
THE STRATEGY



STRATEGY POLICIES

POLICY	PAGE NO.
1: Overall Strategy	14
2: Location of Development	17
3: Strategic Greenfield Sites	23
4: Development and the Transport System	24
5: Derelict, Vacant and Underused Land and Buildings	26
6: Land Uses in Green Wedges	28
7: The Location of Green Wedges	30
8: Separation of Settlements	32
9: Development in the Countryside	33
10: Mixed Use Development	35
11: Good Design	37
12: Developer Contributions	39
13: Regeneration Areas	40
14: The National Forest	42
15: Charnwood Forest	45
16: Rutland Water	45
17: Junction 23a/24/24a Area	46

2. STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Strategy sets out the framework for the Plan and deals with some of the major issues. It introduces the principles of sustainable development which will underpin the other policies of the Plan.
- 2.2 In the adopted Structure Plan, the urban areas were considered to be the main locations that were able to offer a realistic choice of transport, and hence most development is concentrated in and around the urban areas. It was assumed that all parts of the urban areas have an adequate choice of transport. Development was also directed to locations within the Transport Choice Corridors where it was considered that public transport could provide an effective alternative to the private car.
- 2.3 Since the development of this Transport Choice Strategy, the Government has issued PPG13 'Transport'. This supports the principles incorporated in the Transport Choice Strategy but also seeks to place more weight on enabling people to reach everyday destinations with less need to travel, especially by car, by integrating the location of different types of development with transport. This Consultation Draft Structure Plan seeks to emphasise the priority for the location of development to be in existing built-up areas and promote mixed use development to maximise accessibility.
- 2.4 The priority for the location of development to be in existing built-up areas is also favoured as it has advantages in terms of the efficient use of resources, including:
- a) reducing the dependency on the private car for travelling from home to work, leisure activities, services and facilities;
 - b) making full use of derelict and underused land in order to limit the need for greenfield development;
 - c) securing a more economic use of existing and new services and infrastructure;
 - d) conserving countryside and high grade agricultural land; and
 - e) widening the choice of labour and services available to employers.
- 2.5 Housing completions in Leicester have been below the level required to meet the adopted Structure Plan targets. A possible reason for this is that developers often perceive greenfield sites as being easier to develop than sites within the urban areas.
- 2.6 In this Consultation Draft Structure Plan, emphasis is being placed on making the maximum use of the urban areas in accommodating the development needs of the Plan Area. District council boundaries have only a limited value in this respect, and therefore a Central Leicestershire Policy Area (CLPA) has been defined to help direct development to Leicester and its adjoining settlements.
- 2.7 The CLPA is based on the 1991 Census journey to work data, which is derived from an analysis of the main origins and destinations of commuters who travel into and out of Leicester. It includes 58% of the population of the Plan Area, about 535,500 people.
- 2.8 The CLPA, as indicated on the Key Diagram, comprises the whole of Leicester and Oadby and Wigston and parts of the Districts of Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough and Hinckley and Bosworth. It includes the main urban area of Leicester and its adjoining settlements which exert a strong influence on the use of land across a wide hinterland

and which will continue to be the main focus for development in the Plan Area. In particular, to reduce the need to travel long distances to work, it is important to achieve a balance of housing and employment within the CLPA over the Plan period. Thus, the CLPA will be used to help distribute housing and employment land between the CLPA and the remainder of the Plan Area. To achieve this balance, the aim is to locate 60% of new development in the Plan Area in the CLPA.

- 2.9 Both Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council will strongly support a consistent and co-ordinated approach towards site selection in the CLPA. The joint preparation of supplementary planning guidance should be undertaken by the relevant Local Planning Authorities in order to support Local Plan preparation for certain types of development such as retail and leisure. Such an approach has already been applied successfully in Central Leicestershire concerning the provision of retail floorspace.

Sub-Section 1: Framework for Development

OVERALL STRATEGY

- 2.10 Strategy Policy 1 sets the framework for the other policies of the Plan, and has been developed to help further the principles of sustainable development.
- 2.11 The Structure Plan has an important part to play in achieving sustainable development as part of the Agenda 21 process. Agenda 21 involves the whole community, including business, industry, the public and voluntary sectors, as well as individuals. Clearly, the Structure Plan cannot achieve sustainable development by itself, but it can contribute towards the overall aims. The main elements of the Plan that seek to meet the principles of sustainable development and move towards the vision, as set out in the Introduction to this Plan, are reflected in Strategy Policy 1.
- 2.12 Clause a) of Strategy Policy 1 is concerned with social equity, ensuring that people have the same opportunities in terms of accessibility, for example to job opportunities and recreation facilities. This main element of the Plan is addressed and developed in following policies of the Plan, in particular:
- Strategy Policy 2 'Location of Development' directs, as a priority, development to those areas which are the most accessible;
 - Strategy Policy 10 'Mixed Use Development' promotes a mix of suitable land uses and hence making such uses more accessible to local residents;
 - Strategy Policy 4 'Development and the Transport System' and Strategy Policy 12 'Developer Contributions' requires relevant infrastructure, facilities and other resources to be developed in conjunction with new development;
 - Accessibility and Transport Policy 1 'Priorities' maximises people's accessibility by giving priority to walking, cycling and public transport; and
 - Central Areas and Shopping Policy 3 'New Retail Development and Community Facilities to Serve Local Needs' promotes the provision of shops, services and facilities to meet local needs in areas where facilities are deficient.
- 2.13 Clause b) of Strategy Policy 1 is to ensure that the appropriate quantity and types of housing and jobs are provided to meet the needs of the present and future population

of the Plan Area. This main element of the Plan is addressed and developed in following policies of the Plan, in particular:

- Housing Policy 1 'The Quantity of Housing Land' sets out how many new dwellings are required to meet the needs of the Plan Area;
- Housing Policy 4 'Affordable Housing' promotes the provision of affordable housing in urban and rural areas; and
- Employment Policy 1 'Quantity of Employment Land for New Development' sets out how much employment land is needed in the Plan Area and encourages the provision of a range of sites.

2.14 Clause c) is to encourage the promotion of good design including the efficient use of resources. This main element of the Plan is addressed and developed in following policies of the Plan, in particular:

- Strategy Policy 11 'Good Design' promotes a more attractive and safer built environment;
- Resource Management Policy 2 'Energy Efficiency' aims to reduce the amount of energy required by development; and
- Resource Management Policy 3 'Renewable Energy' promotes the use of renewable energy, in particular, passive solar design.

2.15 Clause d) is to encourage a greater sense of community as well as encouraging people to value the environment. This will be promoted through encouraging good design and the creation of more attractive urban environments. This main element of the Plan is addressed and developed in following policies of the Plan, in particular:

- Strategy Policy 5 'Derelict, Vacant and Underused Land and Buildings' aims to create a more attractive urban and rural environment;
- Strategy Policy 10 'Mixed Use Development' promotes more attractive and safer places for people to live;
- Strategy Policy 11 'Good Design' promotes a more attractive built environment; and
- Resource Management Policy 1 'Pollution' aims to protect residential areas from sources of pollution.

