

# Leicester Local Plan Issues and Options

Document for consultation  
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# Leicester Local Plan Issues and Options

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# Leicester: New Local Plan



## Features of our City

With around 330,000 residents, Leicester is the tenth largest city in England, and a key focus of economic development, regeneration and growth in the East Midlands. The city is at the heart of the national road network, is just over one hour away from London via the Midland Mainline and East Midlands Airport is 25 minutes away. Leicester is easily accessible from all major UK cities, European and international locations.

Leicester is the focus for a much larger catchment area dependent on its services and facilities, comprising Leicestershire County and adjacent areas. It provides employment, shopping, public administration, leisure, health care at three hospitals and further and higher education facilities. The last few years have been particularly exciting times for the city of Leicester. We have made significant progress in delivering major shopping, leisure, business and housing regeneration. Leicester can be proud of successful projects such as Highcross, Curve theatre, Building Schools for the Future and health centres as well as provision of new housing schemes across the city. The ongoing development of the City Centre as part of the Connecting Leicester initiative has also been instrumental in transforming the city and boosting confidence in its future.

These changes have been an enormous boost for the prosperity, attractiveness and reputation of the city, but only represents the beginning of an ambitious long term strategy. We must build on what makes our city unique. Leicester has a rich tradition of entrepreneurship particularly through the thousands of small businesses that have thrived in the city. This has been boosted greatly by the many newcomers to the city making Leicester one of the most diverse and cosmopolitan cities in the UK. The city's two universities, University of Leicester and De Montfort University are highly acclaimed nationally and internationally and have a combined total of about 37,000 students.

The City's built and natural heritage is something city residents can enjoy and be proud of. Continuation of the work to improve our parks, green spaces and wildlife areas, together with preservation and enhancement of our historic buildings and conservation areas, provides an opportunity for greater understanding of the city's history as well as attractive places to show the city at its best.

## The future

Future growth must be well planned to ensure that it continues to support businesses, the economy and the delivery of housing. A well conceived plan for the future development of the City will have a major impact for current and future residents and those that work in the city and use and enjoy its facilities. It provides a key opportunity to develop greater pride in the city and its places and buildings as well as ensuring we create attractive buildings and places. As a city we need to deliver new housing of the right type in the right places. We must create the physical conditions that will attract major inward investment but ensure that the people of Leicester can benefit from the growth of new business, jobs and training facilities. At the same time we need to protect and use our important and valued assets and resources to create thriving, attractive and safe places both in the city centre and in local neighbourhoods.

Key to achieving these aims and objectives is to have an up to date and flexible Local Plan, which can steer and encourage development activity, create certainty and confidence for investors and achieve an environment that will make Leicester a safe, enjoyable and attractive city.

## A new local plan

Leicester City Council has begun preparation of a new Leicester Local Plan which will set out a vision and objectives for the growth of the city over the next 15 years.

The new Local Plan will set out how the council will respond to local priorities and how it will meet the social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities that face the city. It will identify broad locations, scale and type of development and supporting infrastructure that will be required in the city.

The local plan must be flexible so as to allow for future changes in circumstances, particularly in terms of the local, regional and national economy. Proposed development needs to be viable. This is important as the current economic climate presents significant challenges for place shaping. As greater investment in house building and job creation gathers pace the Local Plan will provide the framework and certainty that will attract investment to Leicester, allowing us to guide and steer investment in a way which is most beneficial to the city and its residents.

The Local Plan will also respond to, and provide for, the needs of a growing population and growing local economy and reflects the role and importance of the city in the sub-region and the East Midlands. The city lies at the economic heart of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), the key aim of which is to lead economic growth across Leicester and Leicestershire by creating thousands of new jobs and attracting £2 billion worth of private sector investment.

The preparation of the Leicester Local Plan will therefore involve engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities, key stakeholders and public bodies with regards to strategic planning and economic matters.

## Have your say.....

The Issues and Options consultation stage marks the start of the process for the new Local Plan (see diagram below). It will provide the community of Leicester and other stakeholders with the opportunity to suggest any issues that they feel should be addressed, comment on which of the options they think are most appropriate, or tell us about any other options that they may have. We have an opportunity to further improve the quality of life in Leicester and make the most of what is special and unique about our city. There are some big questions, such as:

- Where should new development such as housing and employment go?
- How do we make best use of redundant and brownfield regeneration areas for new development including at Leicester's Waterside areas?
- How and where should new jobs be created?
- What can we do to make city centre shopping more competitive in the face of increased popularity of on-line shopping?
- How can we protect our natural and historic environment?
- How can we promote good design in buildings and spaces?
- How can we create a more healthy and active city?
- How can we encourage development which is more environmentally friendly and energy efficient?
- How do we encourage more people to travel by cycle, bus and walk whilst recognising travel by car is essential for some individuals and city businesses?

It is your city and we want you to help us shape its future development so have a look at the ideas in this document and tell us what you think the big issues are.

The Council is also seeking suggestions of sites or groups of sites where there might be the opportunity for redevelopment or a change of use. Suitable sites will be allocated within the Local Plan to provide for future needs including new places for people to live, office and industrial space, green space and essential services such as educational and community facilities. If you wish to put a site forward, further guidance and forms can be found at [www.leicester.gov.uk/newlocalplan](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/newlocalplan)

You can respond by completing the online questionnaire at:

[www.leicester.gov.uk/issuesandoptions](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/issuesandoptions) or view copies of the document at:

- Leicester Central Library <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/education-lifelong-learning/leicesterlibraries-home-page/locations/centrallibrary/>
- Customer Service Centres <http://www.leicester.gov.uk/contact-us/customer-service-centres/>

**The consultation closes on 24th November 2014.**

## What happens next?

This is the first stage in developing a new Local Plan for Leicester. Once the consultation period has ended we will consider all of the comments and suggestions received, and use them to develop preferred policy options in a draft plan. Further public consultation (see diagram overleaf) will be carried out on the draft plan before it is formally submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in 2015. It is anticipated that the plan will be adopted in 2016.

