

## MELTON LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

### MATTERS AND QUESTIONS – MATTER 2

#### Written Statement of Catherine Jennings

##### Matter 2: Overall Spatial Strategy

##### **2.1 Does the Plan provide a sound framework for the roles that will be played by various parts of the Borough in meeting development needs over the plan period? In particular:**

In my view, the plan overall does not provide a sound framework for the roles that will be played by various parts of the Borough in meeting development needs over the plan period, for the reasons set out below.

##### ***i) are the development strategy, settlement hierarchy and broad apportionment of growth (Policies SS2 and SS3) consistent with the Plan's vision and strategic objectives?***

I am concerned that aspects of the development strategy, settlement hierarchy and broad apportionment of growth are not consistent with the Plan's vision and strategic objectives. In particular, I would question whether Policy SS2 specifically satisfies, first, the stated aim of the vision *'to facilitate a sustainable pattern of high quality development which ....ensures that people benefit from having better access to key services and facilities to create strong, healthy, safer communities'* and, second, the strategic objective to *'reduce the need to travel by car and improve access to public transport'*. The reasons why I believe that there is inconsistency are as follows.

In my view, it is not justified and consistent with national policy for the Plan's development strategy to categorise such a wide range of settlements as 'service centres', when there are such significant differences in the size and respective service bases of those villages included within this group. I believe it is unjustified to place villages such as Croxton Kerrial, Hose, Old Dalby, Scalford, Somerby and Wymondham,

which all have relatively limited service and/or public transport provision, on a par as 'service centres' with settlements such as Asfordby and Bottesford. Asfordby and Bottesford are significantly larger settlements whose range of services and public transport provision is far more comprehensive; including multiple shops and, in the case of Bottesford, a secondary school and rail access. Asfordby and Bottesford, in particular, are clearly higher order settlements and, in my opinion, they should be treated as such in terms of both the Local Plan's settlement hierarchy and the way in which housing growth is distributed. As required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), planning decisions should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable. In my view, by including within the Plan such a wide range of settlements in the same 'service centres' category fails national planning policy requirements in this respect and is, therefore, unsound as an approach.

I am concerned that the categorisation of these settlements as 'service centres', alongside the likes of Asfordby and Bottesford, could lead to them receiving disproportionately high levels of housing growth at odds with their relatively limited service bases, local employment opportunities and public transport provision, as well as their relatively small size and more rural character. This could particularly be the case in respect of speculative housing development on unallocated greenfield sites over coming years (as allowed for by Plan Policy SS3). I am doubtful that such an outcome would accord with the Plan's vision to facilitate a sustainable pattern of development which ensures that people benefit from having better access to key services and also the Plan's objective of reducing the need to travel by car and improve access to public transport.

While there may be limitations in making direct comparisons with the approach taken by other Local Plans, given differences in particular local circumstances, it is nevertheless considered useful to look at the example of two other Leicestershire Local Plans and contrast their settlement hierarchies with that of the Melton Local Plan.

In the case of North West Leicestershire's (NW Leics) Local Plan, adopted November 2017, its settlement hierarchy includes the category of 'local service centres', which *'provide some services and facilities primarily of a local nature meeting day-to-day needs and where a reasonable amount of new development will take place'*. In this respect, the description for this category of settlements is comparable with the Melton Local Plan's description for 'service centres'. However, unlike in Melton's case, the NW

Leics Local Plan only identifies large rural settlements with a comprehensive range of services (e.g. a number of shops) as 'rural service centres'. In contrast, in Melton's case, those settlements classified as 'service centres' need not even contain a shop. In the NW Leics Local Plan just three settlements – Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham – are identified as 'local service centres'. In comparing the two local plans, only really Asfordby and Bottesford of Melton's listed 'service centres' are comparable in terms of scale and function. In the case of the Charnwood Local Plan, adopted November 2015, it has seven 'service centres'. Again, in marked contrast with Melton, they are all large rural settlements and are categorised as 'service centres' on the basis that they have a comprehensive range of services and facilities (including retail facilities). Overall, the approach followed by the Melton Local Plan to identify relatively small rural settlements with limited services and facilities as 'service centres' stands in stark and incongruous contrast with the approach followed in the Local Plans of NW Leics and Charnwood. For information, relevant extracts from the NW Leics and Charnwood Local Plans covering their settlement hierarchies are provided at Appendix 1 and 2.

I would, therefore, argue that a more sustainable approach across rural Melton would be to modify the list of 'service centres' and, instead, focus the list on those settlements that clearly possess more extensive service bases, employment opportunities and public transport provision. In accordance with this suggested approach, based on their relatively small size and limited service bases, Croxton Kerrial, Hose, Old Dalby, Scalford, Somerby and Wymondham should be excluded from the group of settlements classified as service centres and, instead, be moved further down the Plan's settlement hierarchy.