2.16 Clause e) is to ensure that those features or assets which are irreplaceable, too difficult or expensive to replace in human timetables, highly valued and/or essential to human health are identified, protected, promoted and increased. An example of an irreplaceable asset is Bradgate Park. This main element of the Plan is addressed and developed in following policies of the Plan, in particular:

- Environment Policy 1 'Sites and Buildings of Historic, Architectural and Archaeological Interest' protects and enhances areas, sites and buildings of historic, architectural or archaeological importance;
- Environment Policy 5 'Woodlands' protects ancient woodland;
- Resource Management Policy 4 'The Water Environment' protects the natural watercourse system; and

- Resource Management Policy 5 'Agricultural Land' protects the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 2.17 Clause f) is to ensure that replaceable features which are lost through development are either replaced or traded for enhanced living standards. A feature which could be replaced is a playing field and those which could be traded for enhanced living standards are mineral resources. This main element of the Plan is addressed and developed in following policies of the Plan, in particular:
- Environment Policy 3 'Ecology' aims to keep the total ecological resource at least its current level which is an example of where a feature can be replaced in particular circumstances;
 - Resource Management Policy 7 'Land Release - Minerals' aims to maintain an adequate supply of minerals to contribute to local, regional and national needs which is an example of where a feature can be traded for enhanced living standards; and
 - Resource Management Policy 10 'Igneous Rock Extraction' aims to provide continuity of supply for igneous rock which is another example of where a feature can be traded for enhanced living standards.
- 2.18 Clause g) will help to ensure that those resources which are fundamental to people's well-being are managed and enhanced in the most effective way. This main element of the Plan is addressed and developed in following policies of the Plan, in particular:
- Strategy Policy 2 'Location of Development' aims to reduce the need to travel;
 - Strategy Policy 4 'Development and the Transport System' aims to reduce the need to travel by car;
 - Resource Management Policy 1 'Pollution' aims to minimise or avoid air, noise, water, land and light pollution of new development;
 - Resource Management Policy 4 'The Water Environment' protects the natural watercourse system; and
 - Accessibility and Transport Policy 1 'Priorities' aims to minimise the environmental impacts of transport.
- 2.19 Clause h) will help to ensure an efficient use of resources by providing development in locations with sufficient opportunity for employment, shops, services and facilities, thus reducing the need to travel. This main element of the Plan is addressed and developed in following policies of the Plan, in particular:
- Strategy Policy 2 'Location of Development' promotes locations which reduce the need to travel and are well served by public transport;
 - Strategy Policy 4 'Development and the Transport System' promotes access to new development by walking, cycling and public transport to reduce dependency on the private car;
 - Strategy Policy 10 'Mixed Use Development' promotes a mix of suitable land uses and hence making such uses more accessible to local residents; and
 - Accessibility and Transport Policy 1 'Priorities' promotes walking, cycling and public transport as priorities.

Strategy Policy 1: Overall Strategy

The policies of the Structure Plan will help to promote sustainable living through improving people's health and their social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being. This will be achieved in partnership with the whole community, through:

- a) maximising people's ability to utilise facilities, services, opportunities and resources;**
- b) ensuring the provision of appropriate housing and jobs to meet the needs of the Plan Area;**
- c) ensuring that development is of a high quality design;**
- d) encouraging community feeling and a sense of responsibility towards others and the local and wider environment;**
- e) protecting and enhancing irreplaceable and essential features and assets of the natural and built environment;**
- f) ensuring that replaceable features of the natural and built environment are identified, and replaced if lost through development, or increased where there is a deficiency;**
- g) managing and enhancing the quality of the air, water and land environment, and other resources upon which people depend for basic needs or raw materials to improve their quality of life;**
- h) integrating land uses and transportation provision to reduce the need to travel and the dependency on the private car.**

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 2.20 In the adopted Structure Plan, the locational guidance is underpinned by the strategy of Transport Choice. The overall approach of Transport Choice is to guide development to locations where there is less reliance on the private car. This approach is developed further in this Consultation Draft Structure Plan in light of the success of the strategy to date, recent Government guidance and the overall aim of sustainable development.
- 2.21 Recent Government guidance, notably PPG6 'Town Centres and Retail Developments' and PPG13, emphasises the importance of maximising accessibility, reducing the need to travel, and reusing previously developed sites.
- 2.22 PPG13 stresses the need to promote development within urban areas at locations which are well served by public transport and which are also accessible by cycling and walking. Particular importance is attached to locating travel intensive uses in urban centres. PPG6 stresses the primacy of central areas as locations for travel intensive

uses and also advises that the sequential test be applied to all travel intensive uses and gives priority to locations within and adjoining central areas.

- 2.23 In this Consultation Draft Structure Plan, the Three Councils wish to see a settlement pattern which maximises people's accessibility to employment, shops, services and other facilities in line with the overall strategy as set out in Strategy Policy 1. Emphasis is therefore placed on achieving a settlement pattern which both reduces the need to travel and encourages the use of more sustainable means of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling. Most people in the Plan Area live in urban areas where improved bus services offer the most effective way of reducing reliance on the private car for many types of journeys, although improved provision for cycling and walking with increased emphasis on safety are also important considerations.
- 2.24 The settlement pattern in Strategy Policy 2 is therefore based on urban concentration with limited further development in two bus-based transport choice corridors, both of which are within Charnwood District. There are no rail based transport choice corridors identified in this Plan, as there is considerable doubt about whether rail based transport choice can be successfully implemented during the Plan period.
- 2.25 The urban areas of Leicester and adjoining settlements, and the main towns of Ashby, Coalville, Hinckley and Earl Shilton, Loughborough, Lutterworth, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray, Oakham, Shepshed and Uppingham will continue to be the main urban areas for housing, employment, services and leisure.
- 2.26 The vast majority (at least 80%) of development in the Plan Area will occur within and adjoining the main urban areas according to the priorities set out in Strategy Policy 2A, which seeks to maximise accessibility and the use of urban land.
- 2.27 Of the smaller, remaining amount of new development which occurs in Charnwood District, most should be in settlements along the A6 Leicester to Loughborough and the A607 Leicester to Syston transport choice corridors, both of which provide a high standard of public transport services.
- 2.28 Some limited and smaller scale development will also be permitted in rural centres and other villages in the Plan Area.
- 2.29 Once the scale and location of development suitable for each settlement has been determined through Local Plans in light of Strategy Policy 2, the existing and planned development limits can be defined.
- 2.30 The Three Councils consider that the priority locations for development, set out in Strategy Policy 2B and 2C, are the most sustainable. In addition, Strategy Policy 5 gives priority to the use of derelict, underused, vacant land and buildings within the priority locations for development before greenfield sites are considered for development.
- 2.31 With regard to development in Leicestershire and Leicester, the priorities for locating development of housing, employment and other uses generating significant numbers of trips are set out in Strategy Policy 2B. The Policy seeks to maximise the use of land within the urban areas centred on Leicester and its adjoining settlements and the main towns in order to limit the loss of countryside and to promote accessibility. Within these urban areas the inherent accessibility of the central areas, particularly the regional centre of Leicester, affords these locations the highest priority for development before less central locations are considered. Development in lower priority locations which adjoin these urban areas or in settlements along the two bus-based transport choice corridors in Charnwood (Strategy Policy 2B (d) and (e)) will not be permitted to

take place until public transport services to defined standards are in place. This means commercially viable bus services at 15 minute intervals during the working day (Monday to Saturday, 7.00 am to 7.00 pm) and half hourly during evenings and Sundays. Developer subsidy may be needed for a limited period until the density of development is sufficient to support commercially viable services. See also Accessibility and Transport Policy 4 for further guidance.

- 2.32 The priority approach towards locating development will need to be applied separately for the development needs arising from the Central Leicestershire Policy Area (CLPA) to those needs arising from those parts of Districts outside the CLPA. Further details, in terms of the distribution of development, are given in Housing Policy 1 and Employment Policy 1.
- 2.33 With regard to development in Rutland, the need to limit the loss of countryside to new development and to promote accessibility has been fundamental in identifying the priority locations for development. As a consequence, land within the existing limits of Oakham and Uppingham, both of which possess a wide range of facilities and services, is the preferred location for new development, followed by land adjoining the two market towns.
- 2.34 The town of Stamford in Lincolnshire is tightly constrained by the Rutland county boundary on its northern and west side. It is considered that any potential for development in the adjoining areas of Rutland that lay on the fringe of the Stamford urban area should be addressed. In order to do so and to assist the preparation of detailed policies for the area, it is proposed that, subject to the agreement of the adjacent authorities, a joint study be undertaken by the relevant Local Planning Authorities with the aim of determining whether any potential exists. Any development in Rutland on the edge of Stamford under Strategy Policy 2C will be subject to the findings of this joint study.
- 2.35 With regard to other settlements in the Plan Area, more limited or small scale development may be necessary especially to help sustain local rural communities and encourage diversification of the rural economy. The most sustainable locations for such development are those settlements which have a reasonable level of local services and facilities and which also serve a wider hinterland. Such settlements should be designated as rural centres. In other settlements development should be limited to small scale.
- 2.36 As part of the preparation of this Consultation Draft Structure Plan, an analysis of rural settlements has been undertaken. The following are considered to meet the requirements of rural centres:

Area	Settlement
Charnwood	Woodhouse Eaves and Wymeswold
Harborough	Billesdon, Broughton Astley, Fleckney, Hallaton, Husbands Bosworth, Kibworth Beachamp, Kibworth Harcourt and Great Glen
Hinckley and Bosworth	Market Bosworth and Markfield
Melton	Asfordby and Bottesford
North West Leicestershire	Castle Donington, Measham, Swannington and Ibstock
Rutland	Cottesmore, Langham, Empingham, Ketton, Ryhall and Whissendine

- 2.37 Particular restraint should be practised where a settlement is within or abuts the Charnwood Forest. Development adjoining settlements in these locations should only be permitted where there is no adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.
- 2.38 The Three Councils will not support major development along the A5, M1 or other main road corridors unless it is well related to urban areas. In addition, the High Quality Employment Site at Ashby on the A42 corridor is considered to be especially suitable for hi-tech uses.
- 2.39 The A5 corridor lies along the Plan Area's boundary with Warwickshire and extends into Northamptonshire. The following joint statement was issued in 1992 by the three County Councils in recognition of development pressures in the area and the presently restricted capacity of the A5: "Local Planning Authorities in preparing Structure Plans and Local Plans will seek to concentrate the release of land along the A5 Corridor at appropriate sites in the adjoining urban areas, having regard to the capacity of the network, effects on the environment and the principles of sustainable development". Elsewhere, along the A5, there will be a presumption against development.
- 2.40 During the preparation of Local Plans, the sequential approach to selecting sites will be encouraged. Options for developing potential sites higher up the list of priority locations should be thoroughly assessed before those of a lower priority location are considered. This process will need to take into account the capacity of the priority locations to accommodate development. In line with Government guidance, preference should be given to the re-use of derelict, vacant, under-used land and buildings in the priority locations, in accordance with Strategy Policy 5.
- 2.41 The Three Councils recognise that this approach towards site selection will require both flexibility and realism from both the Local Planning Authorities and developers, for example suitable development sites should ideally be identified in consultation with the private sector. In putting forward proposals, developers must demonstrate that they

have tested all possible higher priority locations to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority before sites in lower priority locations can be considered.

- 2.42 Any proposals for development should give particular attention to the need to promote mixed uses and to provide adequate infrastructure. The section of this Chapter relating to Principles for Development provides further guidance on this matter.

Strategy Policy 2: Location of Development

2A: The Role of Urban Areas and along Transport Choice Corridors

The urban areas centred on Leicester and adjoining settlements and the main towns of Ashby, Coalville, Hinckley and Earl Shilton, Loughborough, Lutterworth, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray, and Shepshed will be the main urban areas for housing, employment, services and leisure. The vast majority of development will be directed to locations within and adjoining these urban areas in accordance with Strategy Policy 2B.

Most remaining development will be directed to settlements along transport choice corridors.

Within Rutland, the majority of development will be directed to Oakham, Uppingham and the edge of Stamford.

2B: The Priority Locations for Development within Leicestershire and Leicester

Development will be allocated according to the following list which is set out in priority order:

- a) within or adjoining the central area of Leicester City and within or adjoining other town centres of the main towns;**
- b) other town centres within Leicester and its adjoining settlements;**
- c) other locations within the urban areas of Leicester and its adjoining settlements and the main towns where there are good public transport, walking and cycling links with central areas and other more local centres;**
- d) locations which adjoin the urban areas of Leicester and its adjoining settlements and the main towns where there are good public transport, walking and cycling links with central areas and other more local centres; and**
- e) if required to meet any remaining development requirements, to settlements along the A6 Leicester to Loughborough and the A607 Leicester to Syston transport choice corridors.**

Development in locations defined d) and e) above will not be permitted to take place until public transport services to defined standards are in place.

2C: The Priority Locations for Development in Rutland

The priority for development in Rutland is as follows:

Within Oakham and Uppingham, followed by locations on the edge of Oakham, Uppingham and Stamford, where there are good public transport, walking and cycling links with the town centres.*

* see paragraph 2.34

2D: Development in Rural Centres and Other Settlements in Leicestershire and Rutland.

In rural centres, development of an appropriate scale, size, form and character will be allocated to support their role as centres for services and employment.

In other settlements, proposals for small scale development to meet local needs will be allocated provided it is in keeping with the size, form and character of the village.

STRATEGIC GREENFIELD SITES

- 2.43 Strategy Policy 2 sets out the priorities for location of development in the Plan Area. It aims to ensure the development of locations which reduce the need to travel and maximise accessibility to a range of facilities, including job opportunities and public transport.
- 2.44 A main priority of this Consultation Draft Structure Plan is to make the most effective use of urban areas. However, the capacity of the urban areas will not be enough to accommodate all the development needs of the Plan Area. Consideration has therefore been given to how the residual greenfield development should be accommodated.
- 2.45 Housing Policy 2 sets out the maximum amount of housing development that should be allocated on new greenfield sites.
- 2.46 The new greenfield sites could be allocated as a number of small additions scattered around the periphery of the built-up area or as a small number of large strategic greenfield sites. It is considered that large strategic sites are more advantageous for the following reasons:
- a) transport provision, particularly public transport, can be provided on a comprehensive scale;
 - b) other facilities and infrastructure can be provided in a managed way;
 - c) mixed use development can be provided; and
 - d) the phasing of the development will be easier to achieve and monitor.
- 2.47 Strategic Greenfield Sites should be allocated in Local Plans. Housing Policy 3 indicates how development on these sites should be phased and Employment Policy 2 gives further details on the location of Strategic Employment Sites.

Strategy Policy 3: Strategic Greenfield Sites

Strategic Greenfield Sites should:

- a) incorporate good quality mixed use development;**
- b) provide for Strategic Employment Sites, where appropriate;**
- c) incorporate open space and contribute to existing and proposed green networks;**
- d) be large enough to enable significant contributions to be made by developers towards transport and other infrastructure provision; and**
- e) be capable of being developed in a phased sequence that enables new residents to have access to employment, public transport and other facilities in close proximity from early stages of the development.**

DEVELOPMENT AND THE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

- 2.48 The adopted Structure Plan states that planning permission will not be given for a development if the motor traffic impact from it and approved development exceeds the highway capacity available in the local or wider highway system unless improvements with a reasonable design life are provided.
- 2.49 This Consultation Draft Structure Plan seeks a settlement pattern based on urban concentration where traffic flows are high and congestion already exists. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to comply with the adopted Structure Plan in these locations. The requirement to cater for traffic growth on the local or wider highway network which is unrelated to the development is no longer compatible with Government policy and may also conflict with Circular 1/97, which requires infrastructure to be reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development.
- 2.50 Whilst the adopted Structure Plan does encourage measures which minimise the generation of road traffic, this Consultation Draft gives it a higher priority. The adopted Structure Plan is also incompatible with other policies, as it aims to accommodate all traffic growth. In urban areas and Central Leicestershire in particular, an alternative approach to tackling traffic problems is required.
- 2.51 The Three Councils are concerned to ensure that all new development is adequately served by all modes of travel. Emphasis is placed on measures to enhance access by walking, cycling and public transport and to minimise traffic generated by new development. Road improvements may also be required to ensure that existing conditions are not seriously worsened by the extra traffic the new development creates.
- 2.52 The environmental impact of traffic directly attributable to development is of concern to the Three Councils. Developers will be expected to bear the cost of remedying adverse effects of the traffic generated, particularly in relation to the following;

-
- a) traffic noise and vibration;
 - b) community severance;
 - c) loss of amenity;
 - d) severance of and intrusive impact upon existing and proposed pedestrian, cycling and bridleway routes and facilities; and
 - e) air quality and pollution, where practical.
- 2.53 The term “approved local plan” in this Policy encompasses all development that is allocated in approved local plans and in local plans that have been placed on deposit for consultation.
- 2.54 Before consideration is given to road improvements to accommodate traffic from a development, consideration should be given to measures that minimise the generation or road traffic such as “Green Commuter Plans”, contributions towards improved bus or rail provision, or improved pedestrian and cycle facilities. Commuted payments towards off site parking, for example at park and ride sites, may also be appropriate. In all cases the level of contribution sought will be in accordance with Government guidelines, currently contained in Circular 1/97.
- 2.55 Whilst the assessment of traffic flows and conditions must take into account the cumulative impact of all existing and known proposed development, developers will normally only be expected to meet the cost of road improvements and other measures to mitigate the impact of traffic from their development. In general a solution which leaves the road network no worse off than had the development not proceeded should therefore be acceptable. In applying this policy, a degree of flexibility may be applied in urban areas, particularly in situations where there is the potential to increase the use of public transport, cycling and walking and in locations where these modes would be protected from the effects of increased congestion on the network. The road access to the development will normally be expected to have a reasonable design life.
- 2.56 Development will be considered to have an adverse impact on the local road network where significant problems are caused in localities away from the site (or sites) and where the increased levels of traffic are directly attributable to it. Traffic Impact Assessments will normally be required from developers where proposed development will increase traffic flows on the local network by more than 10%, or 5% where traffic congestion already exists.
- 2.57 Further guidance on the provision for walking, cycling and public transport is given in Accessibility and Transport Policies 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Strategy Policy 4: Development and the Transport System

Development will not be acceptable unless access by walking, cycling and public transport is maximised, and other appropriate measures are taken to minimise the traffic generated by that development.