Key Stages of Local Plan Preparation:

1. Issues and Options – Considers what the main aims and objectives are going to be for the Local Plan;
2. Draft Local Plan – Provides a first draft of what the plan will look like, and will include specific policy proposals relating to issues such as housing, design and climate change. It will also propose sites for particular uses, for example areas identified for future housing, green space and employment;
3. Submission Local Plan – This will take into account any major changes following consultation on the Draft Local Plan. It's the formal plan that will be submitted to the Secretary of State and Planning Inspector for consideration;
4. Examination in Public (EIP) – This is the stage where the Planning Inspector will examine the 'soundness' of the plan. It is a round table discussion, with a number of sessions given over to each issue and providing opportunities to individuals and organisations to challenge or support the plan; and
5. Adoption – If the Planning Inspector is happy that the plan is sound then the local authority can adopt the plan incorporating any relevant recommendations to change the plan.

## Key stages - when can people participate

### Key stages in preparing our Local Plan (LP)



Public consultation on key  
Issues and Options



Publication of draft LP for  
public consultation

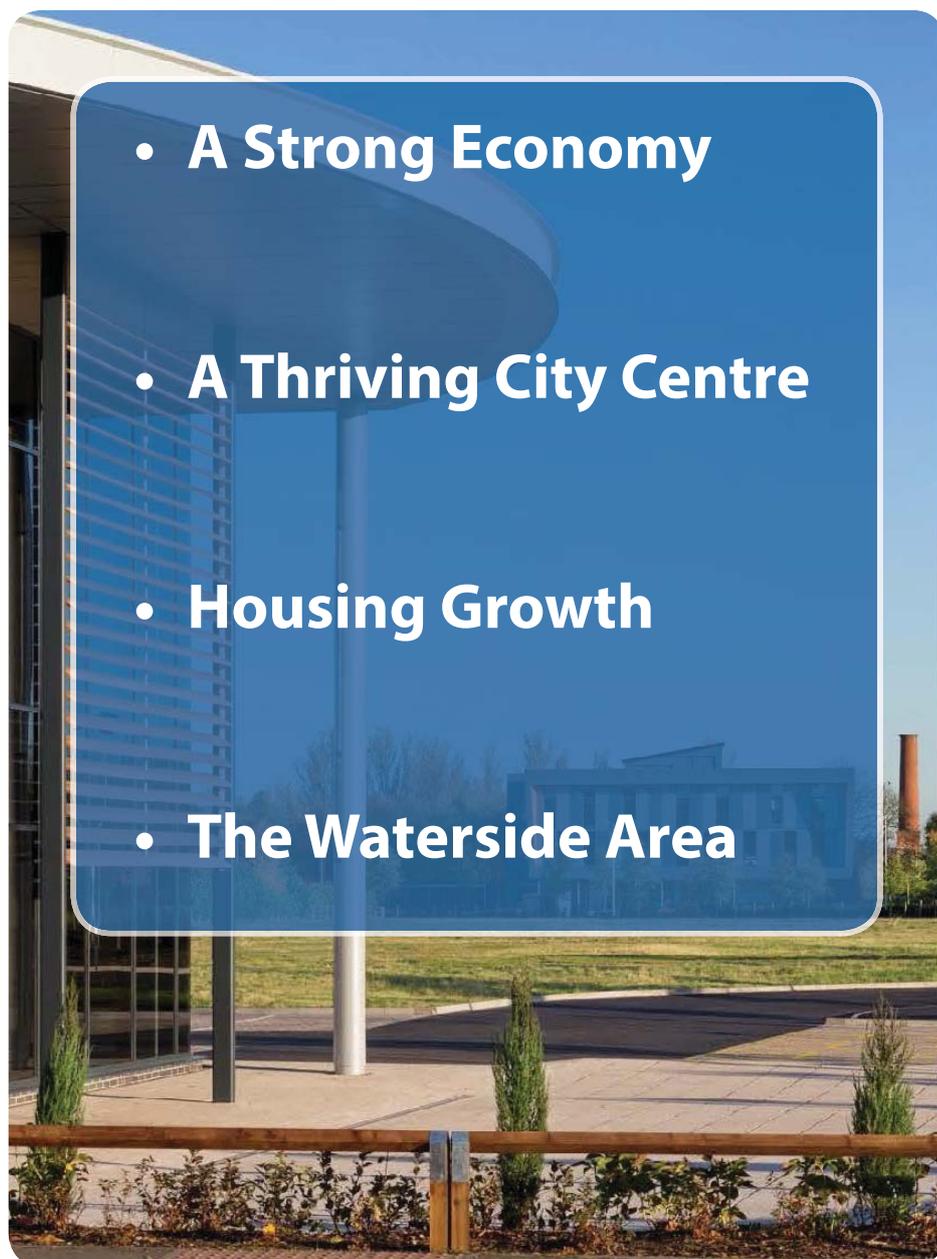
Public consultation on any major changes  
to draft LP (if required)