In the case of the village of Scalford where I live, I would also add that I fail to understand how it was concluded to be a 'rural supporter' settlement in the Council's 'Settlement Roles, Relationships and Opportunities' report, April 2015 (examination document **MBC/SS2** – see page 12), which meant it was placed some way down the settlement hierarchy defined at that time, but it has since been elevated to a 'service centre' alongside the likes of Asfordby and Bottesford. I am not convinced that this change in approach has been adequately explained and justified in the subsequent evidence prepared by the Borough Council to establish the role and function of Melton's settlements (in particular within examination documents MBC/SS3(a),(b) and (c) and MBC/SS4(a),(b) and (c)).

*ii) are they founded on robust evidence, consistent with national planning policy and deliverable? [Note: the soundness of the specific site*

***allocations including the Melton Mowbray Sustainable Neighbourhoods will be considered under Matters 4 and 5]?***

Further to my comments above, I find it hard to understand how retail provision has not been identified as one of the necessary essential services/facilities used to categorise settlements as service centres. It is claimed that the service centres are all capable of serving the basic day to day needs of residents and those living in nearby settlements, but I would question whether this is possible without the presence also of a convenience retail store that opens over a reasonable number of hours each week. In my view, such provision is surely one of the most essential criteria for any rural 'service centre'. In the case of Croxton Kerrial, Hose, Old Dalby, Scalford, Somerby and Wymondham, however, these settlements have either no local shop or the opening hours of the shop/post office tend to be only for a few hours on a limited number of days each week.

***iii) is the role of Table 4 in informing the detailed housing allocations policies sufficiently clear? Is its evidential base sufficient for its purpose?***

In my representation to the Plan's Focused Changes, I referred to the adequacy of the details included within Table 4 when making more detailed points concerning the proposed allocation of land to the south of Melton Road, Scalford. My concern with respect to Table 4 is the way in which it includes a 'capacity' figure for those proposed housing allocations identified in Policy C1(a). In respect of all proposed allocated sites, both Table 4 and Policy C1(a) refer to exact capacity figures for these sites, whereas Appendix 1 (site allocations and policies) of the Plan refers more loosely to 'estimated capacity'. My concern is that the way in which both Table 4 and Policy C1(a) present site capacities is too precise and could result in the delivery of schemes that do not take sufficient account of site specific detailed design and layout issues and other relevant factors affecting particular locations (such as conservation area considerations). To refer to an estimated capacity figure is, in my view, therefore preferable and should more appropriately allow final dwelling numbers to be determined on the basis of site specific considerations at the detailed design stage.

Similarly, I am also apprehensive that the inclusion within Table 4 of specific 'residual' dwelling targets for each and every settlement could have the potential to cloud and unduly influence the number of dwellings on specific sites (particularly in those cases where the settlement has a single allocation), rather than dwelling numbers being

determined on the basis of site specific factors at the detailed design stage. This, however, seems an inherent danger of having such specific dwelling targets for each settlement; targets that seem to have been derived rather tenuously and exclusively on the basis of existing settlement population sizes rather than, as would have been more rational and justified based on national policy, sustainability considerations. I would suggest that more flexibility should be introduced into the Plan in respect of how these targets are presented, although how exactly I am not entirely sure.

**2.2 Does Policy SS3 provide effective guidance for development proposals on unallocated sites in/on the edge of existing rural settlements? How will the risk of inconsistency with the development strategy from repeated application of the policy be assessed?**

I questioned in my representation to Focused Change 1 whether, in its current form, Policy SS3 is justified and consistent with national policy (which advocates a plan-led approach to meeting housing needs) by allowing windfall developments to come forward on currently unidentified greenfield sites outside existing built-up areas.

I would like to reiterate the point that the National Planning Policy Framework (as part of its glossary) identifies that windfall sites normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available, and that, in this context, I would question the legitimacy of the Plan including any allowance for future windfall housing delivery on greenfield sites outside settlements. Whilst it is reasonable and commonplace to expect windfall development to be realised on previously-developed sites within settlements, with the extent of a settlement's built-up area providing some form of control over development levels, my concern is that to readily allow 'windfall' schemes to come forward on greenfield sites outside settlements, over and above site allocations, is potentially too open-ended, uncoordinated and lacks reasoned justification. It is certainly not an approach that is typical of other local planning authorities and, therefore, normal planning practice for a plan-led approach. It risks certain settlements receiving significantly more housing growth than the Plan currently indicates they would receive. Instead, it would seem more appropriate to ensure that a sufficient level of greenfield land outside settlements is allocated by the Plan for housing development from the outset, in order to provide greater certainty that there will be enough land to meet the housing target overall. This would obviate the need for further, uncoordinated greenfield land release for housing development over the rest of the plan period, except should there be a particular need to do so in the future due to an inability to demonstrate, at that time, that there is a sufficient level of

specific deliverable housing land supply across the Borough as a whole.

As a consequence of concerns I raised, I suggested that the second paragraph of Policy SS3 be amended to read as follows: **“Outside of those sites allocated through the local plan, planning permission will be granted for new development in the rural area within existing settlements, provided it is in keeping with the scale and character of the host settlement and where...”**. It seems totally inappropriate and contrary to national policy for the Plan to actively encourage uncoordinated windfall development on greenfield sites outside settlements.