If, despite the above measures, the remaining traffic generated by the development, together with that from existing and other development for which planning permission exists or which is proposed in an approved local plan, would:

- a) impair road safety;**
- b) have an unacceptable effect on the environment; or**
- c) exceed the capacity available in the local highway system,**

further satisfactory and environmentally acceptable road improvements should be undertaken, at the developer's expense, to mitigate the impact of the development.

DERELICT, VACANT AND UNDERUSED LAND AND BUILDINGS

- 2.58 One of the main objectives of this Consultation Draft Structure Plan is to make the most effective use of urban areas. Strategy Policy 5 will help to achieve this through the recycling of existing land and buildings, particularly in urban areas.
- 2.59 Government guidance advocates the importance of making full and effective use of the urban areas and stresses that there are many opportunities for reusing derelict, vacant and underused land and buildings. The maximum use of previously developed land and buildings for new development will relieve pressure for development on greenfield land and encourage regeneration. However, such development should not be at the expense of open space as well as biodiversity and ecological value that is needed for recreation and amenity in urban areas. Resource Management Policy 1 ensures that decisions on siting sensitive developments takes into account the detrimental effects of existing or potential sources of pollution.
- 2.60 A recent Government policy statement, "Planning for the Communities of the Future" proposes that nationally 60% of new homes are expected to be built on previously developed land. The Government recognises that there are considerable differences between the regions in terms of their degrees of urbanisation and the number of opportunities for re-use and therefore states that regional targets will be set by Regional Planning Conferences.
- 2.61 Opportunities for re-using land and buildings also exist in rural areas. PPG7 'The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development' states that the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as

for sport, tourism and recreation. It also emphasises the role the National Forest can play in promoting economic regeneration in a landscape damaged by industrial dereliction, while creating new recreational opportunities and wildlife habitats.

- 2.62 Substantial areas of derelict, vacant and underused land exists in areas where it would be appropriate to seek restoration, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas that have been subject to past mining and quarrying activities. The Three Councils recognise the need to give emphasis to the improvement of the landscape quality in such areas. The National Forest is a particularly important opportunity for such restoration. Improvements will not only enhance the living conditions and surroundings of the many residents in the area, but will also be instrumental in creating new opportunities for employment, recreation and conservation.
- 2.63 The existence of previously used land does not necessarily mean that it is appropriate for development as it may be in an unsuitable location. Strategy Policy 2 gives guidance on the location of development. More detailed guidance is provided in the Derelict Land Strategy and Action Programme, which was adopted by the County Council in 1992.
- 2.64 Many opportunities will arise for landscape improvement through new development, which District Councils will be encouraged to pursue.
- 2.65 It is also intended to initiate further Countryside Management Projects in accordance with the Rural Strategy for Leicestershire and to pursue a vigorous programme of derelict land clearance and reclamation in accordance with the Derelict Land Strategy. These strategies will help in the implementation of this Policy.

Strategy Policy 5: Derelict, Vacant and Underused Land and Buildings

In considering the options for the location of new development, priority will be given to the re-use of derelict, vacant and underused land and buildings.

Within urban areas and rural centres, the fullest use will be made of derelict, vacant and underused land and buildings for development. Additional areas of open land should be created when reclaiming land where a deficiency in open space has been identified or would result from the development.

In the Countryside, the fullest use will be made of derelict, vacant and underused land and buildings for agriculture, forestry, recreation, nature conservation and other land uses compatible with their location and condition.

LAND USE IN GREEN WEDGES

- 2.66 Strategy Policy 6 sets out the land uses that are acceptable in Green Wedges. The strategic locations of Green Wedges are set out in Strategy Policy 7.
- 2.67 An important function of Green Wedges is to contribute towards the quality of life of all people living in the urban areas. Any land use or associated development in Green Wedges is therefore required to:
- a) retain the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge;
 - b) retain and create green networks between the Countryside and open spaces within the urban areas; and
 - c) retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation.
- 2.68 Green Wedges aim to:
- a) protect structurally important areas of open land which influence the form and direction of urban development;
 - b) ensure that areas of open land extend outwards between the existing and planned development limits of the urban areas and preserve landscape and wildlife links between the Countryside and urban open spaces;
 - c) prevent coalescence and maintain the physical identity of settlements adjacent to the main urban areas;
 - d) provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents; and
 - e) promote the positive management of land to ensure the Green Wedges remain or are enhanced as attractive contributions to the quality of life of nearby urban residents.
- 2.69 Parts of existing Green Wedges, particularly in the more extensive Green Wedges, are still in agricultural use, effectively retaining their open and undeveloped character. However, the contribution such areas make to the quality of life of people living nearby would increase through improvements to the landscape and public access, including tree planting and access agreements, where appropriate.
- 2.70 The recreational use of Green Wedge land will bring benefits for residents of adjacent urban areas. Outdoor recreational uses such as sports pitches and golf courses are acceptable, but any associated development, essential for operational requirements, should be small in scale and sited so as to retain the open and undeveloped nature of the Green Wedge. More formal outdoor recreational facilities should be located adjacent to the built up areas to minimise the need to travel and to lessen the impact of the facility on the Green Wedge.
- 2.71 Woodland planting is consistent with the aims of Green Wedges and would increase the area of woodland in the Plan Area. In urban fringe areas, it would help to enhance the landscape, and to the north west of Leicester, would help to extend the green network to the National Forest. It is not considered that woodland would compromise the open character of Green Wedges. However, development which would not otherwise be acceptable in Green Wedges will not be made acceptable by the provision of a woodland setting.

-
- 2.72 Green Wedges can improve the quality of life of the residents of adjacent urban areas by providing opportunities for public access to open space, Countryside and the National Forest. This can be facilitated by the provision of rights of way, bridleways and cycleways. Routes for walking, horseriding and cycling should therefore be viewed favourably as they would facilitate public access and have a negligible effect on the amenity of the Green Wedge. Green networks which link Green Wedges with other open spaces and natural areas within the urban area, can also help wildlife to migrate from one area to another, reducing the risk of populations becoming isolated and more vulnerable to local extinction.
- 2.73 It is recognised that mineral workings may need to be located in Green Wedges if that is where the reserves are found, and that the associated plant could be intrusive if insensitively sited. However, there is scope for sensitive siting of plant, and, because mineral workings are temporary, restoration of the site can take account of its Green Wedge designation. Restoration to water uses can help to provide additional space for water recreation and nature conservation. Leisure Policy 4 encourages the development of new areas of water for recreational use.
- 2.74 Many existing roads, including the M1 and the Leicester Western Bypass, cross Green Wedges, and the resulting severance can have a significant effect on wildlife and public access to the Green Wedges concerned. Major roads can also have an urbanising influence through road traffic noise, large signs and street lighting. Further road building, beyond what is already proposed in the Development Plan, or necessary to serve such development that is permitted, would therefore not be appropriate in Green Wedges. The importance for public access and recreation is considered to outweigh any benefits arising from additional roads. Any roads that may be allowed will need special provision to ensure that severance and other adverse effects on the amenity of the Green Wedge are minimised.
- 2.75 Although dedicated public transport corridors contribute to the quality of life for urban residents, they are only acceptable in Green Wedges if there is no alternative route. Provision for minimising severance and adverse effects on the amenity of the Green Wedge affected will be required.
- 2.76 Park and ride facilities are usually located in urban fringe areas, many of which may be designated as Green Wedges. Such facilities should only be located in a Green Wedge in exceptional circumstances, and if there is no other suitable site available outside the Green Wedge.
- 2.77 Development control policies in Local Plans should make it clear which land uses are acceptable within the context of this Policy. Local Plans should also elaborate on what types of development would permanently damage the open and undeveloped character of Green Wedges.