Submission of draft LP to Secretary of State  
and Planning Inspectorate

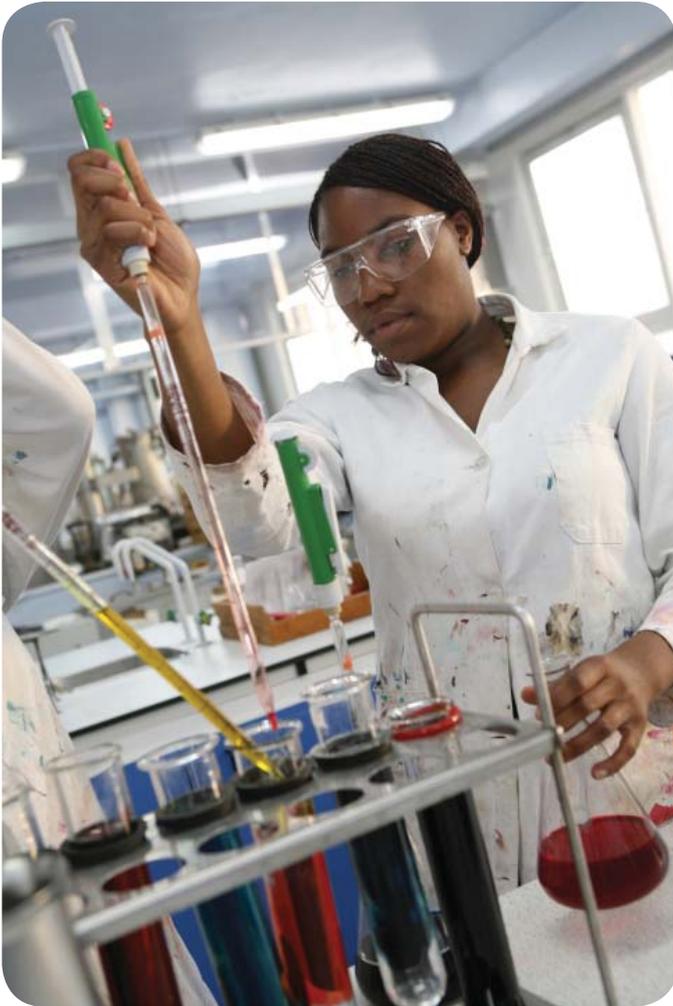
Independent Public Examination  
of submission LP

Adoption of LP by the Council

# A Growing City...



# A Strong Economy



Leicester's economy is based on a very strong and diverse small business community and is not dependent on any one sector or large employer. This provides a good platform for future economic growth. The city has a long-standing reputation for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship – owing to the diversity of its local communities and the enterprising culture that has developed.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) sets out a vision which aims to create a vibrant, attractive and distinctive place that will ensure a prosperous economy. In the city there are major growth opportunities in the Waterside and Abbey Meadows regeneration areas and projects like 'Connecting Leicester' help create the right conditions for a thriving city centre. Recent developments such as Pioneer Park, Ashton Green Business Park and retail developments at Highcross have enhanced Leicester's role as a major economic centre in the Midlands.

The city's Economic Action Plan aims to improve the local economy and generate wealth through innovation and creativity, deliver efficient transport infrastructure and create more

employment in higher skill, high wage jobs. The priorities include youth employment; better graduate retention; improved knowledge transfer between the universities and business; business support and the development of local innovative and creative talent through the education system and through encouraging the growth plans of our many small and medium sized enterprises (SME). There are also fantastic opportunities for strong growth in the creative industries, space-related research and environmental technologies.

We have recently made changes to allow new office development throughout the city centre, instead of only around the railway station. More jobs in the city centre will also help support the existing shops and services there, creating a more thriving environment.

Given the constraints provided by the city boundary we have not been able to accommodate all our employment land needs within the city area and have been reliant on adjoining districts.

## Issues:

1. How can we ensure that there is enough employment land in the right places, serving different business needs?
2. Where should industrial land be located?
3. Do we need to retain the lowest quality of existing employment land or what alternative uses could this land be put to?
4. How do we accommodate emerging high value and skilled sector jobs, as well as research and development?

## Options:

1. Support the improvement and re-use of existing employment sites that are suited for continued employment development.
2. Continue to focus new office development in the city centre.
3. Focus high value and skilled jobs and research and development at Pioneer Park at Abbey Meadows.
4. Work together with adjoining local authorities to ensure that they provide sufficient employment land, which is beneficial to the city.
5. Consider some green field sites in the city for future employment needs instead of being largely reliant on adjoining districts.
6. Allow redevelopment for non-employment uses (for example housing), on the poorest quality employment land which is no longer fit for purpose.

**What do you think we should do?**

# A Thriving City Centre



Leicester's city centre is the focus for commerce, retailing, culture, leisure and entertainment for the city and county. A vibrant and thriving city centre is essential for growth in the city's economy and in the wider sub-region. Over £1 billion of investment in iconic new developments such as Highcross, Curve theatre, Phoenix Square, Market Food Hall and extensive public realm improvements continue to transform the city, but there is still more to do.

Further investment is needed to keep the city centre competitive and an attractive place to shop, work, live and visit. The Council intends to do this by strengthening the retail offer through attracting further premium brands as well as building stronger links to the independent retail sector and strengthening and diversifying the early night time economy. The Central Shopping Core is a smaller area within the city centre (see map). It is the main focus for shops in the city centre such as the Highcross Shopping Centre, the Lanes and arcades and the market as well as all the shops around the Clock Tower. Concentrating shopping in this area has helped to sustain Leicester as a major regional shopping destination.