Finally, notwithstanding my above objections to Policy SS3, the Focused Change (FC1) to remove mention of specific dwelling figures (e.g. ‘10 dwellings in Melton Mowbray and in Service Centres’) from the policy and the replacement of this with text to indicate that development should be *‘in keeping with the scale and character of the host settlement’* is supported. It seemed both unjustified and problematic to have applied the same standard windfall scheme size limit to Melton Mowbray (i.e. up to 10 dwellings) as to settlements such as Croxton Kerrial, Hose and Old Dalby, given the complete disparity in size and function between Melton Mowbray and these far smaller settlements. However, to then still mention the same standard dwelling limits in the policy’s supporting text (paragraph 4.2.16 of the Plan) remains, in my view, unjustified and potentially hampers the appropriate application of Policy SS3 – i.e. to ensure development is in keeping with the scale and character of the host settlement. I remain sceptical that the same dwelling limit for Melton Mowbray should also be applied to some or all of the defined ‘service centre’ settlements.

**Appendix 1: Extract from North West Leicestershire Local Plan, adopted  
November 2017**

(taken from:

[https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/adopted\\_local\\_plan\\_2011\\_20311/  
WrittenStatement%20-%20as%20Adopted.pdf](https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/adopted_local_plan_2011_20311/WrittenStatement%20-%20as%20Adopted.pdf))

# **NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN**

**Adopted: November 2017**

**Policy S1 – Future housing and economic development needs**

Over the plan period to 2031 provision will be made to meet the housing and employment land needs of the district as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (January 2017).

This means that:

- provision will be made for the development of a minimum of 9,620 dwellings (481 dwellings per annum) which is the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) and Housing Requirement for the district;
- provision will be made for 66 hectares of land for employment purposes (B1, B2 and B8 of less than 9,000sq metres)

Provision will also be made for 7,300sq metres for shopping purposes.

The Council will continue to work collaboratively with the Leicester & Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) authorities to establish the scale and distribution of any additional provision that may be necessary in North West Leicestershire and elsewhere in the HMA as a result of the inability of one or more authority to accommodate its own needs as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment.

The District Council will commence a review of this Local Plan (defined as being publication of an invitation to make representations in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) by the end of January 2018 or within 3 months of the adoption of this Local Plan (whichever is the later). The Plan Review will be submitted for examination within two years from the commencement of the review. In the event that the reviewed plan is not submitted within two years then this Local Plan will be deemed to be out of date.

**WHERE SHOULD DEVELOPMENT GO?**

- 5.13 A core principle of the NPPF is to “focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable”. To help do this we define a settlement hierarchy to distinguish between the roles and functions of different settlements and to guide the location of future development, although it should be appreciated that the scale and location of most new development that is needed is already committed.

**Policy S2 – Settlement Hierarchy**

The following Settlement Hierarchy will be used when assessing the suitability of a settlement for new development, with the general principle being that those

settlements higher up the hierarchy will take more growth than those lower down and that the type of development proposed is appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement and its place in the hierarchy.

Settlement Classification	Settlement(s)
<p><b>Principal Town</b></p> <p>The primary settlement in the district which provides an extensive range of services and facilities including employment, leisure and shopping and which is accessible by sustainable transport from surrounding areas and to other large settlements outside the district. The largest amount of new development will be directed here, including retail development, to support the regeneration of Coalville Town Centre.</p>	<p>Coalville Urban Area which comprises of Coalville, Donington-le-Heath, Greenhill, Hugglescote, Snibston, Thringstone and Whitwick as well as the Bardon employment area.</p>
<p><b>Key Service Centre</b></p> <p>Smaller than the Principal Town in terms of population and also the range of services and facilities they provide, they play an important role providing services and facilities to the surrounding area and are accessible by some sustainable transport. A significant amount of development will take place in these settlements but less than that in the Principal Town.</p>	<p>Ashby de la Zouch Castle Donington</p>
<p><b>Local Service Centre</b></p> <p>Settlements which provide some services and facilities primarily of a local nature meeting day-to-day needs and where a reasonable amount of new development will take place.</p>	<p>Ibstock Kegworth Measham</p>
<p><b>Sustainable Villages</b></p> <p>Settlements which have a limited range of services and facilities where a limited amount of growth will take place within the defined Limits to Development.</p>	<p>Albert Village, Appleby Magna, Belton, Blackfordby, Breedon on the Hill, Coleorton (the Lower Moor Road area only), Diseworth, Donisthorpe, Ellistown, Heather, Long Whatton, Moira (including Norris Hill),</p>

		<b>Oakthorpe, Packington, Ravenstone, Swannington, Worthington.</b>
<b>Small Village</b>	<b>Settlements with very limited services and where development will be restricted to conversions of existing buildings or the redevelopment of previously developed land (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) or affordable housing in accordance with Policy H5 (Rural Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing).</b>	<b><i>Battram, Coleorton (the part not considered to be a Sustainable Village), Griffydam, Hemington, Lockington, Lount, Newbold, Newton Burgoland, Osgathorpe, Peggs Green, Sinope, Snarestone, Swebstone, Spring Cottage, Tonge, Wilson.</i></b>
<b>Hamlets</b>	<b>Small groups of dwellings with no services and facilities and where development will be considered in the context of the countryside policy (Policy S3).</b>	
<p><b>The re-use of previously developed land (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) will be supported where it is compatible with the settlement hierarchy set out above. The redevelopment of previously developed land for housing should be within or well-related to the Principal Town, a Key Service Centre, Local Service Centre, Sustainable Village or Small Village.</b></p> <p><b>Any development provided for within this policy which discharges wastewater into the Mease catchment will be subject to the provisions of policy En2. Any such development which does not meet these provisions will not be permitted.</b></p>		

