckley which carries the traffic of both the A5 and the A47. The A5 Partnership proposals also call for improvements to upgrade the A5 between the A38 and the M1 to ‘expressway’ standard. This is supported by the Midlands Connect Strategy and will provide much needed relief to local roads, and provide an efficient alternative route to the M6, between J12 and the M1.

MELTON MOWBRAY: KEY CENTRE FOR REGENERATION AND GROWTH

Melton Mowbray sits at the centre of a largely agricultural area in the north east of the county. Somewhat distant from other centres, strategic road and rail routes, the town functions as a rural hub for the surrounding villages and rural communities, the focus of social and economic activity, enhanced by a characterful and distinctive landscape. Despite economic growth has been constrained by lack of sites and poor connectivity but there is evidence that local firms are looking to expand and new businesses wish to move in.

The town centre is congested and in need of regeneration but has a great deal of potential.

Investment in the public realm – the buildings, public spaces, streets – would do much to restore confidence in the town and support its potential as a centre for tourism and leisure in one of the most attractive parts of the county.

The recent approval for the Melton Mowbray Relief Road provides the catalyst for change: it will remove congestion in the town centre and open up land for development to the north and east of the town. Similar investment in highways to the south of the town could increase this further.

New growth will support town centre shops and services and provide the opportunity for people to live close to where they work. The new A46 expressway and improved connections to it, will also improve connectivity to Leicester, the M1 and the Leicestershire International Gateway.
AREAS OF MANAGED GROWTH IN LOCAL PLANS

Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth and Market Harborough vary in size, location and economic base but all contribute significantly to the local economy. All are already under intense pressure for development and have made substantial provision within and on the edges of the existing towns. Much of this has still to be built and is dependent upon new local infrastructure. Further sustainable development should be consistent with the need to support local growth. In particular, there are aspirations for continued town centre regeneration and better services.

OUR VILLAGES AND RURAL AREAS

In recent years, our villages and rural areas have been under intense pressure for growth. The strategy proposes that, in future, there will be limited growth in these areas, consistent with providing for local needs.

NOTIONAL CAPACITY (DWELLINGS)

We have estimated the notional capacity of our strategic growth areas to accommodate new homes and this is shown in Table B below. In Appendix B we indicate how this growth would be distributed across the eight local authorities in Leicester & Leicestershire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth area</th>
<th>Notional capacity (dwellings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A46 Priority Growth Corridor</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leicestershire International Gateway</td>
<td>11,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton Mowbray: Key Centre for Regeneration and Growth</td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTIONAL CAPACITY (EMPLOYMENT LAND)

Our study of housing and economic development needs indicates the amounts of employment land that will be required in the periods 2011-31 and 2011-36 (see Appendix A). We are confident that, for these periods, provision will be made in existing and emerging Local Plans.

Longer term requirements are not quantified. The need for employment land is subject to considerably greater market variability than the need for new homes.

It is, therefore, unrealistic to anticipate what these might be so far ahead. In principle, however, it is considered that the spatial distribution of new employment will need to reflect the overall strategy of the Plan, that employment, homes and jobs to be located in close proximity, and take advantage of opportunities for commuting by public transport. The need for new employment land will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis through the preparation and adoption of Local Plans.

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Our analysis demonstrates that Leicester & Leicestershire has the potential to deliver development which is of national and regional significance. The fact that the Strategic Growth Plan has been prepared by the ten partner organisations responsible for planning, transport and economic development demonstrates the extent of the collaborative work that is taking place. Three strategic documents are being prepared in parallel: the Strategic Growth Plan, the Strategic Transport Plan and the Local Industrial Strategy. Together with Local Plans, these key documents will demonstrate our commitment to future growth and infrastructure investment.

STATUTORY VS NON-STATUTORY PLANS

The changes to the National Planning Policy Framework state a preference for statutory plans, make recommendations on a standard methodology for calculating housing need, and set out the requirements for a ‘Statement of Common Ground’. The work on our three strategic documents, however, has reached an advanced stage. To pause and re-work the Strategic Growth Plan in a different format would cause significant delay at a time when there are significant issues to resolve and opportunities to grasp.

Proposals, therefore, maximise the benefits that are delivered by the infrastructure investment proposed in these documents. We value the government’s stated commitment to the region.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Digital connectivity is a significant issue in parts of Leicestershire, both rural and urban. High quality communications support remote working and provide access to on-line services. They are an essential part of the infrastructure planning process and need to be funded as such.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DELIVERY

We propose, therefore, to proceed on the basis of a non-statutory plan and we will reinforce its provisions as necessary to give confidence that we are committed to delivery. We will implement the Strategic Growth Plan through our statutory Local Plans, supplemented by additional documents as necessary.

Should circumstances change in future, we can update housing need and supply through Statements of Common Ground and/or a review of the Strategic Growth Plan.

ALIGNING INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

It is clear, however, that we will need support from government if we are to achieve the step change in the amount and speed of housing and economic growth that we propose. We started our work with a shared commitment to deliver the homes and jobs that Leicestershire needs over the period 2011-50 and our strategy is set out in this Plan. We wish to take full advantage of the opportunities that are presented by the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect strategies. Our proposals, therefore, maximise the benefits that are delivered by the infrastructure investment proposed in these documents. We value the government’s stated commitment to the region.