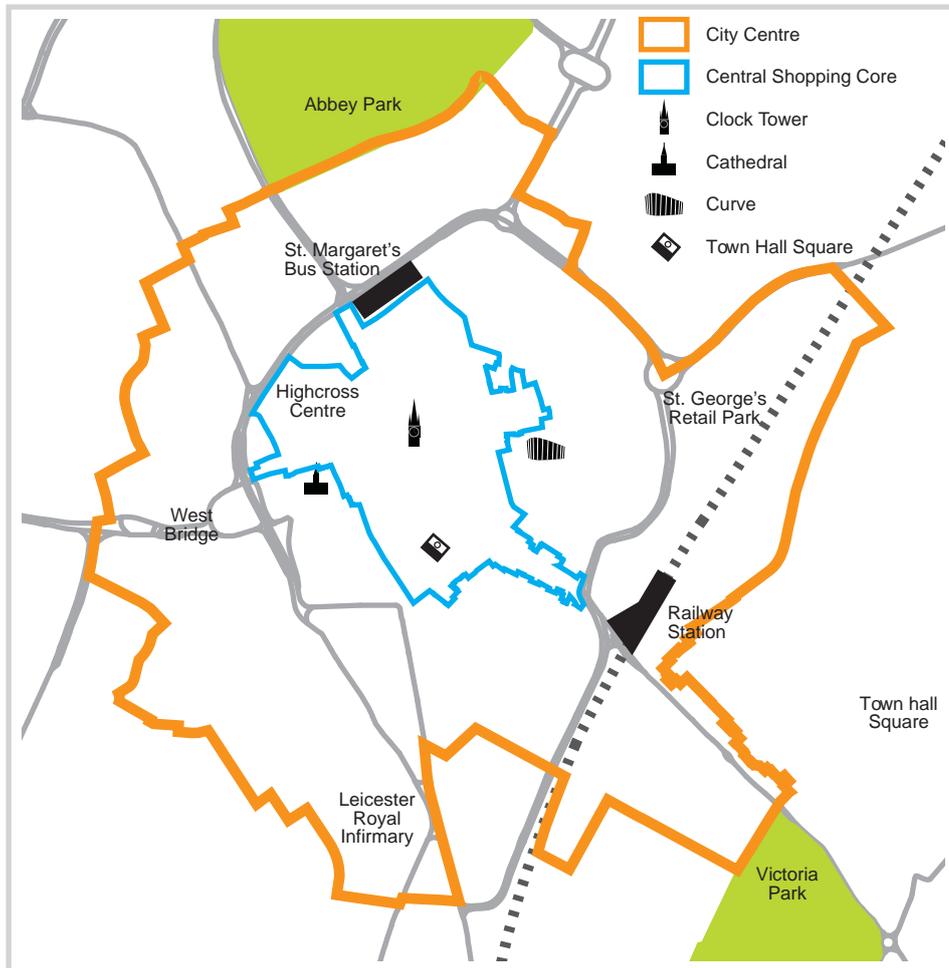
The "Connecting Leicester" initiative will continue to improve physical connections in the city centre and link up special historic buildings and places with shopping, leisure, business and residential areas creating a more joined up and attractive city centre. Investment in public transport is also key to a thriving city centre, so investment being made to improve city centre bus facilities including an upgraded Bus Station.

More offices and homes in the city centre would help to support a greater mix of leisure, retail, and cultural activities and help to create a strong and lively 24 hour centre.

There has been a substantial increase in student accommodation within and adjacent to the city centre. The provision of other forms of housing has been less prevalent compared to other cities.

Cafés, restaurants, pubs and takeaways are a necessary part of the shopping experience and can make a centre more interesting. Other key aims are to enhance the appeal of the city centre particularly as a safe family-friendly place, and to improve signage and lighting, to make the city more accessible.

The discovery of the remains of Richard III and the subsequent investment in the visitor centre, Cathedral Gardens and a tomb for re-interment of his remains in the Cathedral create a major new opportunity to strengthen and diversify the city centre. Linking these areas with other historic areas including the Castle and Jewry Wall, retail areas and new public squares at Jubilee Square and the Market will create new 'circuits' for walkers and cyclists, retaining people for longer in the city centre.



## Issues:

1. Is it desirable to maintain a compact city centre?
2. What else is needed in the city centre to make it attractive for everyone to visit at any time?
3. Where should leisure uses go and what should they be? For example restaurants, music venues and sports facilities.
4. How can we increase demand for the shops and services in the city centre?
5. How can we create an improved public realm environment for visitors to the city centre?
6. Are there enough cafés, restaurants, pubs and takeaways or too many? Are they located where they are most needed?
7. Are there too many betting shops in the city centre?
8. Should we have more student housing schemes and how can we encourage new housing for other residents in the city centre?
9. Some areas of the city centre have more empty buildings than others. Should the Council be more flexible with the type of uses (such as non-shop uses) that would be acceptable in these areas? What type of uses would be appropriate?
10. How can we maximise the benefit of the historic parts of the city centre including the facilities connected to the discovery of the remains of Richard III?

## Options:

1. Maintain the Central Shopping Core (see plan on page 14) as the focus for city centre retail development or reduce the shopping area to focus on the key retail areas.
2. Allocate land for further expansion of retail and leisure and accept some major development outside the city centre.
3. Continue to direct large scale office development to the city centre.
4. Continue to improve and link streets and spaces to create a more attractive environment for shoppers and other visitors to the city centre.
5. Continue to support the development of cafés, restaurants, pubs and takeaways throughout the city centre or concentrate these in specific areas.
6. Restrict the number of betting shops in the city centre.
7. Encourage more housing in the city centre.

**What do you think we should do?**

# Housing Growth

Leicester will need to continue to grow over the next 15 years to meet the housing, education and employment needs of an expanding population. There is a need to create high quality housing and schools in attractive neighbourhoods for people to live in, that offer good connectivity to places of work and access to a diverse range of cultural, leisure, sport and entertainment activities. Government guidance also tells us that we need to set targets for new Gypsy and Traveller sites which address the identified level of need, and then allocate enough land in the Local Plan to meet these targets.