- 5.14 In considering the sustainability of different settlements this means looking at the range of services and facilities available including accessibility by public transport and non-car modes. Consideration also needs to be given to the role of specific settlements. For example, some settlements will have services and facilities which only serve the immediate population, whilst in other settlements there is a greater range of services and facilities which serve an area wider than the settlement itself.
- 5.15 Therefore in defining the settlement hierarchy we have assessed the different settlements within the district in terms of the range of services and facilities available.

Services looked at include schools, post office, general store, doctors surgery, recreational and community facilities as well as accessibility by public transport and non-car modes. The frequency of public transport services to and from settlements and also the range of destinations of services have also been taken into account. Consideration has also been given to the role of specific settlements. Those settlements with fewer facilities and services are less self-sufficient in their ability to meet the daily requirements of residents.

5.16 In North West Leicestershire the following settlements (in alphabetical order) offer the most comprehensive range of services and facilities and they also, to some extent, serve other settlements as well:

- Ashby de la Zouch;
- Castle Donington;
- Coalville Urban Area;
- Ibstock;
- Kegworth; and
- Measham

5.17 Therefore, these six settlements form the central part of our settlement hierarchy and will accommodate the vast majority of new development.

5.18 Outside of these settlements there are a number of settlements which have some services and facilities but on a much lesser scale. Some development in these settlements will be appropriate, although there is already a significant level of provision made through planning permissions. Any further development in such settlements will be restricted to either infilling or previously developed land which is well related to the settlement concerned. We term these as Sustainable Villages and they comprise:

*Albert Village, Appleby Magna, Belton, Blackfordby, Breedon on the Hill, Coleorton (the Lower Moor Road area only), Diseworth, Donisthorpe, Ellistown, Heather, Long Whatton, Moira (including Norris Hill), Oakthorpe, Packington, Ravenstone, Swannington, Worthington.*

5.19 Beyond these the remaining settlements have very few services and facilities. Development in these locations would inevitably require the use of private vehicles to access services and facilities. Such an approach is at odds with the aim of the NPPF and so is inappropriate.

*Battram, Coleorton (the part not considered to be a Sustainable Village), Griffydam, Hemington, Lockington, Lount, Newbold, Newton Burgoland, Normanton le Heath, Osgathorpe, Peggs Green, Sinope, Snarestone, Swepstone, Spring Cottage, Tonge, Wilson.*

- 5.20 There are also small groups of buildings in the countryside that sometimes have a settlement name and may be best described as hamlets and that have no facilities. Development proposals in these settlements will be considered against Policy S3 (Countryside).

## **COUNTRYSIDE**

- 5.21 The NPPF recognises the need to “take account of the different roles and character of different areas,” and that planning should recognise “the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.”

### **Policy S3 – Countryside**

**Land outside the Limits to Development is identified as countryside where those uses listed (a) to (s) below will be supported, subject to those considerations set out in criteria (i) to (vi) below.**

- (a) Agriculture including agricultural workers dwellings;**
- (b) Forestry including forestry workers dwellings;**
- (c) The preservation of Listed Buildings;**
- (d) The re-use and adaptation of buildings for appropriate purposes including housing in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy (Policy S2);**
- (e) The redevelopment of previously developed land in accordance with Policy S2;**
- (f) Flood protection;**
- (g) Affordable housing in accordance with Policy H5;**
- (h) The extension and replacement of dwellings;**
- (i) Expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;**
- (j) Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in accordance with Policy H7;**
- (k) Small-scale employment generating development or farm diversification;**
- (l) Community services and facilities meeting a proven local need;**
- (m) Development by statutory undertakers or public utility providers;**
- (n) Recreation and tourism;**
- (o) Renewable energy;**
- (p) Development at East Midlands Airport in accordance with Policy Ec5;**
- (q) Development at Donington Park Racetrack in accordance with Policy Ec8;**
- (r) Transport infrastructure;**
- (s) Employment land in accordance with the provisions of Policy Ec2.**

**Developments in accordance with (a) to (s) above will be supported where:**

- (i) the appearance and character of the landscape, including its historic character and features such as biodiversity, views, settlement**

**pattern, rivers, watercourses, field patterns, industrial heritage and local distinctiveness is safeguarded and enhanced. Decisions in respect of impact on landscape character and appearance will be informed by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, National Character Areas and any subsequent pieces of evidence; and**

- (ii) it does not undermine, either individually or cumulatively with existing or proposed development, the physical and perceived separation and open undeveloped character between nearby settlements either through contiguous extensions to existing settlements or through development on isolated sites on land divorced from settlement boundaries; and**
- (iii) it does not create or exacerbate ribbon development; and**
- (iv) built development is well integrated with existing development and existing buildings, including the re-use of existing buildings, where appropriate; and**
- (v) the development will not seriously undermine the vitality and viability of existing town and local centres; and**
- (vi) The proposed development is accessible, or will be made accessible, by a range of sustainable transport.**

5.22 North West Leicestershire is a mainly rural district and the area that separates our towns and villages consists of largely undeveloped countryside. Although major infrastructure, urban and industrial influences are rarely far away, there remain substantial areas of open, mainly arable, farmland. We want to maintain, and where possible enhance, the environmental, economic and social value of the countryside.