We have undertaken an analysis of completions, planning permissions and allocations in adopted and emerging Local Plans. We have concluded that sufficient provision has been, or will be, made in adopted or emerging Local Plans to accommodate the OAN for housing, across the HMA as a whole, for the period 2011-31. The unmet need arising in the administrative areas of Leicester City Council will, therefore, be accommodated in the remaining borough and district councils and this will be reflected in Local Plans as they progress, supported by an agreed statement or Statement of Common Ground as appropriate.

Beyond 2031, provision will be made in Local Plans in accordance with the framework set out in this Plan.

We have undertaken a study of our housing and employment economic development needs for the periods 2011-31 and 2011-36 to align with the different time periods for which Local Plans are being prepared. The results of this analysis are set out in Tables 1 and 2 and further detail can be found in the study. Leicester City Council has formally declared that it will be unable to meet its ‘objectively assessed needs’ (OAN) for housing for the period 2011-31. Oadby & Wigston Borough Council has declared that, subject to further investigation of highway matters, it might be unable to meet its needs for the period 2031-36. Planning guidance requires the OAN to be satisfied across the ‘housing market area’ (HMA) as a whole.

### TABLE 1: HOUSING NEED 2011-31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Housing Need</th>
<th>Number of dwellings per annum</th>
<th>Total number of dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blaby DC</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>4,740</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charnwood BC</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>20,620</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harborough DC</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>10,640</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinckley &amp; Bosworth BC</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>9,420</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester City Council</td>
<td>1,692</td>
<td>33,840</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton BC</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>3,720</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Leicestershire BC DC</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>9,620</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oadby &amp; Wigston BC</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2,960</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Leicester &amp; Leicestershire)</td>
<td>4,829¹</td>
<td>96,580⁰</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2: HOUSING NEED 2011-36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Housing Need</th>
<th>Number of dwellings per annum</th>
<th>Total number of dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blaby DC</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>9,025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charnwood BC</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>24,850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harborough DC</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>12,850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinckley &amp; Bosworth BC</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>11,350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester City Council</td>
<td>1,668</td>
<td>41,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton BC</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Leicestershire BC DC</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oadby &amp; Wigston BC</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3,875</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Leicester &amp; Leicestershire)</td>
<td>4,716¹</td>
<td>117,900⁰</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
2. The totals do not match the sum of the parts due to the way in which additional provision to support economic growth in Melton BC and North West Leicestershire DC is taken into account.
APPENDIX B

NOTIONAL HOUSING NEEDS AND SUPPLY 2031-50

For the purposes of the Strategic Growth Plan, we need to estimate the likely scale of growth for the period 2031-50. This needs to be identified across the housing market area as a whole. Currently, only the Melton Local Plan goes beyond 2031, and only to 2036.

The study of housing and economic development needs also gives us an indication of what needs might be for the period 2031-36.

We recognise that projecting forward beyond this date is highly problematical but we need some notional estimates of growth in order to take a longer term view. In the absence any more authoritative data, therefore, we have chosen to extrapolate these figures forwards. The results are set out in Table 4.

It is important to note that, although these numbers cannot be regarded as being authoritative, they will be consistently monitored and reviewed, and can be adjusted as necessary.

In Table 4, we have also estimated the likely sources of housing supply. The Strategic Growth Plan assumes that both Leicester City Council and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council will be unlikely to be able to meet their objectively assessed needs during this period. Table 4, therefore, assumes that there will be a re-distribution of housing across the housing market area.

In line with the strategy set out in the Plan, we propose that there should be a shift in the focus of development from small- and medium-sized sites to strategic locations.

The authorities in Leicester & Leicestershire agree that the distribution in Table 4 will be used as the basis for future Local Plans. This will be reinforced in an agreed statement or Statement of Common Ground and in Local Plans.

### TABLE 4: NOTIONAL HOUSING NEED AND SUPPLY 2031-50

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Notional Housing Needs 2031-50</th>
<th>Delivery on Non-Strategic Sites</th>
<th>Delivery on Strategic Sites</th>
<th>Total Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dpa</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>dpa</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaby DC</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>6,859</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charnwood BC</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>18,886</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>8,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harborough DC</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>9,766</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinckley &amp; Bosworth BC</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>8,626</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>2,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester City</td>
<td>1668</td>
<td>31,692</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>10,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton BC</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>3,250</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Leicestershire DC</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>8,512</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>4,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oadby &amp; Wigston BC</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Leicester &amp; Leicestershire) (%)</td>
<td>4,764</td>
<td>90,516</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>34,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
2. Charnwood and North West Leicestershire are assumed to meet notional OAN so delivery on non-strategic sites exceeds the Strategic Growth Plan’s figure of 40% of notional OAN.
3. Due to the level of provision for development on strategic sites in Blaby DC, Harborough DC and Hinckley & Bosworth BC, delivery on non-strategic sites is limited to 30% of notional OAN.
4. Delivery on non-strategic sites rounded to the nearest ‘10’. 

LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE 2050: OUR VISION FOR GROWTH
For further details on the Strategic Growth Plan please visit our web site:

llstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk

or contact any of the partner organisations listed on the inside cover.