Currently there are around 126,700 houses in Leicester, accommodating almost 330,000 people (2011 Census). The population of the city has grown rapidly in recent years, and is expected to continue to grow. Recent government projections show that the population of the city will increase by almost 12% - to around 368,000 people by 2031. The population of the city is growing because people are living longer, more children are being born and because more people are moving into the city than leaving. In addition more people are living on their own than in the past which means even more houses are required to meet housing needs. The adopted Core Strategy sets out a housing requirement of 1,280 new dwellings a year. Recent research has indicated that between 1,250 and 1,350 new houses will be required each year up to 2031 to meet the needs of the city's growing population, which is broadly similar to the existing annual requirement. The current strategy to provide new houses in the city includes:

- Prioritising new houses on brownfield sites in the regeneration areas around the city centre, particularly in the Waterside/Abbey Meadows areas;
- Delivering houses on allocated housing sites including the green field locations at Hamilton and Ashton Green;
- Ensuring efficient use of land and seeking higher density developments where appropriate to maximise the delivery of new housing;
- Remodelling and improving areas already in residential use, particularly low density housing estates where new housing could provide a wider and better choice of housing; and
- Redevelopment of poorer quality industrial areas which are no longer suitable for modern industrial use.



## Issues:

1. Our current strategy has delivered many new houses in the city in recent years, but given that the population of the city is expected to continue to increase, brown field sites alone will not be sufficient to meet the growing need.
2. Are there any other potential sources of housing land in the city other than those mentioned above?
3. Not enough affordable housing is being built in the city. How can development sites provide adequate levels of affordable housing?
4. National policy states that we should consider setting policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens. Only a small proportion of new houses are provided on residential gardens in Leicester each year, but should the city seek to restrict such development in the future?
5. Over the last ten years or so there has been a trend to build flats and smaller houses rather than housing more suitable for families. However, we know that there is significant demand for larger housing in the city.
6. Do we continue the current policy of only allowing limited new student accommodation, do we need stricter controls or should we relax the current policy?
7. Is there a desire to develop self-build/ custom build houses in the city? Is this something that we should encourage?

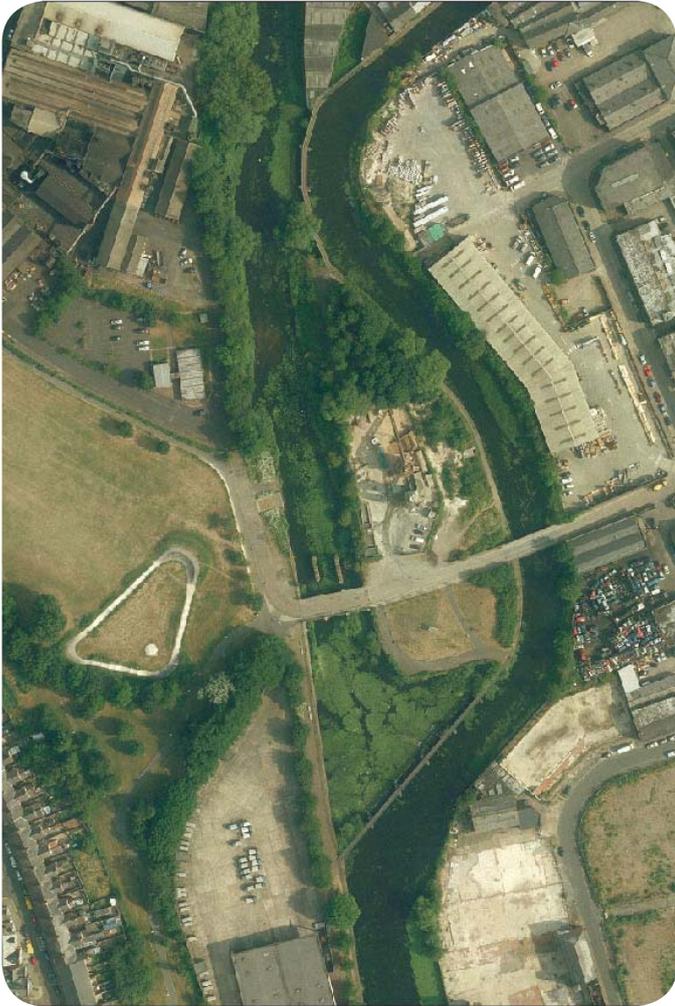
8. What suitable sites are available for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople? Can we identify enough suitable sites in the city to meet all the need arising?
9. Should we continue with the current policy of restricting the development of new hostels in areas of the city where there is already a concentration?

## Options:

1. Use the existing strategy for new housing provision set out above as the priority for new housing land.
2. Consider more flexible reuse of older industrial areas and some green field sites in the city for new housing.
3. Increase the percentage of affordable homes expected from larger development sites and/or expect smaller sites to also provide affordable housing.
4. Encourage the development of more family housing in the city.
5. Support new student accommodation in key locations to support our universities
6. Identify and allocate enough Council-owned and private sites to meet the need arising for new Gypsy and Traveller sites within the city, or work with neighbouring authorities to see if any of the need arising in the can be met across a wider area.
7. Limit the sub division of housing to flats where there is a shortage of family housing.

**What do you think we should do?**

# The Waterside



The Waterside is home to a number of small businesses but large areas are characterised by extensive dereliction and vacancy. Currently, it is not contributing what it could to the prosperity of Leicester, but it has potential for significant intensification of use for new homes and businesses. It has recently been identified as one of the Leicestershire and Leicester Economic Partnership's Priority Transformation Zones. This designation reflects the importance of Waterside to the future prosperity of the City; it will help the Council to attract public investment to the area to provide infrastructure and enable new development to take place.

The Waterside area has potential to connect existing communities with the city centre and the riverside and canal. Our strategy is to develop the Waterside as an attractive, high quality, residential-led, mixed use neighbourhood focusing on water. This would include local facilities and leisure attractions which enhance the riverside, the canal and its ecology and improve connectivity to adjoining areas. The increased use of the river and canal corridor for leisure and recreation could add to the city's tourism offer and associated employment.

Recently work has started to refurbish Friars Mill for new workspace development to kick start regeneration in this area. A student housing scheme has also commenced on adjacent land.

A future strategy could include:

- Encouraging a full mix of housing types;
- Encouraging small scale offices and workspaces and supporting neighbourhood uses;
- Defining a new local retail centre to serve the area on the A50;
- Improving vehicle, pedestrian and cycling access through and within the area; and
- Seeking to provide access links, education provision and improvements in the provision of public open space (including to Rally Park).