5.23 We have defined Limits to Development around most of our settlements as a means of distinguishing between areas of potential for new development and areas which can be regarded as countryside where development will be considered having regard to the provisions of Policy S3.

5.24 The uses listed above are those which it is considered would be potentially appropriate in the countryside but it will be necessary to ensure that proposed development does not unduly impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside.

**Appendix 2: Extract from Charnwood Local Plan (Core Strategy), adopted  
November 2015**

(taken from:

[https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/adopted\\_core\\_strategy1/Charnwood%20Local%20Plan%202011%20-%202028%20Core%20Strategy%20Adopted%20November%202015.pdf](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/adopted_core_strategy1/Charnwood%20Local%20Plan%202011%20-%202028%20Core%20Strategy%20Adopted%20November%202015.pdf)



# Charnwood Local Plan 2011 to 2028

## Core Strategy

Adopted 9th November 2015



## Where Will Development Be Located?

**4.16** We will ensure new development is located where it helps provide people with good access to jobs, services and facilities including health, education, shops, leisure and open space. Our strategy is one of urban concentration and regeneration; where new homes and jobs benefit from the existing infrastructure in our urban areas whilst new infrastructure that accompanies our strategic developments benefits as many people as possible. This includes public transport, roads, schools and leisure facilities. Our strategy supports regeneration, reduces the need for people to travel and provides a genuine choice to walk, cycle or use public transport.

### What this means for Charnwood

**4.17** The communities who enjoy the best access to jobs, services and community facilities in our Borough are those living and working on the edge of Leicester City and in our towns of Loughborough and Shepshed. We have limited brownfield opportunities in Charnwood and cannot meet our housing needs entirely on brownfield land in these urban areas.

**4.18** We believe the best way to deliver the majority of the homes and jobs needed is through sustainable urban extensions to the edge of Leicester City and Loughborough. This will meet our aim of taking advantage of existing infrastructure and ensuring new infrastructure benefits as many people as possible. It will also minimise the impact of new developments in and around smaller villages.

### Sustainable Urban Extensions

Sustainable urban extensions are planned extensions to the existing urban areas which are large enough developments to support new businesses, schools, shops, health care facilities, open space and leisure facilities. This gives the people who live in them the opportunity to meet their daily needs without needing to make journeys by car.

Sustainable urban extensions should also benefit the existing, adjacent community to which they are attached; helping them to meet their daily needs.

**4.19** Outside of the main urban areas, there are also seven larger settlements which function as Service Centres to the more rural parts of our Borough. These settlements are Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby and Syston. They have a good range of services and community facilities including shops, schools and health centres. Whilst not appropriate locations for sustainable urban extensions, they provide a sustainable location for a smaller scale of development, appropriate in size to their character and the services and facilities they contain.

- 4.20** Our remaining smaller villages and hamlets are not considered to generally be appropriate locations for development. We do not want to see significant growth in these villages but will encourage development that meets local needs and ensures the continued vitality and viability of these settlements. We will specifically support development that directly results in the protection or provision of new facilities and services in these smaller villages and hamlets.
- 4.21** The remainder of this chapter sets out how we will distribute carefully designed development. Our towns and villages fit into a hierarchy of settlements based on their level of services and facilities and our strategy directs new developments as appropriate in each part of the hierarchy.
- 4.22** Whilst there is a close relationship between this hierarchy and how we plan for new shops, we support the ‘town centre first’ approach for new retail developments. Our strategy for town centres and shops is set out in Chapter 6 as part of our approach to the economy and regeneration.

## **The edge of Leicester City**

- 4.23** South Charnwood has a strong physical, social, economic and environmental relationship with Leicester City. Birstall and Thurmaston are defined as part of the Leicester Principal Urban Area. They form a physical edge to the city with strong links to it for jobs, services and community facilities including shops. A significant amount of land in our Borough adjoins Leicester Principal Urban Area settlements in other local authority areas, including Hamilton in Leicester City and Glenfield in Blaby District.

### **Leicester Principal Urban Area**

A joint Study called the Leicester Principal Urban Area Strategic Planning Context (October 2009) has been prepared in partnership with authorities that adjoin the Leicester urban area. It defines the Leicester ‘Principal Urban Area’ as the continuous built up area of the City of Leicester and includes thirteen settlements outside the City boundary. The Principal Urban Area covers all or parts of Leicester City, Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough and Oadby and Wigston local authority areas.