Strategy Policy 6: Land Uses in Green Wedges

The open and undeveloped character of Green Wedges will be protected, and wherever possible, enhanced.

Only the following land uses will be acceptable in Green Wedges, provided the development associated with these uses does not permanently damage the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge:

- a) agriculture;**
- b) outdoor recreation;**
- c) forestry;**
- d) footpaths, bridleways, cycleways;**
- e) mineral uses.**

In addition, the following land uses will only be acceptable if appropriate measures are also taken to minimise severance and adverse effects on the amenity of the Green Wedge:

- f) road proposals in the Development Plan;**
- g) dedicated public transport routes (in exceptional circumstances where there is no alternative route);**
- h) park and ride facilities (if no other suitable site outside a Green Wedge is available).**

Provision will be made in Green Wedges for the retention and creation of green networks between urban open spaces and the Countryside, and the retention and enhancement of public access, especially for recreation.

THE LOCATION OF GREEN WEDGES

- 2.78 Green Wedge policy has been an established part of the Leicestershire Structure Plan for many years and was incorporated into the two previous Structure Plans approved in 1987 and 1994. Green Wedges have enjoyed strong support from both District Councils and the public, who value them as accessible open space which benefits local residents.
- 2.79 Strategy Policy 7 sets out the general location of Green Wedges. Green Wedges aim to ensure that as urban development extends, structurally important areas of open land that influence the form and direction of urban growth are protected. The second function of Green Wedges is to prevent the coalescence of main urban areas with adjacent

settlements. In addition, Green Wedges penetrate the urban area, and thus function as “green lungs”, absorbing pollution and channelling fresh air into the urban area.

- 2.80 The two main functions of Green Wedges are illustrated by, for example, the Beaumont Leys/Birstall, Oadby/Wigston and Soar Valley South Green Wedges which extend outwards from, and penetrate the main urban area of Leicester. The Glenfield/Groby, and Beaumont Leys/Anstey/Cropston/ Thurcaston Green Wedges, on the other hand, prevent Groby, Anstey, Cropston and Thurcaston from coalescing with the main urban area. In addition, the Ratby/Groby and Groby/Anstey Green Wedges form links between Leicester and the National Forest.
- 2.81 The management of Green Wedges should take into account the need for good design principles to be implemented. For example, safety and security, access for all sectors of the community, and protection of the cultural heritage and ecological interests. Further details on good design are given in Strategy Policy 11.
- 2.82 District Councils will be encouraged to designate and define the precise boundaries of Green Wedges in Local Plans, after taking into account the need to reconcile the location of the Green Wedges with the location of development, and the need to extend Green Wedges in tandem with any extensions to the urban area.
- 2.83 Designations on Local Plan proposals maps should not overlap. For this reason, and because they perform a strategic function, Green Wedges should not overlap with areas covered by Strategy Policy 8: Separation of Settlements or Strategy Policy 9: Development in the Countryside.
- 2.84 There is scope within the existing general locations of Green Wedges for extensions in tandem with extensions to the main urban area of Leicester, for example the Green Wedge between Oadby and Wigston. However, there is little scope for designating additional Green Wedges to prevent coalescence. Such designation should only be used for settlements immediately adjacent to the urban areas centred on Leicester and the main towns.

Strategy Policy 7: The Location of Green Wedges

The detailed boundaries of Green Wedges will be defined in the following general locations:

In and around Leicester:

- a) Leicester (Beaumont Leys)/Birstall/Thurcaston/Anstey/Cropston;**
- b) Birstall/Leicester/Thurmaston (Soar Valley North);**
- c) Thurmaston/Syston;**
- d) Hamilton;**
- e) Leicester/Scraptoft;**
- f) Thurnby/Leicester/Oadby;**
- g) Oadby/Leicester/Wigston;**
- h) Whetstone/Blaby/Countesthorpe;**
- i) Blaby/Glen Parva (Sence Valley);**
- j) Whetstone/Enderby/Glen Parva/Braunstone/Blaby/Narborough/Cosby (Soar Valley South)**
- k) Ratby/Groby/Glenfield/Kirby Muxloe/Kirby Fields/Kirby Frith;**
- l) Beaumont Leys/Glenfrith/Anstey/Groby;**

Other Areas:

- m) Loughborough/Shepshed;**
- n) Loughborough/Quorn;**
- o) Loughborough/Hathern;**
- p) Coalville/Whitwick/Swannington;**
- q) Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton.**

SEPARATION OF SETTLEMENTS

- 2.85 This Policy is applicable in relation to proposals to develop or allocate land that is not already covered by Strategy Policies 6, 7 and 9 concerning Green Wedges or development in the Countryside. There will be exceptional circumstances when an area of land between settlements, that neither performs the function of a Green Wedge nor can properly be regarded as Countryside, needs to remain open in the interests of maintaining the character and identity of those settlements. Generally, such land will be of limited extent and in urban fringe type uses.

- 2.86 The definition of such exceptional circumstances and the amount of land to be safeguarded is essentially a local matter. Appropriate designations should be made in Local Plans in the light of individual circumstances such as topography and tree cover.

Strategy Policy 8: Separation of Settlements

In areas to which Green Wedge policies do not apply and which cannot be properly designated as Countryside, development will only be appropriate where it would not result in a reduction in the separation between the built-up area of settlements.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

- 2.87 An assessment of Leicestershire's landscape quality was carried out in 1976, which identified Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APACs), shown diagrammatically on the Key Diagram of the adopted Structure Plan. The adopted Structure Plan sets out the special consideration that applies to development in these areas. It also recognises that there may be areas of local landscape value to which the District Councils would wish to give special protection.
- 2.88 APACs have been deleted from this Consultation Draft Structure Plan because of concern that there are too many local designations, which goes against advice given in the revised PPG7. However, additional protection has been given to Charnwood Forest (see Strategy Policy 15) in anticipation of its designation as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.89 This Policy sets out the strategic approach towards development in the Countryside, defined as land outside the existing and planned development limits of settlements, and outside land designated as Green Wedge or areas of separation. Separate guidance on development in Green Wedges and areas of separation is given in Strategy Policies 6, 7 and 8 respectively.
- 2.90 It is recognised that some development will need to be located in the Countryside. For example, minerals can only be extracted where they are found. This Policy sets the framework to allow such developments to come forward. Any such development should incorporate appropriate landscaping, however.
- 2.91 Although, a wide range of development associated with the use of land for agriculture and forestry does not require planning permission from the local authority, such development cannot proceed until the Local Planning Authority has been given 28 days notice in which to decide whether prior approval is required for the details of the development. These details include the siting, design and external appearance of buildings and their relationship to their surroundings, the siting and means of construction of roads, the siting of certain excavations and waste deposits and the siting and appearance of fish tanks.
- 2.92 The development of modern buildings is important for the future efficiency of agriculture. However, these buildings should be located so as to minimise intrusion into the landscape. Properly sited and screened, such intrusion should be avoided and in

some cases the new feature may improve the quality of an otherwise bare and uninteresting view. Where suitably sited attractive buildings exist, new development should normally be sited close to these. Suitable existing buildings have a form, bulk and general design in keeping with their surroundings and do not intrude into the landscape.