## Issues:

1. What types of housing should be included? Mainly town houses, flats or a mix of both?
2. How can the offices and other mix of uses best be accommodated in the area?
3. How much green space should be provided in the area and where?
4. What type of leisure destinations would be most successful?
5. How can we make sure that existing firms can flourish whilst redevelopment take place?
6. How do we improve access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists?

## Options:

1. A high density flat led development; lower density town houses, or a mix of both.
2. Have a larger green space in one area or a range of smaller green spaces that are spread out.
3. Have concentrated areas of offices and mixed uses or spread them through the area.
4. Enhance existing or provide new infrastructure for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists to access this area.

**What do you think we should do?**

# People and Spaces...

- 
- **Good Neighbourhood Facilities**
  - **Creating High Quality Spaces**
  - **Our City's Heritage**
  - **A Healthy and Active City**

# Good Neighbourhood Facilities



Leicester consists of many neighbourhoods with their own individual characteristics, which come together to create a city of rich diversity. The provision of accessible local facilities within residential development helps to support strong and vibrant communities. Local centres vary in quality and the range of services they offer, but generally provide easily accessible shopping to meet people's day to day needs. Cafés, restaurants, pubs and takeaways support the vitality of shopping centres, along with social and community uses such as schools, crèches, surgeries, and play facilities which provide places to meet, support community engagement and promote sport and physical activity.

Some existing centres may bring noise, litter and anti-social behaviour, for example outside takeaways. Some communities have sought to provide their own facilities, such as places of worship, but this is difficult if the cost of buildings is too high.

The City Council is also going through a process of matching community facilities with local need, which may result in a specific need for local community services in certain areas or a consolidation of existing provision. The council recognises the need for neighbourhoods to be safe and healthy places and will seek to work with infrastructure providers such as health providers and the emergency services.

## Issues:

1. Are local centres in the right places to serve existing communities and new housing development?
2. Are the current centres the right size? Do any need to be made bigger or smaller?
3. Are any extra services or facilities needed? Or could the way existing services are provided be improved – for example by creating multi-purpose centres, which provide a range of facilities such as health, education and cultural activities in one place?
4. Should we allow a greater mix of uses in local centres such as health, community facilities and offices that would support shopping provision?
5. Are there enough food stores and supermarkets? If not, where are they needed?
6. Should there be more or fewer cafe, restaurant, pub and takeaway outlets and should opening hours be restricted?
7. How can we support smaller community groups who wish to provide their own premises for community uses?
8. In what particular locations do we need education facilities?

## Options:

1. Strengthen some local shopping centres by focusing new development in them and enhance the special character of centres such as Belgrave Road.
2. Restrict the number of takeaways near schools, and limit the number of cafés, restaurants, takeaways, and pubs in local centres.
3. Develop new centres or enhance existing centres in existing and planned residential areas where such provision would not duplicate existing facilities.
4. Plan for multi-purpose community buildings that include, for example, education and health facilities.
5. Give greater protection to community buildings to allow community uses to continue.

**What do you think we should do?**

# Creating High Quality Places



Good design is central to creating attractive and sustainable places. High quality, well designed developments that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the local natural and built environment are important. It includes places that are safe, secure and accessible by all; that reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable transport provision; places that are easy to find one's way around and that have a strong identity; well designed buildings and spaces which have regard to their setting; and creating places which have a variety of uses and choices.

In considering any development in Leicester, note must be taken of the general characteristics of the city, its form and history. There is a need to make sure that future development does not cause harm to the city's natural and built environments.

## Issues:

1. How do we ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the surrounding environment?
2. What is the appropriate density/height of new developments in the city centre and in the city suburbs.
3. Large scale advertisement hoardings can be unsightly and devalue streets and spaces. Do they have a role in screening derelict sites for a temporary period?
4. Street equipment such as freestanding advertisement hoardings, ATM machines and phone boxes can make a street look cluttered and untidy and cause problems for people with limited mobility.
5. Recent research nationally shows that the dimensions of your property (room sizes, storage space) could define your life. Property size is one of the main reasons why people move house. Size can dictate not just how comfortable you feel in your home, but also how much privacy you get.

## Options:

1. Promote good quality design in new development and ensure that development respects its setting.
2. Set density standards, allowing higher density development in and around the city centre and varying density standards across the rest of the city.
3. Establish strong design principles that encourage high quality buildings, streets and spaces.
4. Only allow temporary large scale advertisement hoardings where they screen a derelict site. Remove existing hoardings which do not.
5. Provide clear through routes for pedestrians to aid accessibility by restricting unnecessary clutter such as free standing advert hoardings, ATM machines and phone boxes.
6. Set specific space standards for new houses. For example minimum sizes for rooms and storage.

**What do you think we should do?**

# Our City's Heritage

The city's historic environment is an asset of enormous value, and should be recognised for the quality of life it brings to us every day. When we visit and live in these places not only do they affect us in an emotional way, they can also enrich our lives in much more visible ways – for example through the communities that form within and around them, the environmental benefits it brings and the economic boost it can provide to the area.

Leicester is becoming more and more aware of the opportunities heritage and the historic environment can bring to the city. Work to protect important historic areas and buildings in the city centre is progressing. The historic environment can play a vital role in tackling today's social and economic issues, particularly in difficult times, making our history key to shaping our future.



## Issues:

1. Should we identify buildings and other heritage assets at risk and pro-actively work with owners and other stakeholders to bring assets back into good repair and long term use?
2. How do we better protect, respect and retain Leicester's historic and archaeological heritage?
3. Should we continue to work pro-actively, applying for funding schemes, providing grants and engaging with stakeholders?
4. How should Leicester promote its historic environment?
5. Are our Conservation Areas fit for purpose?