- 4.24** We will concentrate development at the edge of Leicester to take advantage of existing infrastructure and support the regeneration in south Charnwood. This will include the development of two sustainable urban extensions and the Watermead Regeneration Corridor.
- 4.25** The city has almost reached its physical limits and our strategy will take advantage of this to attract new investment for the benefit of Charnwood, the City and the wider Principal Urban Area. The three strategic development areas will provide new homes and jobs for people and businesses that want to be close to the city to take advantage

of its services and facilities but do not want to be in the City itself.

- 4.26** Our strategy identifies a sustainable urban extension to the north east of Leicester for approximately 4,500 homes and up to 13 hectares of employment (east of Thurmaston and north of Hamilton). It also includes a direction of growth for a second sustainable urban extension of at least 1,500 homes and up to 15 hectares of employment to the north of Birstall (north of the A46). These two extensions will provide sustainable mixed use developments for homes, jobs and community facilities.
- 4.27** The sustainable urban extensions will be complemented by the Watermead Regeneration Corridor which will provide up to 8,750 sqm of offices and around 16 hectares of general employment land as well as a focus for leisure and recreation. Watermead Country Park is an important asset within the Corridor which itself extends to the waterfront at Thurmaston. The Corridor's location on the edge of the City means regeneration projects will be of benefit to both of the new communities as well as improving the long term vitality of Thurmaston.
- 4.28** All three of these strategic developments are located on important corridors into the City. They form part of a wider strategy for the City which also includes two sustainable urban extensions in adopted Core Strategies. One is part of Blaby District Council's Core Strategy and is near to junction 21 of the M1 motorway at New Lubbesthorpe. The other is Leicester City Council's plan for a sustainable urban extension at Ashton Green which itself is near to our boundary at Birstall and Thurcaston.
- 4.29** We will continue to work closely with our local authority partners in the Principal Urban Area to ensure that these major developments will collectively provide a full range of homes and business opportunities, complementing one another and ensuring the long term success of the City.
- 4.30** The land we have identified to the north east of Leicester is the only area large enough in Charnwood that is adjacent to the Principal Urban Area and capable of accommodating a sustainable urban extension that delivers a full range of infrastructure including a secondary school. This location is well connected to the City with high frequency bus links that will offer genuine choice for the new community to access jobs, services and community facilities. It also provides an opportunity to integrate with the community and support the priority neighbourhood and regeneration at Thurmaston. A sustainable urban extension in this location will attract businesses into the area and provide the community to the east of the railway, which is cut off from the centre of Thurmaston, a new focus for their day to day needs.
- 4.31** The land to the north of Birstall will provide an opportunity on the edge of the Principal Urban Area to deliver a sustainable urban extension. This location has the potential to deliver a development that reflects the garden suburb principles underpinning the original concept behind Rothley Ridgeway, just north of the site along the Great Central Railway. This location is well connected to the City with high frequency bus links, an existing Park and Ride and a national cycle route. It also provides an attractive location for both

new homes and businesses which will support housing delivery and bring investment into our Borough. This location is also able to accommodate a sustainable urban extension which meets the day to day needs of its community with a good range of jobs, services and facilities.

- 4.32** In addition to these large developments, there are about 1,100 homes completed or committed on other smaller sites within and adjoining the Principal Urban Area, making the most effective use of brownfield land to meet our needs for homes and jobs.

## **Loughborough and Shepshed**

- 4.33** Loughborough is the largest town in Charnwood and home to the University. Loughborough Town Centre is the main focal point for shopping, culture, leisure, and business in our Borough. It sits on the east side of the M1 motorway and forms part of a wider urban area with the smaller town of Shepshed to the west of the motorway. Together they act as a social and economic focus in the north of the Borough. The two towns together enjoy good public transport links and provide a wide range of homes, jobs and community services.
- 4.34** The majority of our growth, which is not taking place at the edge of Leicester, is planned for at Loughborough and Shepshed. This means that the people who live and work in these new developments can take advantage of the facilities already present and in turn support the economy and regeneration of the centres.
- 4.35** Our strategy is focused on a western growth area that will deliver new homes, a range of jobs, services, community facilities and public access to 188 hectares of historic parkland.
- 4.36** It includes a sustainable urban extension to the west of Loughborough (north of the A512) of approximately 3,000 homes and up to 16 hectares of employment land. This will directly lead to the restoration of Garendon Registered Park and provide public access to it for the first time. The sustainable urban extension will deliver a sustainable mixed use development for homes, jobs and community facilities.
- 4.37** This will be complemented by an extension to the Science and Enterprise Park to the south of the A512 and to the west of Loughborough on land adjacent to Loughborough University. This will deliver up to 77 hectares of high technology, knowledge based business land in a campus environment.
- 4.38** The western growth area will maximise Loughborough's location at the centre of the three cities of Nottingham, Leicester and Derby. It will provide an exciting opportunity for new homes and jobs to be provided with the significant benefits of a parkland setting, with the attractive landscape of the Charnwood Forest as a backdrop and a new road link between the west and north sides of the town. These developments will attract new investment into the town and maintain its reputation as a centre for high technology and knowledge based industries.