- 2.93 Landscape character is the pattern within the landscape resulting from the particular combinations of natural, cultural and aesthetic factors that make one area different from another. A Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape Character Area Map is being produced which identifies a series of areas of different landscape character without making judgements about their relative worth.
- 2.94 From this Landscape Character Area Map, the landscape quality of particular areas may be assessed in terms of distinctiveness (or strength of character) and condition. Methods for carrying out this type of evaluation are still being developed through research conducted by the Countryside Commission. Local Planning Authorities may wish to use this type of evaluation to identify :
- a) Areas of Local Landscape Value where it is important to conserve the character of the existing landscape and where this cannot be achieved through other planning policies; and
 - b) Local Landscape Improvement Areas where there is a particular need to restore and enhance the character of the existing landscape.
- 2.95 District Councils should identify the boundaries of the Countryside in Local Plans. Within the Countryside designation they should also show the boundaries of any Areas of Local Landscape Value or Local Landscape Improvement Areas. There should be no overlaps between the Countryside and areas designated as either Green Wedge or areas of separation.
- 2.96 The planned limits to the built up areas of settlements should be defined by Local Plans as the boundaries of existing and proposed development.

Strategy Policy 9: Development in the Countryside

Land beyond the existing and planned limits to the built up area of settlements, and outside land defined as Green Wedge or areas of separation will be designated as Countryside.

In addition, Countryside of local importance may be designated as Areas of Local Landscape Value, and land in the Countryside which is degraded or unattractive may be designated as Local Landscape Improvement Areas.

The Countryside will be protected for its own sake and hence development in the Countryside will only be acceptable if it has no more than a limited adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape, and if it comprises at least one of the following:

- a) the re-use of existing buildings;**
- b) limited small scale development for employment, leisure, agriculture or renewable energy installations;**
- c) agricultural buildings; and**
- d) land extensive outdoor recreation uses that do not include substantial built development.**

Within Areas of Local Landscape Value, provision for such development will only be made where there is no adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

Within Local Landscape Improvement Areas, additional measures will be taken to enhance the landscape.

Agricultural buildings in the Countryside (including dwellings essential for agricultural and forestry needs) should be well integrated in relation to existing buildings and designed sympathetically to fit into the local surroundings.

Sub-Section 2: Principles for Development

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

- 2.97 PPG 1 'General Policy and Principles' suggests that Local Planning Authorities should consider whether high quality mixed use development such as urban villages represent an appropriate form of development for any part of their area.

- 2.98 The adopted Structure Plan policies address the need to locate development where there is or will be a realistic choice of transport, including public transport, to encourage people to make less use of motor vehicles, but do not adequately reflect the aim of reducing the need to travel and overall distances travelled. In addition, the policies do not sufficiently provide the means to promote sustainable patterns of development through which urban villages can develop.
- 2.99 This Consultation Draft Structure Plan seeks to promote sustainable patterns of development that facilitate more self-contained, vibrant communities which consume less energy and produce less pollution and congestion. The development of good quality mixes of complementary land uses in close proximity to one another and retaining and enhancing, where possible, appropriate mixes that already exist help to achieve this. The resulting development should reduce the need to travel long distances and increase the options for making journeys by cycle and on foot. These principles are particularly important for larger developments, where sites of single land uses should be avoided (see Strategy Policy 3: Strategic Greenfield Sites). However, it is important to ensure that uses that are not compatible, such as polluting development, do not cause an unacceptable detrimental effect. Further guidance is given in Resource Management Policy 1.
- 2.100 Mixed use development is exemplified by the urban villages concept, which includes the following characteristics:
- a) compactness and human scale;
 - b) a mixture of uses and dwelling types, including affordable housing;
 - c) a range of employment, leisure and community services;
 - d) high standards of urban design;
 - e) access to public open space and green spaces;
 - f) access to public transport; and
 - g) a move towards more sustainable living.
- 2.101 Mixed use development should be promoted in Local Plans. Suitable locations should be identified where the aims of the Policy can be furthered. Areas which are deficient in particular facilities should be identified and measures taken to rectify those deficiencies. In particular, the Three Council's accept a responsibility to influence, as far as possible via the Plan the range and mix of dwellings provided to meet the wide ranging needs of the Plan Area's households.

Strategy Policy 10: Mixed Use Development

Good quality mixed use will be promoted or retained through the provision of:

- a) a mix of compatible land uses that take into account the scale of development proposed and existing needs in the area, incorporating a variety of dwelling types including affordable housing, employment, retail, leisure, and community facilities;**
- b) local character and distinctiveness;**
- c) convenient, safe and secure walking and cycling networks with priority access;**
- d) dedicated public transport routes;**
- e) areas of open space and green linkages; and**
- f) residential environments which are free from the nuisance of through traffic.**

Within and adjoining the central areas, proposals for good quality mixed use development will be encouraged, provided that retailing is not adversely affected and a mix of compatible uses can be achieved.

GOOD DESIGN

- 2.102 Good design is a central theme in PPG1 as a way of promoting sustainable development by helping to improve the quality of the existing environment and making new development more attractive. Accordingly, one of the main objectives in this Consultation Structure Plan is to make the most effective use of urban areas, by ensuring the quality of the built environment is both protected and enhanced, thereby making urban living more attractive.
- 2.103 Most people in the Plan Area live and work in towns and villages. The general quality and appearance of the surroundings, the availability of a range of open spaces for different uses and the effects of traffic all play a significant part in peoples' quality of life. If more people are to be encouraged to live in urban areas, good design is essential to improve the quality of the urban environment and to avoid town cramming.
- 2.104 The need to protect open spaces within urban areas is now widely recognised. It is important to ensure that existing open spaces, including playing fields and recreational facilities, are protected from development unless there are very significant overriding needs and circumstances. This protection should extend to privately owned land as well as land owned by local authorities and other public bodies. Similarly, new developments should include appropriate open spaces for both public and private use and appropriate landscaping and planting to maintain and improve the quality of the built environment.

- 2.105 All aspects of design including layout and highway design are matters of increasing concern to the public and will be an increasingly important part of planning control. It will be important to ensure that design and layout are of sufficient quality to enhance the general environment over the expected lifetime of the development.
- 2.106 Innovative design and layout should allow people to use the development freely without fear of crime and allow access for all people including those with impaired mobility, and should also help to reduce the amount of energy consumed, for example innovative design solutions can increase density by reducing the amount of land allocated for roads and car parking, and which incorporate walking and cycling.
- 2.107 The construction and subsequent use of buildings have significant impacts on the environment. Buildings use a large amount of energy both to provide building services and embodied in the materials used in their construction.
- 2.108 The Building Research Establishment (BRE) (an Executive Agency of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) has developed BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) which can be used to assess the global, local and internal environmental impact of buildings. This methodology identifies and credits designs where specific targets, in advance of regulatory minimum standards, are met. The Three Councils will strongly encourage new development, and in particular major development, to be designed to a standard that achieves a high BREEAM rating.
- 2.109 New development can in some circumstances increase the ecological interest of an area, for example by providing wildlife corridors or stepping stones between habitats. This Policy requires new development to include new ecological areas which can be provided as part of landscaping or open space, or as a dedicated area.
- 2.110 The Countryside Commission's Landscape Character Map and English Nature's Natural Areas Map provides information about the typical landscapes in different parts of the Plan Area. Design outside the urban areas should take account of these local distinctive characteristic landscapes.
- 2.111 To implement this Policy, Local Planning Authorities will be encouraged to promote development that minimises the fear of, and prospects for, crime, and which has a high standard of design.
- 2.112 The Three Councils will achieve good design for their own buildings and developments, incorporating the principle of "access for all" and will assess the need to retain land in public ownership for use as public or private open space before disposing of it for other uses. The Leicestershire Landmark programme of environmental improvements will be developed and the principles for environmental good practice for the construction and development industry will be promoted.