## Options:

1. Keep and maintain a local heritage at risk register to identify heritage assets at risk and prioritise resources.
2. Establish a strong local heritage designation process to sit alongside the national designation process.
3. Work with other stakeholders and funding bodies to identify opportunities to promote and enhance the historic environment.
4. Produce development guidance and management strategies for historically sensitive sites and areas.
5. Review the number and extent of Conservation Areas.

**What do you think we should do?**

# A Healthy and Active City



Many factors influence our health, including housing, diet and the environment around us. Planning shapes the physical built and green environment that we live, work and play in. We therefore need to make sure that policies in the Local Plan create a healthy environment which will help to get people active, connect and strengthen communities, provide healthy food options and that planning decisions consider health and well being in the most appropriate way.

Leicester's diverse population is marked by a greater number of younger people and a lower number of older residents than the national average. There is a persistent gap in health between Leicester and England overall and the health gap between the more deprived and the more affluent communities within Leicester has remained a stubborn inequality.

There are serious health issues in the city including circulatory diseases, cancers and respiratory disease. Poor health is largely driven by deprivation and exacerbated by lifestyle factors embedded within communities. Leicester also has high levels of obesity, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and smoking.

## Issues:

1. How do we build desirable communities and neighbourhoods that improve people's physical and mental health and reduce inequalities?
2. How do we encourage people to be physically active in their everyday lives?
3. How do we improve people's well-being and make people feel safer in their own communities?
4. How do we make sure that everyone has fair access to: jobs paying a living wage; health services; education; social venues and leisure facilities?
5. How do we reduce the impact of poor housing on health?

## Options:

1. Create a safe, attractive and well designed local environment which prioritises walking and cycling over cars.
2. Improve the quality and accessibility of open and green space across the city to improve physical and mental health, and well-being.
3. Promote environments for active recreation – for example green gyms, open play spaces and jogging trails.
4. Increase access to, and use of, green space for people to grow their own food – for example by providing allotments as part of new development.
5. Ensure that local facilities offer a balanced food environment that promotes healthy eating by: keeping local shopping centres attractive through encouraging a better mix of shops; restricting the number of takeaways near schools; and limiting the number of cafés, restaurants, takeaways, and pubs in local centres.
6. Ensure that there is equitable access to job opportunities, health, education, social and leisure facilities. For example by encouraging local employment opportunities on new development schemes.

**What do you think we should do?**

# The Environment...

- 
- **Accessing the City**
  - **Climate Change and Flooding**
  - **Open Space, Sports and Leisure**
  - **Managing Leicester's Waste and Mineral Resources**

# Accessing the City

Due to its advantageous position in the centre of England, Leicester has excellent links to most of the UK via the motorway network and national rail routes. Over 90% of the city is within 400 metres of a bus stop, and the city is also well connected to the national cycle network.

Over recent years there has been substantial investment in transport infrastructure in the city, and more work is planned to build on the progress already made in reducing congestion and improving accessibility, to ensure that Leicester is a thriving modern city.

Key projects include:

- Connecting Leicester - An ongoing programme of projects aimed at improving pedestrian and cycling links between shopping, leisure, heritage, housing and transport facilities.
- Ongoing improvements to the National Cycle Network, including the Riverside Way, Great Central Way and Forest Way.
- Recently completed A426 (Aylestone Road/Lutterworth Road) Bus Corridor improvements.
- Smart Ticketing - An integrated ticketing system on buses in Leicester and Leicestershire is being developed.
- Haymarket Bus Station Project - new bus station on Charles Street to provide additional needed capacity for local bus services.
- 20mph Programme - An ongoing key project to improve safety and introduce 20 miles an hour zones near schools, community facilities and in densely populated areas.

Although car ownership in Leicester is below the national average, like everywhere else it is increasing, and with funding for new infrastructure at a premium and a lack of space for new roads, alternative options will be needed to support growth. Inevitably, new development will also lead to more journeys, often by commuters from outside the city, and these journeys should make increased use of public transport. In addition, recent changes to government policy require a more positive approach to promoting access to the major shopping areas by all modes of transport including the car, but at the same time providing reliable public transport and reducing air pollution.

The council is introducing a new city centre car parking action plan to make car parking simple and easier for those that have to use a car to access the city centre.



## Issues:

1. What can be done to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport?
2. How do we make sure that new development is accessible for everyone including those with limited mobility?
3. How do we plan development to reduce the need to travel?
4. How do we positively promote access to the city centre?
5. What transport infrastructure is needed to support new development and to disperse traffic more evenly through and around the city?
6. How can we ensure that new developments do not increase the risk of accidents?

## Options:

1. Encourage major development that is visited by the public in either the city centre or in local shopping centres.
2. Make sure that all new housing is near to shops, schools, health centres and employment.
3. Work with local partners to improve public transport access to the city centre and new areas of development.
4. Provide more linked cycleways and footpaths and ensure they are connected to areas people want to get too, and are safe and avoid busy roads and junctions.
5. Have a balanced approach to car parking standards that helps to reduce congestion but at the same time keeps the city centre competitive from a business perspective.

**What do you think we should do?**

# Climate Change and Flooding



Climate change affects everyone and one of the biggest contributors to Leicester's carbon footprint is energy use in domestic and commercial buildings. Impacts on highways, businesses and biodiversity are also to be anticipated.

The planning process plays an important part in building Leicester's resilience to the impacts of climate change and in enabling the city to become more energy efficient and use sources of renewable energy for the future. Energy costs are rising yet many of our homes are energy inefficient, wasting heat to the atmosphere and contributing to further climate change. Solutions to insulate solid walls are available to reduce energy costs but these risk altering the appearance of our street scene unless planned carefully.