- 4.39** There are commitments for approximately 1,200 new homes at Shepshed. This development, along with benefits associated with the town's proximity to the western growth area, will help address the decline of the town centre. We will amend the settlement boundary to reflect these commitments at Shepshed through our Site Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document.
- 4.40** The land to the west of Loughborough provides an opportunity to deliver a sustainable urban extension which can support the day to day needs of the new community. This location is well related to Loughborough and Shepshed with high frequency bus links. It is a location which provides an opportunity to integrate with the existing community so that the new infrastructure and open space benefits as many people as possible. It also has the potential to improve links between Loughborough and Shepshed and support the regeneration of Shepshed and West of Loughborough Priority Neighbourhood. This is also an attractive location for new homes and businesses which will support housing delivery and bring investment into Charnwood.
- 4.41** Our strategy for town centres and shops is set out in Chapter 6 and Policy CS9. We plan for new retail development to be focused in Loughborough Town Centre to support it as a successful, attractive and vibrant Town Centre and ensure it remains the focal point for our businesses and community. In addition to this we will also plan for some new shops in Shepshed Town Centre to support its regeneration.
- 4.42** In addition to these major developments, there are a further 1,800 homes completed or committed and up to 6 hectares of employment land to be developed on smaller sites within and adjoining Loughborough and Shepshed, making the most effective use of brownfield land to meet our needs for homes and jobs.

## **Service Centres**

- 4.43** Anstey, Barrow upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby and Syston are our Service Centres. Each has the following services and facilities:
- a primary school and good access to a secondary school;
  - access to employment opportunities;
  - food shops and a post office;
  - good access to a doctors surgery;
  - a good, regular public transport services to at least one main urban centre and reasonable bus access to nearby villages; and
  - a good range of recreation, leisure and community facilities
- 4.44** The Service Centres are all home to at least 3,000 people and the good range of services and facilities and good transport links allow them to provide for the daily needs of the people living there as well as supporting nearby communities.

- 4.45** A small amount of housing and employment development is necessary in the Service Centres to maintain their facilities and services to benefit the people who live there and to support surrounding communities. There are commitments for around 3,500 homes in Service Centres. This is sufficient to meet the levels of planned provision and we only expect to see small scale windfall developments within the settlement boundaries between 2014 and 2028. We expect approximately 7 hectares of employment land to be delivered in Service Centres between 2011 and 2028.
- 4.46** We will encourage the effective use of land for the new homes and jobs that are still to be found. Our priority is to see any new development that takes place at Service Centres to be within their existing built-up areas. However, greenfield locations may be appropriate where there is a recognised local housing or employment need and insufficient capacity within built-up areas to meet that need. We will expect the remainder to be provided for through our Site Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document and ongoing development management decisions. We will also encourage the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans to provide for this development and, where appropriate, identify further development to support communities.

## **Other Settlements**

- 4.47** Many of our villages do not generally have access to a good range of services or facilities and rely largely on the private car for their day to day needs. Our strategy allows for some development in these locations to help us to protect and where possible increase services and facilities within them.
- 4.48** Where a village has four or more key services and facilities (taken from the Service Centre criteria) and bus access to a Service Centre, town or the City they are generally able to serve some day to day needs of the people who live there.
- 4.49** Barkby, Burton on the Wolds, Cossington, East Goscote, Hathern, Newtown Linford, Queniborough, Rearsby, Thrussington, Thurstaston, Woodhouse Eaves and Wymeswold have four or more key services and facilities.
- 4.50** These villages may be suitable for some small scale infill development to meet local needs. To be considered small scale, a development should be appropriate in size for the village they are in and the character of the site's location and surroundings. This could include single or small groups of homes or businesses that are developed through the conversion of existing buildings or on infill plots. Any development that increases the need to travel by car will not be considered to be acceptable small-scale development. Our strategy for access and travel is set out in Chapter 8.
- 4.51** We expect Neighbourhood Plans to take a strong lead on meeting and managing the local housing needs of the neighbourhood they are prepared for. We will provide a framework for these developments in our Site Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document.

## Small Villages and Hamlets

- 4.52** There are a number of small villages and hamlets which have few or no services and facilities. The people who live in these villages rely on larger settlements for their day-to-day needs. These villages have much less potential to provide for a sustainable community where people can access what they need by walking, cycling and public transport. These villages are therefore poor locations for new development and our strategy for the countryside will apply (for our approach to development in the countryside see chapter 7).
- 4.53** Our small villages and hamlets are Barkby Thorpe, Beeby, Cotes, Cropston, Hoton, Prestwold, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Ridgeway Area of Rothley, Seagrave, South Croxton, Swithland, Ulverscroft, Walton on the Wolds, Wanlip, Woodhouse and Woodthorpe.
- 4.54** We recognise, however, that the needs of smaller communities should be provided for, particularly given the decline in rural services. We expect local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans if they wish to see small-scale development, where this meets an identified local housing or economic need that realises a genuine improvement in the services and facilities. We will expect any community preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to conform to our strategy for 'other settlements' as set out above.
- 4.55** We have been monitoring the amount of new homes that have been built in Charnwood since the start of the plan period in 2011. The table below shows the number of homes provided by the development strategy. The number of homes provided in Service Centres and the Rest of the Borough are already sufficient to meet the levels of planned provision. The Core Strategy housing trajectory does not include windfall sites which may come forward during the Plan period. This potential housing supply provides additional flexibility to the overall housing supply in the Borough.
- 4.56** The Objectively Assessed Need is for 820 homes a year in Charnwood. The supply of homes will be assessed against this number as an overall requirement for Charnwood.