Strategy Policy 11: Good Design

Good design will be promoted by ensuring that development:

- a) protects and enhances the form and character of the built and natural environment, and ensures that areas of open spaces and green linkages are reserved and provided in new development;**
- b) incorporates comprehensive landscaping within and around the development on a scale appropriate to the scale and impact of the development;**
- c) maximises energy conservation in the siting, orientation, scale and layout of buildings and spaces;**
- d) maximises the use of resource-efficient materials;**
- e) incorporates innovative design where appropriate, particularly in urban areas;**
- f) takes account of the access needs of all people, including people with disabilities;**
- g) minimises traffic nuisance and develops a high quality walking and cycling network;**
- h) enhances the feeling of personal safety and minimises the potential for crime; and**
- i) incorporates new ecological sites. Management plans will be developed to take full account of ecological interests.**

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

- 2.113 The Three Councils consider that a consistent and co-ordinated approach is required for infrastructure and amenity provision by developers, to serve new developments. In particular, the use of agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (known as planning obligations) as a means of securing appropriate provision will have to be used consistently. All developer contributions to infrastructure costs will be sought within the Government guidelines, presently provided by DoE Circular 1/97.
- 2.114 In accordance with the Government guidelines, the infrastructure contributions sought will depend on the impact and scale of that development and the needs created by it. A comprehensive assessment will be made of the requirements in each case, which may involve a number of developers contributing jointly to an improved facility. Typical examples of relevant infrastructure that may be required are given in Circular 1/97 and PPGs. These include providing adequate access, highway works, facilities for public transport, cycling and walking, open space, landscaping, social, educational, recreational, sporting and other community provision; securing an acceptable balance

of uses for mixed development; securing an element of affordable or special needs housing; offsetting the loss of or impact on a resource present on a site or nearby; and protecting or reducing harm to protected sites or species.

- 2.115 Infrastructure that is already the responsibility of the developer such as water supply, sewerage or sewage disposal is excluded from this Policy because it is dealt with by other means. In appropriate cases, a provision will be dealt with via a planning condition rather than a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Act. Within the area of the National Forest specific on and off site landscaping obligations will apply to new development as specified in Local Plans.
- 2.116 In addition to the infrastructure costs required to service a site, there may well be a need for the recording, rescue or protection of sites of archaeological or ecological importance. Such costs must be allowed for by the developer. In order to establish whether a site is sensitive, the developer should contact the Local Planning Authority at an early stage.
- 2.117 As Local Plans are prepared and reviewed, consideration should be given to the inclusion of policies where the Local Planning Authority intends to seek agreement with developers in connection with particular types of development or in relation to specific development sites. These policies should indicate the full infrastructure requirements of foreseeable proposals.

Strategy Policy 12: Developer Contributions

Developers should meet the requirements for, and costs of, relevant infrastructure and facilities and other resources required to support the development. A comprehensive assessment of these requirements will be made in each case.

Sub-Section 3: Special Policy Areas

REGENERATION AREAS

- 2.118 Securing economic, social and environmental regeneration is important to improving quality of life in those parts of the Plan Area suffering relative deprivation and also to help achieve investment to create homes, jobs, services and other facilities within urban areas. The Plan aims to direct measures to those areas which have the greatest need, but also recognises that pockets of deprivation exist within Leicestershire. However, it is necessary to ensure that once the external sources of funding have expired that the quality of life achieved through regeneration is sustained. For sustainable regeneration, effective partnerships of the public and private sectors and local voluntary organisations together with community participation are vital. Community involvement in the decision making process promotes a feeling of ownership and thus is crucial to the interest of securing lasting benefits.
- 2.119 The greatest concentration of social and economic deprivation in the Plan Area occurs within the City of Leicester. Unemployment is more than double the Plan Area average in twenty of the twenty eight wards of the City. There is also a concentration of

employment in declining industries and occupations often associated with low pay. The mapping of unemployment and social deprivation across the City also shows clear evidence of spatial segregation. The economically inactive, including the long term unemployed and the marginally employed, are concentrated in areas of the inner city and peripheral estates. These areas of the City are characterised by a poor built environment, including deteriorating housing and a lack of civic amenities, and suffer high levels of anti-social behaviour and crime.

- 2.120 There is significant correlation between ill-health, low educational achievement, and economic activity in parts of the inner city and the peripheral estates. The situation is exacerbated in peripheral areas by poor public transport services, which combined with low car ownership, reduces the mobility of those seeking work, as well as access to retail and leisure facilities. The City of Leicester is therefore the key strategic priority area for regeneration within the Plan period. Regeneration in the City is now driven by a number of public, private and voluntary sector partnerships guided by the Leicester Urban Regeneration Strategy.
- 2.121 With regard to other parts of the Plan Area, since the early 1980s considerable and sustained effort has been put into the regeneration of the former coalfield areas of the North West Leicestershire Coalfield Priority Area, which suffered considerable problems as a result of the demise of the deep-mined coal industry. The prospects for the former coalfield areas have improved significantly and increased confidence in the area's future has resulted in private sector investment in new development. However, there is still some way to go before the County Council's long-standing commitment to the regeneration of the area can be withdrawn. A number of unresolved issues related to environmental quality, including large amounts of derelict land, and the social and family consequences of economic restructuring continue to affect the area. For these reasons the former coalfield areas of the North West Leicestershire Coalfield Priority Area remain a strategic priority area for regeneration with a view to consolidating the progress made to date during the Plan period.
- 2.122 With regard to other areas in Leicestershire, an assessment of need is precursor for the development of regeneration priorities. A series of Community Profiles, which will include statistical information on the characteristics of different communities, are currently being prepared to identify priorities for regeneration in the seven shire Districts of Leicestershire. Despite improvements at the national, regional and local level in unemployment, educational attainment and income level, persistent pockets of deprivation and need remain. The County Council is currently establishing its corporate priorities for regeneration within the market towns, rural areas, and the Leicester urban fringe. These priorities will complement the objectives already being pursued within the Coalfield Priority Area. The regeneration priorities across the County will be brought together within a Corporate Regeneration Strategy to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of regeneration resources to tackle need.
- 2.123 To implement this Policy, partnership working with key regeneration agencies to secure investment in the Priority Areas for Regeneration will continue and opportunities provided by appropriate external funding sources will be maximised.
- 2.124 In addition to the regeneration strategies prepared by Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council, the County Council's Derelict Land Strategy and Action Programme will be pursued together with a forward strategy to consolidate the

regeneration progress made in recent years in the former coalfield areas of North West Leicestershire will be implemented.

Strategy Policy 13: Regeneration Areas

Measures will be taken to improve the quality of life within those areas suffering relative deprivation and also to help achieve investment to create homes, jobs, services and other facilities within urban areas.

The primary focus of measures to achieve sustainable regeneration will be the Leicester Priority Area. Priority will also be given to the sustainable regeneration of pockets of deprivation within Leicestershire and Rutland, and to support the former coalfield areas of North West Leicestershire in the completion of a forward strategy to consolidate the regeneration process.

THE NATIONAL FOREST

- 2.125 Strategy Policy 14 recognises the significant role of the National Forest beyond the boundary of the Charnwood Forest in providing opportunities for the widest range of leisure and tourist facilities in the Plan Area.
- 2.126 The National Forest concept was pioneered by the Countryside Commission in its 1987 policy document "Forestry in the Countryside". The Countryside Commission appointed a Development Team in 1991 to draw up a strategy for the National Forest and produce a business plan on the means of its creation.
- 2.127 The National Forest Strategy was published in 1994. The vision of the Strategy is for a 502 square kilometre mosaic of woodland, farms, open land and settlements. The woodland cover target is 33%, compared to about 6% at present, with a 60:40 ratio of broadleaved trees to conifers.
- 2.128 The Forest is a major national resource being created locally in the Plan Area. It provides a good example of sustainable development, addressing as it does social, economic, recreational and environmental issues and bringing back into use derelict land.
- 2.129 In implementing the leisure and tourism elements of the National Forest Policy, beyond the boundary of the Charnwood Forest, the objectives will be to:
- a) provide a range of high-quality accommodation of all sizes, that is able to attract its own markets and win considerable repeat business;
 - b) concentrate immediate effort on areas that are currently either derelict land sites or subject to mineral workings, with due regard to any nature conservation sensitivities and opportunities. These cover around 6% of the total National Forest area. In the Plan Area they include Ashby Woulds / Donisthorpe opencast coal/derelict areas, Heather / Bagworth opencast coal/derelict areas, Lounge opencast coal site, and the Charnwood granite quarries.