There are concerns about our reliance on our current sources of energy. There is also a need to adapt to changes in the climate that are already inevitable. It is predicted that due to climate change, Leicester will have warmer, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters. There may also be an increase in erratic or unsettled weather events such as prolonged periods of drought and severe storms that can lead to, for example, flooding and reduced water availability. Adapting to these changes will require buildings that can resist overheating in warmer summers and are not vulnerable to flooding.

New buildings will need to have higher standards of energy efficiency, whilst existing buildings will need to be improved.

The city's location near to the headwaters of the River Soar and its surrounding geology means that it is at risk of flooding. Leicester is an urban area so heavy rainfall can lead to surface water flooding. The City Council has directed new development towards lower flood risk areas

## Issues:

1. How can we ensure that buildings are more energy efficient – able to deal with cold and hot weather efficiently?
2. What types of renewable energy schemes would be acceptable in Leicester? Large scale wind, solar hot water, anaerobic digestion, gasification, pyrolysis, solar panels, combined heat and power networks are examples of current technologies.
3. How should planning policies deal with changes to the climate in the future - warmer, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters (for example require less energy use, better sustainable drainage systems, natural cooling)?
4. Should flood relief systems also benefit biodiversity and areas of open space?
5. What types of solid wall insulation solutions are acceptable in historic areas of the city?
6. Should the planning system be encouraging additional secure energy supplies through local community energy generation?

## Options:

1. Require good design that gives shading and natural ventilation to help cope with a changing climate and the higher temperatures found in city centres.
2. Require higher standards of energy efficiency in buildings, including ensuring that buildings stay cool in summer.
3. Require large developments (housing and commercial) to incorporate renewable energy schemes.
4. Ensure that renewable energy schemes do not have an unacceptable impact on the community. For example, impact on building design and the street scene.
5. Encourage large commercial developments to connect to district heating schemes where available.
6. Encourage community energy projects.
7. Require woodland planting on parts of development sites to improve air quality, reduce flooding, provide habitats for wildlife, reduce high summer temperatures and store carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas).
8. Strengthen our policies to ensure that all new relevant developments incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems.

**What do you think we should do?**

# Open Space, Sports and Leisure



Leicester has a good network of different types of open space such as parks, children's play areas, sports pitches and natural areas, many of which are well maintained and provide a variety of functions. There are also a number of leisure centres and swimming pools across the city. These areas and facilities are valued by local communities, and help to promote sport and physical activity.

Areas of woodland can help improve air quality, provide habitats, reduce summer temperatures, store carbon dioxide and reduce surface water flooding. They also provide areas for recreation and relaxation. There may be opportunities to increase the amount of woodland in Leicester in the future.

Open spaces can provide useful areas where wildlife can thrive and move from one area to

another through new or established ecological networks. They can provide flood storage, improve water quality or help reduce temperatures and cool the city. They can also provide good public amenity value.

However, there is increasing pressure to provide land for development within the city. Some areas of open space may be of relatively low value and may be more suited to some sensitively designed housing or employment use. This would allow existing limited resources to be focused on other higher quality, more well used areas of open space.

There is also a need to provide long term sustainable solutions to the decreasing availability of burial space in the city.

## Issues:

1. Does the city have enough sports facilities (sports halls and pools) and outdoor sports pitches? If not, where should new sports facilities be located?
2. Are there any less popular or lower quality open spaces within the city that could reasonably be developed for housing or employment? If so which ones?
3. How high a priority should biodiversity protection and creation be when considering new developments? How much control should the council have over landscape and planting schemes?
4. There is a shortage of burial space in the city to meet future needs.

## Options:

1. Insist on open spaces and play areas being provided as part of new development.
2. Seek appropriate contributions from development for new and improved open space.
3. Where there is an overriding need for housing or employment, allow some development on selected open spaces which are less popular, underused, poorly located or of poor quality.
4. Encourage biodiversity to flourish on a variety of open spaces across the city and facilitate greater connectivity for the community and wildlife between sites (for example river corridors and canals).
5. Require high quality planting and landscaping as part of new development.
6. Create extensions to existing cemeteries or identify areas for new cemetery provision.

**What do you think we should do?**

# Managing Leicester's Waste and Mineral Resources



As resources become scarcer we must recycle and reuse more of the waste we produce. In Leicester we diverted nearly 70% of our waste away from landfill in 2013. European Union and Government legislation sets a requirement that waste should be processed where it is produced and as new development is built and the population of the city increases more waste will be produced. Leicester currently has enough recycling capacity to deal with all forms of waste until 2021; however options will be needed after this time. A significant amount of Leicester's waste is ultimately processed outside of the city and the city also processes significant amounts of waste from other areas.

Leicester is also responsible for the minerals within the city boundary, and whilst we have a rich heritage of mineral extraction very few workable deposits remain. These deposits are unlikely to be extracted in the near future but government policy requires us to protect them for future generations. To meet the development needs of the city significant amounts of building materials will be needed which will either involve importing this from other areas where these minerals are extracted or reusing existing building materials.

## Issues:

1. How can we ensure that the city's recycling rates continue to improve as the population increases?
2. Where should any new waste facilities be located and what type of facilities should they be?
3. Leicester should continue to work with neighbouring authorities in regards to waste and minerals matters.
4. How should Leicester deal with its future demand for aggregates?
5. How should Leicester protect its remaining minerals?

## Options:

1. Work closely with both the private and public sectors to ensure that new facilities are provided or rely on waste facilities elsewhere to meet any future city need.
2. Encourage individual large scale waste facilities or lots of smaller waste facilities.
3. Continue to restrict all new waste facilities to existing employment areas or allow some low impact waste facilities such as composting and aggregate processing on areas such as green space.
4. Continue to import most aggregates from outside of the city and/or increase capacity for recycling building materials.
5. Safeguard area(s) from development to protect mineral deposits.

**What do you think we should do?**