**Figure 1: Summary of Housing Provision and Strategy**

	Planned Housing Provision 2011-2028	Completions 2011 - 2014	Commitments* as of November 2014	Residual Provision Required up to 2028	Estimated Supply from Strategic Sites up to 2028	Estimated Total Supply from Completions, Commitments and Strategic Sites 2011 - 2028***
Principal Urban Area	5,500	401	730	4,369	4,595	5,726
Loughborough and Shepshed	5,000	412	2,511	2,077	2,440	5,363
Service Centres	3,000	778	2,682	0	0	3,460
Rest of Borough	500	211	676	0	0	887
<b>Charnwood Total</b>	<b>14,000**</b>	<b>1,802</b>	<b>6,599</b>	<b>6,446</b>	<b>7,035</b>	<b>15,436</b>

\*Commitments include sites with planning permission or with a resolution to grant permission subject to S.106, sites under construction and sites saved under policy H/1 of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan (2004)

\*\* Figure rounded up from 13,940 (820 x 17yrs)

\*\*\* Additional windfall sites may also come forward within the settlement boundaries between 2014 and 2028

## Policy CS 1

### Development Strategy

**We will make provision for at least 13,940 new homes between 2011 and 2028.**

### Leicester Principal Urban Area

**Our priority location for growth will be the Leicester Principal Urban Area, where provision will be made for at least 5,500 new homes and up to 46 hectares of employment land between 2011 and 2028.**

**We will do this by planning positively for:**

- **a sustainable urban extension of approximately 4,500 homes to the north east of Leicester, delivering approximately 3,250 homes and up to 13 hectares of employment land by 2028 and the remaining homes beyond the plan period as part of a comprehensive and integrated development;**
- **a direction of growth for approximately 1,500 homes as part of a sustainable urban extension to the north of Birstall, delivering approximately 1,345 homes and up to 15 hectares of employment land by 2028 and the remaining homes beyond the plan period as part of a comprehensive development;**
- **a direction of growth for up to 8,750 sqm of offices and up to 16 hectares of general employment land within the Watermead Regeneration corridor; and**
- **sustainable development which contributes towards meeting our remaining development needs, supports our strategic vision, makes effective use of land and is in accordance with the policies in this strategy.**

### Loughborough and Shepshed

**The majority of our remaining growth will be met at Loughborough and Shepshed where provision will be made for at least 5,000 new homes and up to 22 hectares of employment land between 2011 and 2028.**

**We will do this by planning positively for:**

- **a sustainable urban extension of approximately 3,000 homes to the west of Loughborough, delivering approximately 2,440 homes and up to 16 hectares of employment land by 2028 and the remaining homes beyond the plan period as part of a comprehensive and integrated development;**
- **approximately 1,200 homes within and adjoining Shepshed to support its regeneration;**

- up to 6 hectares of employment land within and adjoining Loughborough/Shepshed; and
- sustainable development which contributes towards meeting our remaining development needs, supports our strategic vision, makes effective use of land and is in accordance with the policies in this strategy.

We will also plan positively for up to a 77 hectare expansion of Science and Enterprise Park to the West of Loughborough University.

## Service Centres

We will plan positively for the role of Service Centres (Anstey, Barrow Upon Soar, Mountsorrel, Quorn, Rothley, Sileby and Syston). We will do this by;

- providing for at least 3,000 new homes and approximately 7 hectares of employment land within and adjoining our Service Centres between 2011 and 2028;
- safeguarding services and facilities; and
- responding positively to sustainable development which contributes towards meeting our development needs, supports our strategic vision, makes effective use of land and is in accordance with the policies in this strategy.

## Other Settlements

We will meet the local social and economic need for development in other settlements (Barkby, Burton on the Wolds, Cossington, East Goscote, Hathern, Newtown Linford, Queniborough, Rearsby, Thrussington, Thurstaston, Woodhouse Eaves and Wymeswold). We will do this by:

- providing for at least 500 new homes within settlement boundaries identified in our Site Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document between 2011 and 2028;
- responding positively to small-scale opportunities within defined limits to development;
- responding positively to affordable housing developments in accordance with Policy CS3;
- safeguarding services and facilities; and
- responding positively to development which contributes to local priorities as identified in Neighbourhood Plans.

## Small Villages and Hamlets

We will safeguard services and facilities and respond positively to development that meets a specific local social or economic need in our smallest settlements (Barkby Thorpe, Beeby, Cotes, Cropston, Hoton, Prestwold, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Ridgeway

**Area of Rothley, Seagrave, South Croxton, Swithland, Ulverscroft, Walton on the Wolds, Wanlip, Woodhouse and Woodthorpe). We will do this where:**

- **the specific local social or economic need is identified by a Neighbourhood Plan or other appropriate community-led strategy; or**
- **the development supports sustainable businesses in accordance with Policy CS10.**