-
- c) The large scale of these sites provides the opportunity to develop a wide range of leisure and tourism after-uses. Together with existing access areas and leisure foci they should form the main sites for attracting and channelling large numbers of visitors. Restoration will aim to accommodate one or more of the following uses:
- i) public access opportunities to walk, ride and cycle, which could be accommodated in large recreation areas such as country or forest parks or, in the case of small scale sites within or adjacent to urban areas, the development of pocket parks. Public access should be given high priority, as these sites will provide some of the best opportunities for open access provision in the National Forest. Such access should be safe and secure and convenient for people to use;
 - ii) provision for fishing, golf or water sports within a wooded setting;
 - iii) provision of facilities that can only be provided in a planned landscape, such as motorised sports or visually-intrusive new development in the form of major attractions and/or accommodation; and
 - iv) landscaped sites allocated to establish a mature wooded setting for long-term forest-related development.

2.130 This range of options should be applied to other areas of opportunity in the National Forest Policy, beyond the boundary of the Charnwood Forest, that may arise in the future. This will include areas of appropriate farmland as well as derelict land and former mineral workings.

2.131 To implement this Policy, support and assistance will be given to the implementation of the National Forest Strategy, including in Local Plans. In addition, the Three Councils will review their own land holdings to investigate the potential for additional woodland planting and more woodland planting in the restoration of mineral/waste disposal sites will be encouraged.

Strategy Policy 14: The National Forest

Within the National Forest, provision will be made for the planting of woodlands with public access, subject to environmental constraints.

In appropriate locations within the rural area of the National Forest, development will be acceptable which facilitates its use as a sustainable natural resource. Development which involves new buildings, significant structures or other operations, will be required to be accompanied by proposals for creating an appropriate woodland setting. All substantial development proposals will be required to reflect the National Forest context in their accompanying landscaping and planting.

Within the National Forest beyond the boundary of the Charnwood Forest, provision will be made for the creation of new leisure and tourism facilities and for public access, subject to environmental constraints. Development will be acceptable which meets the objectives of the National Forest Strategy in:

- a) providing public access opportunities through the provision of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways;**
- b) providing for appropriate sporting activities within a wooded setting, including golf, fishing and water sports;**
- c) providing for leisure facilities that can only be established in a planned landscape; and,**
- d) providing landscaped sites to create a mature woodland setting for long-term forest-related leisure development.**

Restoration of mineral/waste disposal sites will be required to accommodate one or more of those uses.

CHARNWOOD FOREST

- 2.132 Charnwood Forest is the Plan Area's most distinctive landscape character area. The underlying rocks are some of the oldest in England and Wales and give the area a unique upland character. Charnwood Forest is the most well-wooded of the Plan Area's landscape character areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland sites. Heathland and parkland also contribute to the area's ecological richness and special landscape qualities. These elements combine to produce a particularly distinctive landscape which is highly valued for its scenic beauty and for which the County and District Councils are seeking designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.133 To implement this Policy, District Councils should identify the boundaries of the Charnwood Forest in Local Plans.

Strategy Policy 15: Charnwood Forest

In Charnwood Forest, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and character of the landscape should be given priority over other planning considerations.

Provision should only be made for development where:

- a) it is small scale development essential for the economic or social well being of the Charnwood Forest; or**
- b) there is an overriding proven national interest and there is no other acceptable alternative.**

Where development is permitted, particular care should be taken to ensure that any development does not damage the natural beauty or landscape character of the area.

Development permitted exceptionally because of overriding national interest will be required to be removed in the event of redundancy at a later date.

RUTLAND WATER

- 2.134 Since 1976, Rutland Water has developed into a nature conservation resource of international significance. In addition, it is a major regional attraction for casual recreational pursuits such as sailing, fishing, walking, cycling and sight-seeing, with around half a million visitors a year. The aim of Strategy Policy 16 is to balance new recreation, sports and tourism developments against the overall conservation theme for the location. The area to which it applies will be defined at the local level (presently the Waterside Area in the Rutland Water Recreation, Tourism, and Environmental Issues Local Plan which will be superseded by the Rutland Water Area when the Rutland Local Plan is adopted).

2.135 To implement this Policy:

- a) visitor and traffic management measures will be introduced as necessary to ensure that the quality of the recreational experience at Rutland Water is not diminished;
- b) Rutland Water Nature Reserve will be protected and where possible enhanced as a site of international wildlife importance;
- c) the existing rights of way network in the area around Rutland Water will be improved to allow residents and visitors to the area to follow the routes easily: and
- d) the Rutland Water Cycleway will be extended to provide a safe off-road cycling circuit around Rutland Water.

Strategy Policy 16: Rutland Water

Limited development of recreation, sports and tourism facilities of more than local significance will be permitted within the Rutland Water Area subject to such development:

- a) not detracting from the landscape and the sensitive environment of the Area;**
- b) complementing existing facilities; and**
- c) relating to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water as a water supply and recreational and ecological resource.**

JUNCTION 23a/24/24a AREA

- 2.136 RPG 8 states that around junction 23a/24 it would be inappropriate to establish further large concentrations of employment creating uses unrelated to urban areas and not served by a realistic choice of public transport. The guidance stresses effective public transport links to nearby population centres as a prerequisite to further large-scale employment development in this area. RPG 8 also states that some distribution uses may be appropriate in this general area but sites should only be established through the development plan process.
- 2.137 East Midlands Airport plays an important role in terms of the future economic development of the Plan Area and the East Midlands in terms of both direct employment and the generation of additional activity.
- 2.138 RPG 8 stresses that planning authorities should make provision for operational requirements of the Airport in development plans. The operational development of the Airport should not be compromised by unrelated development and only development related to the operational working of the airport itself, or development which requires to be located at the Airport, should be sited within its immediate vicinity.
- 2.139 Strategy Policy 17 reflects the need to take into account the highway and environmental constraints affecting the future planning of this area together with other relevant considerations relating to the planning of the remainder of the Plan Area.

- 2.140 The adopted Structure Plan makes provision for one High Quality Employment Site (HQES) of County significance and one regional storage and distribution site in locations well related to junction 23a/24/24a of the M1. These limited allocations were considered to be an exception to the transport choice strategy. Planning permission has been granted for High Quality Employment Sites on land at Finger Farm and on land to the west of Gimbro Farm, to the west of the East Midlands Airport. Also, land has been allocated for a regional storage and distribution centre at the former Power Station site at Castle Donington, which is well related to M1 junctions 23a/24/24a.
- 2.141 Proposals for M1 widening between junctions 23a and 25 including a new junction 24a were included in the Government's longer-term roads programme which is now under review. Notwithstanding, possible improvements to the M1 and the strategic highway network in the vicinity of junction 24 that may arise out of the Government's review of its roads programme, the likely growth in traffic generally, together with that associated with committed employment sites and that arising from the likely expansion of the airport, will greatly increase traffic congestion and problems in this locality. Worsening congestion and accessibility to the airport is likely to make the airport less attractive and the wider economic benefits which arise as a result of the airport are likely to be lost.
- 2.142 The provision of homes and jobs in close proximity in order to reduce the need to travel is an important consideration. Employment growth in the vicinity of junction 23a/24/24a is likely to be considerable over the Plan period due to a large amount of employment land being committed and because of the likely expansion of the airport. The further encouragement of employment growth in this vicinity will militate against achieving a balance of employment and housing within particular localities.
- 2.143 The Three Councils are of the view that a regional scale business park in this locality will undermine the regeneration strategies for Leicester, Derby and Nottingham and also undermine the property market within the wider area. They consider that the existing committed HQES sites well related to M1 junction 23a/24/24a satisfy the objective of diversifying the local economy as stated in the adopted Structure Plan. Further large-scale employment development or other travel intensive uses cannot be justified as a further exception on sustainability grounds. Large-scale employment development or travel intensive uses include significant employment developments, retail, leisure or other facilities (generally in excess of 1 hectare or 1000 square metres). More general guidance on the location of development is set out in Strategy Policy 2.
- 2.144 Accessibility and Transport Policy 11 gives guidance on East Midlands Airport and other more general aviation matters.
- 2.145 Local Plans will be encouraged to incorporate policies that restrict development within the vicinity of junctions 23a/24/24a.

Strategy Policy 17: Junction 23a/24/24a Area

Beyond the boundaries of the airport in the vicinity of M1 junction 23a/24/24a further large concentrations of employment development or other travel intensive uses will not be acceptable.

